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## “Power Vertical” in Russia: 2003-2004 Election Cycle Peripeteia

The article deals with the internal political process compound and idiosyncratic element of so called election cycle covering the period of 2003 elections to the State Duma and 2004 elections of the president democracy problem. First, the general characteristics of the preelection political regime are defined as of the main factor influencing the content of the elections. Main attention is paid to the violations of the democracy requirements in the procedural course of the presidential and the State Duma's election campaigns and to the analysis of the propresidential party „United Russia“ exceptional keynote „democratic“ position on forming the government on the basis of the Duma's results. The political results of the elections are discussed that for the additional four years have legitimized the direction of the political monocentric power strengthening and freezing of the democratic processes conducted by Putin and it is stressed that it is achieved violating the principle of the democratic representation justice as the equal opportunities were not guaranteed for all participants of the political competition in the election procedural course. Thus, the last elections have not become the indicator of the further spread of democracy.

### Introduction

The post-communist development of Russia lasting over the decade and attendant theoretical reasoning, practical actions, the highlighted certain regularity and paradoxes of the process are the object of the constant attention of the political science with all possible forms of manifestation. The most conceptual problem solved by the researches is directly related to the concept of the “democracy transformation” in broad sense.

To be precise, the more precise answers are in search for the following principal questions: why the democratization process in independent Russia has not achieved the vivid results, why the created political power system is corresponding more to the attributes of the intermediate political regime what have caused too slowly implemented principles of the democratic political life, to what extent the achieved winnings of democracy are deep and irreversible in the separate spheres of the state and public life, and finally - can we expect the successful consolidation of democracy in the nearest perspective. But some vivid changes of the internal political development in Russia that started in 2000 cause the doubt

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not only about the perspective of consolidation but also about the possibility of the democratic processes succession<sup>1</sup>.

As it is known, in Russia the democratization process has achieved the biggest winnings exactly in the area of elections, to be more precise - they are conducted more or less on the basis of the democratic election procedures legitimizing the newly elected power. By the way, this principle has been realized for the first time in the history of the state. The functioning of the election system is based on the legal base of democratic elections and as if corresponds at least to the formal procedural criteria (direct, public, equal, secret, competitive, periodical), and it proves that the democratic rules are respected and the democratic regulations of the political regime are demonstrated – the government receives democratic legitimating and the political elite is not questioning the results of the elections. This is the only more serious criteria allowing to include Russia into the list of the modern “electoral democracies” (the most vivid and general feature characterizing the political regime).

But such characteristic has many exceptions and it is possible only due to superficial and often formalized point of view as after each elections (from 1993) the independent observers from such organizations as the ESBO have stated various violations but they did not reach the critical line to be evaluated as obviously non-democratic.

The main goal of the article is to define one of the most important phenomena of the internal political process in Russia, namely – correspondence of the 2003–2004 electoral cycle to the standards of the democratic elections. First of all, the pre-electoral general characteristic of the political regime as the essential factor influencing the content of the elections is determined but the main attention is allotted to define the non-conformity of the procedural course of the presidential election campaign and of the elections to the State Duma with the democracy requirements in order to present the conclusions on the influence of the elections results upon the political regime consolidation in longer perspective.

## 1. Functioning of the Political System: Pluses and Minuses of the Monocentral Power Strengthening

The significance of the elections for the development of the political regime is more than obvious, their importance is becoming essential for the intermediate political regimes of the third wave of democracy. The analysis of the electoral practice in Russia strongly facilitates understanding and characteristics of the transformation processes, bearing in mind that practically the elections make the uninterrupted cycle – a little over three months' period between the elections. On the other hand, the elections are evaluated as one of the most essential presumptions of democratization in Russia.

<sup>1</sup> *Russia After the Soviet Union*, London: Longman, 1999; Sakwa R., *Russian politics and society*, 3rd edition, London: Routledge, 2002; Brown A., “Russia and democratization”, *Problems of Post-communism*, 1999, Vol. 46, No. 5; *Russia's Unfinished revolution: Political Change from Gorbachev to Putin*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001; Гельман В., “Transition” по-русски: концепции переходного периода и политическая трансформация в России, *Общественные науки и современность*, 1997, №. 4; McFaul M., Petrov N., Ryabov A., *Between dictatorship and democracy Russian Post-Communist Political Reform*, Carnegie Endowment for international Peace, 2004; Colton T. J., McFaul M., “Russian Democracy Under Putin”, *Problems of Post-Communism*, July–August, 2003, Vol. 50, No. 4.

Before starting to analyze directly the problems of the electoral cycle that lasted almost six months, first of all it is proper to review the preelectoral period, to be more precise, the peculiarities and essential changes of the political system functioning during the period of President Vladimir Putin's rule. The most vivid change in the sphere of the political role took place when in the end of the first Putin's term the greater majority of the monocentric power features have been formed – the president has become the only and real centre of power hold, establishing strategical directions of the political process movement, and day by day more firmly controlling the channels of the political regime performance as well as the main actors. The Russian independent analysts characterize the achieved general result by the word stability, covering on one or another level all spheres of the state life. And what is more, these results have become so obvious, radical and unquestioned that caused the broad discussion – how deep they have changed the characteristics of the political regime<sup>2</sup>.

During the first years of the term, essentially, Putin was solving the only conceptual political problem – in all possible ways he was trying to neutralize threats of the state disintegration that he received as the direct legatee of Boris Jelcin's political inheritance. The first post-electional actions of the president have been concentrated to realize the central power strengthening procedures, i.e. from the links that weakens it mostly: narrowing of the broad autonomic rights of the regional elite and influence of the oligarchs on the political decisions adopted by the Kremlin.

In order to solve successfully the first problem it was enough to adopt two radical administrative decisions: first, establishing seven districts with the authorized persons appointed by the president, who have broad and not too clearly defined functions in order to ensure the coordination of the actions between the central and regional power institutions what in itself has strongly decreased the level of the regional elite's political autonomy. Secondly, reorganization of the Federal Council, depriving the governors' and the heads of the regional legislative institutions of the right to be its members, what means loss of the immunity status and narrowing of the political performance freedom on the level of the whole state<sup>3</sup>. Really, it must be mentioned that the president managed to avoid not only traditional confrontation in the relations with the State Duma but to concentrate and to base the political communication not on the ideology principle but exceptionally on the principle of pragmatic dialogue with the deputates of the different parties what considerably lessened oppositional contraposition and at the same time has decreased the influence of the Duma<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Шевцова Л., "Президент Путин оформляет собственный политический режим: что из этого следует". <http://www.carnegie.ru/ru/print/69486-print.htm>, 2005 01 23; Зудин А., Ю., "Режим В. Путина: контуры новой политической системы". *Общественные науки и современность*, 2003, №. 2, с. 67; Putin ensured solid (not fallen below 50 percent level) and stabile (10% bias) support of the citizens of the country and what is the most interesting - almost not depending on the present conjuncture. "В. Путин: рейтинг неизменен – имидж меняется", [http://www.bd.fom.ru/report/cat/president2/putin/rating\\_Putin/d023924](http://www.bd.fom.ru/report/cat/president2/putin/rating_Putin/d023924), 2004 11 12; "Рейтинг Путина обвалится через год?", <http://www.cipkr.ru/publication/p010604.html>, 2004 09 10.

<sup>3</sup> Rogoża J., Wiśniewska I., A summary of the politico-economic changes taking place during Vladimir Putin's first term of office, *Prace OSW* (Centre For Eastern Studies), Warsaw, 2003, No. 11, p. 17–18, 55–56; Петров Н., Puzzle федеральной реформы: 4 года спустя, <http://www.carnegie.ru/ru/print/69803-print.htm> arba <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/stories/2004/02/17/006.html>, 2004 05 10.

<sup>4</sup> Bielinis L., "Kremliaus sprendimus diktuoja šalies politinė inercija", *Tarptautinė politika: komentarai ir interpretacijos*, Vilnius: Eugrimas, 2002, p.181.

The second problem was solved by Putin resultatively as well – using the methods of economic and legal constraint the most politicizing oligarchs have lost the possibility to influence directly the political decisions adopted by the Kremlin, their potency was finally neutralized. Thus, the president ex-parte has established the new principles of communication between the Kremlin and the oligarchs as political subordination and loyalty announcing taboo on the public political role of the oligarchs<sup>5</sup>. Of course, it was compulsory to observe them by other members of that exclusive club. It must be added that parallel to the process of the strengthening the positions of the Kremlin there was slow rise in economy caused not by concrete and successful economic policy of the authorities but more by permanently favourable international conjuncture preserving high and stable level of the world prices for strategical raw materials.

Thus, stabilization of the internal development of Russia is considered to be the greatest winning of the first term that was achieved consolidating the real leverage of power in one hand at the same time repairing, slowly and carefully, the basic spheres of the state life that were on the stage of anarchy and without which the further movement towards the normal situation was not possible. And really on the background of the stronger potency of the Kremlin, and in the anti-crisis activities of the power it is possible to see certain modern undertakings and concrete attempts to apply them in practice – adopting the law on parties, reforms of the courts and prosecutor house, tax system, land and air forces. To tell the truth, the majority of these projects due to multiple both objective and subjective factors have not become the political–social ones, and especially the catalysts of the economic structural changes, more often they managed to reach only the level of a half or minimum practical implementation, so the final result was also weak<sup>6</sup>. Comprehensively evaluating the situation it is important to add that so called modernization decisions of the power in the general context of the anti-crisis activities have obviously been modified and essentially solved not the problems to considerable improvement of the situation but foremost the problems of its normalization.

On the other hand, we can state that the anti-crisis activities of the Kremlin becoming the only priority goal (because it was the problem of the survival of the state) step by step “has frozen” the general and rather chaotic process of democratization, and even more – the tendency of the democracy positions narrowing gradually started to be more vivid. To be more precise, the energetic activities of the power directed to ensuring the state stability have weakened the freedom of word and press either closing or limiting the opposition press and TV channels (a part of them were closed because they belonged to the oligarchs who felt into disgrace of the Kremlin)<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Фортесько С., Правит ли Россией олигархия?, *Полис*, 2002, № 5, с. 64–73.

<sup>6</sup> For a detailed analysis see: Shevcova L., *Putin's Russia*, Washington: Carnegie endowment for international peace, 2003, p. 104–133, 187–196; Laurinavičius Č., “О военной реформе в России”, *Lietuvos rytų kaimynai: Politika ir saugumas. Tarptautinės mokslinės konferencijos medžiaga. Nr. 7*, Vilnius: Leidybos centras prie KAM, 2002, p. 25–28.

<sup>7</sup> The political scientists comparing preelectional political conjuncture of 1999 and 2003 have named the „reforms“ implemented by Putin as antidemocratic reconstruction that created multiple challenges for the political opponents in the future elections. McFaul M., Petrov N., “What the Elections Tell Us, *Journal of Democracy*, July 2004, Vol. 15, No. 3.

On the other hand, Putin considerably increased the direct role of the special services in the state governing by the policy of the cadres appointments when the representatives of the military structures and special services were appointed to the responsible posts of the civil power (every fourth representative of the political elite), what naturally contradicts the logic of the democratic order<sup>8</sup>.

It can be stated that from that very moment the tendency of the president's potency strengthening has evolutionated from the policy of single actions to the priority political programme, in such a way giving the status of the official policy and at the same time weakening the development of the public democratic institutions. On the background of this policy the new view of the power on the further development of democracy is more vivid little by little, postponing the solution of the problems to the further perspective, motivating it by the specificity of Russia disturbing to take over the experience of the Western democratic life.

To tell the truth, considerably strengthened potency of the president and achieved relatively stabilized political and social environment in the end of the first term provided Putin with alternative possibilities as, for example, to include the new tasks of the state democratic transformation into the political agenda and to solve them qualitatively. Of course, practically it could be started to implement only after the elections cycle – the elections of the parliament and the president.

## 2. The State Duma Elections: Search for Democracy

In the end of the first Putin's term the most important political event undoubtedly was the elections to the State Duma despite clearly restrained possibility of that institution to construct the political processes. Nevertheless, political pluralism is being realized in this very power institution although on the minimum level and what is especially important the Duma is formed on the basis of the free elections principle in the competition of the political parties of different deviations.

The pre-election political situation in the country comparing with the previous elections of 1999 has considerably changed and depended, as it was mentioned already, on the new factors listed above. According to political scientist Andrirej Riabov in this case the president himself, his administration or just the Kremlin have become the main election player forming the agenda of the election and the direction of the pre-election fight and the parties and so called election unifications have only adjusted to the election situation<sup>9</sup>. Besides, it should be stressed that during the pre-election period for the first time the potency of the Kremlin has reached the highest level what means that the political forces supporting it can expect stronger than earlier and diverse support.

The Kremlin was trying not only to consolidate the achieved winnings in respect of the Duma but also to guarantee the most favourable number of the Duma deputies' supporting mandates. The traditional way was used to achieve that goal –

<sup>8</sup> Крыштановская О., "Режим Путина: либеральная милитократия?", *Pro et Contra*, Т. 7, 2002, №. 4, с. 158, 175–176.

<sup>9</sup> Пресс-брифинг: "Расстановка сил перед выборами: оценки и прогнозы", <http://www.carnegie.ru/ru/print/69303-print.htm>, 2004 05 11.

the “power party”<sup>10</sup>. The concrete actions in that direction have been undertaken in 2001, uniting two political forces - “Motherland” and “Unity” into the public organization and later into the party. Comparing with the previous elections the pre-election positions of both political players have considerably transformed in favour of the president – this time openly expressed support of the strong first politician provided the party with more political dividends than vice versa. The latter factor and active and regular actions of the party leaders quickly increasing the ranks of the party members and supporters, and what is the most important the direct possibility to use inexhaustible power administrative resources have created the especially favourable conditions for the party to accumulate successfully potential strength and to win the electorate favour<sup>11</sup>.

It should be kept in mind that there was one more aspect of the favourable factors related to the usage of the administrative resources especially in the regions. It was easy to decide for the state bureaucracy of all levels as the favourites of the elections and especially of the presidential ones became clear in advance. Thus, it was necessary just to coordinate one’s actions with the vivid political conjuncture and to support the propresidential political force.

Thus, the elections that took place on 7 December 2003 essentially solved the only political intrigue – how many mandates of the deputies would be received by the power party “United Russia”. The early public opinion polls conducted by various public opinion research centres also proved that the “power party” had not faced serious obstacles because the new favourable moments appeared, for example, the main political forces were weak – the Communist party failed to increase the ranks of its supporters and left far behind and the possibilities of the both right parties even to overstep the foreseen percentage barrier remained doubtful due to failure to coordinate joint actions<sup>12</sup>. In the space created by the conjuncture of these factors it is purposeful to discuss the further important aspects of the elections when 23 political parties and public movements independently or setting up the election unifications have entered the competitive struggle<sup>13</sup>.

According to the data of the sociological polls only 5 participants could expect really to gain serious advantage and to overstep 5 % limit, the weakest positions were demonstrated by the “Yabloko” and the “Union of the right forces” due to the personal ambitions of the leaders of these parties who failed to agree on joint agitation actions. Such tendency stayed unchangeable with little deviations till the begin-

<sup>10</sup> Carothers T., “Democracy: no party for parties”, *Rough crossing democracy in Russia*, Moscow: Neostrom Publister, 2004, p. 75–76.

<sup>11</sup> The statistical data of the party as for March 2002: about 400 thousand members, among whom 154 deputies of the State Duma, 41 member of the Federal Council, 6 governors in the council of the party, the affiliates work in all 89 subjects of the federation, in total about 2 400 local departments. Верин В., “Единая Россия” обещает успех” *Парламенская газета*, 2003 04 01, № 59 (1188); Мнения экспертов, “Развитие партии “Единая Россия” и состояние партийно-политической системы”, <http://niiss.ru/edro.shtml>, 2004 03 05; “Программа “Выборы–2003”, “Съезд партии “Единая Россия” <http://svoboda.org/programs/el/2003/el.040303.asp>, 2004 03 23.

<sup>12</sup> Партийные электораты: динамика и перспективы: Аналитический бюллетень. Август 2003, [http://www.carnegie.ru/ru/print\\_67956-print.htm](http://www.carnegie.ru/ru/print_67956-print.htm), 2004 04 12.

<sup>13</sup> “Политические партии в начале предвыборной кампании в Государственную Думу РФ”, <http://www.in-dem.ru/IDD2000/anal/Rim2583.html>, 2004 10 11.

ning of the election agitation and the day of the elections except the fact that just before the elections the ratings of “Rodina” has greatly increased<sup>14</sup>.

On the other hand, it is necessary to remind one interesting moment that despite low public ratings of the parties and the Duma itself (the ordinary citizens answering the question what kind of the elections they consider the most important in the country indicated them in the following order: of the president, municipalities, of the governors and only on the fourth position the elections to the Duma that they almost equalized with the elections of the regional legislative institutions) the prognosis was not less than 50% activity of the electorate<sup>15</sup>. Such disharmony can be convincingly explained by too strong influence of the traditions of the forced participation upon the present electorate that came from the near past.

Discussing the peculiarities of the elections agitation period it is meaningful to pay attention to one more product of the election process forgotten by the researchers – the election programmes of the parties despite the obvious truth – under the conditions of Russia they can be evaluated as the virtual form of the political theoretical thought manifestation. In other words, this is totally formalized election attribute of the election democracy in Russia only because of the fact that their practical implementation is impossible if it does not coincide with the political line of the Kremlin. But in this case we are mostly interested in the “power party” as potentially the only force disposing the certain open possibility of the political thought realization. On the other hand, new proposals related to the strengthening of the democratization process in the country are fixed in the election programme of the party and in the official speeches of its leaders.

And really, the election programme of the election favourite concentrates the main priority on social and economic activities that should rise the citizens' welfare but we also find several very concrete statements directly related to the problems of deepening the democratic processes. This political force introducing itself to be of the centrist orientation, the party of the professionals and pragmatists rises the goal to become the party very carefully at first – “if the government will be formed on the basis of the parliamentary results” but rather clearly and it is prepared to announce “the composition of its government as only such party is able to pretend to have power in the country. And we are ready for that!” They proposed to use six ways to solve successfully the problem of the power management optimization, among which one is related to necessity to strengthen the influence of the party on the executive power and it is spoken about the accountability of the government to the State Duma<sup>16</sup>. The previous official documents of the party show that such statement is the

<sup>14</sup> Пресс-выпуск No 20: рейтинги партий и политиков, <http://www.levada.ru/press/2003111701.html>; 2004 05 23; Рейтинги партий, [http://www.bd.fom.ru/report/cat/policy/party\\_rating/stat\\_rating/party\\_rating\\_2003/d034401](http://www.bd.fom.ru/report/cat/policy/party_rating/stat_rating/party_rating_2003/d034401), 2004 05 24.

<sup>15</sup> “Опрос населения 2003 07 03. Отношение к выборам”, [www.bd.fom.ru/report/cat/policy/party\\_rating/election\\_2003/attitude\\_to\\_election\\_/d032608](http://www.bd.fom.ru/report/cat/policy/party_rating/election_2003/attitude_to_election_/d032608), 2004 03 06.

<sup>16</sup> Предвыборная программа Политической партии “Единая Россия” <http://www.edinros.ru/section.html?rid=2092>, 2004 05 09.

logical political-ideological guide of the values of the party, one of the effective ways to strengthen the democratic processes of the political regime<sup>17</sup>.

On the other hand, the programme tells the electorate about the necessity to have other democratic decisions (free press, strengthening of the self-governing, accountability of power) but this is formulated very carefully, for example, if it is spoken about the defence of press against the commercial structures and influence of power then it is always spoken about “socially responsible press”<sup>18</sup>. Summarizing we can state that the party defining its priority task of the activities as growth of the economy of the country and of the citizens’ welfare relates these to further gradual democratization procedures of the separate areas of the political regime that to my mind are especially far from the democracy standards. Thus, the position of the party to continue the transformation process in the direction of deepening democracy was not by chance and we can surely state it took the concrete place in the list of the principal democratic provisions despite the ambiguity of formulations guaranteeing the freedom of political maneuvers. On the other hand, such solid election provision although having the supporting part unlikely can be included into the programme without preliminary consultations or at least silent consent of the first politician of the country. At the same time such position causes the thought about the exceptionally patronage relations dimension of the Kremlin and the “United Russia”, officially announcing to be the „President’s prop”, preventing this political force from realizing its independent initiatives. It narrows the possibility even of the “power party” to perform successfully the role of the mediator between the society and the political institutions. Comparing with the election programmes of the right wing parties, The Right forces union and especially of the “Yabloko” declaring the priority way of the democratic choice of Russia, the package of the “power party” proposals is less concrete and radical, with considerably smaller volume of the actions, but the positions on some questions practically coincide, for example, increasing influence of the parliament lower chamber (providing the control function) for the executive power – the government<sup>19</sup>.

The elections even during the most active agitation period were monotonic and without bigger tension of competition, except one exceptional case – refusal of the “United Russia” radicals to participate in the teled debates with the main political opponents. This position is based on the formal explanation about notoriety of the party ideology and positions on the most important issues and their presentation in the programme and at the congresses and about the especially active work of the party

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<sup>17</sup> For the first time the position was formulated in the most precise and broad way in March 2002 in the report of leader Boris Gryzlov where it was stated that the developed situation is the most problematic heritage of the decade and one of the obstacles of the political development of the country, to create “true democracy” and “true civil society”. Even the favourable time to solve the problem is indicated – the elections of the State Duma. But at the same time, again it is compulsory stressed that the Constitution is not foreseeing such possibility and alterations of the Constitution are “the question of the future”. Доклад Б. Грызлова на II Съезде Партии “Единая Россия”, <http://www.vvp.ru/docs/parties/er/63.html>, 2004 05 10.

<sup>18</sup> See note 17.

<sup>19</sup> “Демократический манифест”, “Основы государственной политики на 2003–2005 г.” [http://www.yabloko.ru/Elections/2003/Program\\_2003/index.html](http://www.yabloko.ru/Elections/2003/Program_2003/index.html), 2004 04 10; “Обращение СПС к российским избирателям”, 8 августа 2003 г., <http://www.duma.sps.ru/?id=51132>, 2004 03 25.

members on the level of the regions. Of course, such strategy of the elections was determined by other motives because the ordinary electorate is not reading the programmes and the congresses of the party are not translated via mass media.

But speaking about the validity of such strategy it is necessary to underline that it really has served the purpose as the party more benefited than disadvantaged because of the critics of the political competitors and mass media. First of all, it as the “power party”, i.e. as if responsible for the present policy of the power has escaped the unfavourable questions of the gifted speakers of the parties, especially of the RKP and “Yabloko” - (the “Jukos” case, social hyper-differentiation, low international status of the state) on-air and non-used air time, what is noted by the majority of the experts of the elections, the party compensated by multiple appearance of the party leaders on the main TV channels subordinate to the state (four times more often comparing with other candidates, parties and election unifications all together)<sup>20</sup>.

Ascertaining the further aspects of the procedure course we face the degree of the administrative resources usage causing especially serious doubts about democracy of the process of the elections. Administrative recourse as one of the brightest features of the Russian electoral system is divided into three parts that shortly can be characterized in the following way: the first, informational. Characterized by the monopoly of the TV channels; the second, official, combination of dual officials in one person: the leader of the party or vivid supporter and the state service in the central or regional power institution, public speeches about the support of the certain political force; and the third – “forced”, direct influence on the will of electorate by the means of the administrative impact and falsification of the results of the elections. Till that time such illegal method of agitation directed to mobilize the electorate was mostly noticed during the presidential campaigns, the classical example – the second electoral campaign of Boris Jelcin, when the administrative recourse was directed against the competitors and was mostly expressed by financial and informational resources<sup>21</sup>.

The ESBO observers were the first to state publicly in their primary reports about the threats of such tendency in the agitation process of the elections but the monitoring of the “administrative recourse” conducted by the competent international company “Transparency International”, unit in Russia, stated about spread of such phenomenon and its influence upon the mobilization of the electorate and the final results of the elections in the most precise and eloquent way. During the monitoring the “United Russia” managed to be mentioned in all main information sources (mass media, TV, Internet) practically (46, 14 percent) as much as other parties all together. It should be added for the sake of clarity that the coefficient of the administrative resource subservience could reach not less than one and a half times.

<sup>20</sup> Бадковский Д., “Комментарий в связи с отказом “Единой России” от участия в теледебатах”, [www.carnegie.ru/ru/print/68544-print.htm](http://www.carnegie.ru/ru/print/68544-print.htm), 2004 04 02; Михайлова О., “Старт дан...”, [www.indem.ru/idd2000/index.htm](http://www.indem.ru/idd2000/index.htm), 2004 04 05.

<sup>21</sup> Gelman V., “The Iceberg of Russian Political Finance”, *Contemporary Russian Politics*, Oxford: University press, 2001, s. 182, 191–192; Воронцова А., Звоновский Б., “Административный ресурс как феномен российского избирательного процесса”, *Полис*, 2003, № 6, с. 114–124; Михайлова О., “Предвыборная кампания – 2003: итоги и выводы”, <http://www.indem.ru/IDD2000/anal/MOV31215.htm>, 2004 06 10.

Of course, first of all the party has used administrative resource (162 times) for the goals of self-advertising, but rather big dose (42 times) were allotted for the open critics of the biggest competitor - the RKP<sup>22</sup>. On the other hand, Head of the Strategical research centre politologist Andrej Piontkovskij stated comparing the initial starting positions of the favourite and the final achievements that namely the television was the main tool ensuring the absolute victory of the main party of the Kremlin<sup>23</sup>.

Of course, we cannot agree with such serious arguments but the leaders of the party in their laconic evaluations (we won due to real work) were not mentioning that phenomena as if it was not existing at all. Head of the party election headquarters Jurij Volkov was a little more open and diplomatic stating that not the administrative resource was used but "hule human resource"<sup>24</sup>. The ESBO observers stated in the preliminary report distributed the next day after the elections about the "administrative resource" as about the fait accompli and stressed universality of the usage and namely that became the ground for the final conclusion – one of the most important principle of the democratic elections has been violated what means that the parties and the candidates were competing under unequal conditions of the competition<sup>25</sup>. The analogical conclusion only with broader argumentation was presented in the final report of that organization a month later where the administrative resource is related to the elevation of one party via mass media<sup>26</sup>. Thus, the administrative resource can be considered one of the main factors influencing the results of the election in favour of the "power party" what is proved by the new order of the political forces exposition. The "United Russia" has considerably consolidated its positions collecting 306 (of 450) deputates' mandates (the achievement of the "power party" in 1999 was 81 mandates). The Communist party has preserved the second position collecting 54 mandates but correspondingly losing 30 places of the deputates, the third place is occupied by the new party "Rodina" that collected 38 places. The Liberal-democrats are on the fourth position and they have improved their result more than twice and gained the right for 36 mandates. The right wing parties experienced the biggest failure being not elected to the Duma and losing as many as 52 mandates<sup>27</sup>.

So, on the basis of the analysis conducted by the Commission in which we can find quite a lot of positive evaluations (for example, the increased professionalism of the Central election commission is noted) states clearly about the serious violations

<sup>22</sup> "От мифов к фактам: использование административного ресурса в избирательной кампании в цифрах", [www.transparency.org.ru/doc/pr231203\\_rus\\_01101\\_2.doc](http://www.transparency.org.ru/doc/pr231203_rus_01101_2.doc); "Второй промежуточный отчет миссии ОБСЕ", <http://www.urna.ru/rules52534.html>, 2004 02 23.

<sup>23</sup> Понтовский А., "Управляемая демократия стала ещё более управляемой", *Новая газета*, 9 декабря 2003

<sup>24</sup> "Борис Грызлов комментирует предварительные итоги выборов в Госдуму", <http://www.gryzlov.ru/index.php?page=events&id=326>; Юрий Волков: "Наша победа закономерна", <http://www.edinros.ru/news.html?id=41486> 2004 05 12.

<sup>25</sup> "OSCE: Vote Fundamentally Distorted", <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/stories/2003/12/09/001.html>; 2004 02 01; "Выборы в Госдуму: предварительный доклад ОБСЕ", 08 декабря 2003; <http://www.urna.ru/rules/53557.html>, 2004 04 16.

<sup>26</sup> Russian Federation Elections to the state Duma 7 december 2003. OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Report, Warsaw, 2004, p. 12.

<sup>27</sup> Smith M., "The Putin Presidency: Establishig Superpresidentialism", *Conflict Studies Research Centre*, (Russian Series), February 2002, p. 2–3.

of the competitively criteria. The fixed number and frequency of the violations gives the basis to speak about the element of control existing in the election democracy in Russia that appeared due to illegitimate attempts of the power and non-correspondence to one of the main elements proving competition – equal conditions, i.e. free and fair for the participants of the political competition. One more observation is obvious - that not the programmes were fighting during the elections but bureaucracy had monopolized the electorate who voted not according to the presented programme but purely automatically or following other motives giving the right to rule. That is why we can state that the step of further progress was not undertaken in that direction and in the consciousness of the society the democracy of the elections is still comprehended very passively and have no steady tradition, thus, can be easily violated.

Despite the obvious violations of the integrality of the democratic elections process norms from the side of the executive power the president Putin has stated the positivism of the accomplished elections in his evaluations – the citizens of Russia had one more possibility to elect the Duma and “the state guaranteed free and fair democratic choice”, the elections “reflected the real sympathies of the citizens” and he presented the main conclusion – “this is one more step strengthening democracy”<sup>28</sup>. Bearing in mind the statements of the competent organizations mentioned above and adding that the parties identifying themselves with democratic values disappeared from the new Duma, but there still was, although very weakened, the opposition of the left-wing deviation, the motives of such conclusion are difficult to explain but they are understandable in the context of the pragmatic policy conducted by the president. The Putin’s stand should be interpreted in another way, perhaps – at the present development stage of the state and the society the existing realia of election “democracy” are evaluated unambiguously as rather big achievement of modernization. On the other hand, such political action of Putin clearly brought to daylight the difference of values among the Western states and Russia.

### 3. News of the Inter-Electoral Cycle

In the further agenda of the internal policy of Russia related to the election period the elections of the president were figuring, thus, it is understandable that the decisions adopted at that time should be evaluated considering that factor. But the sudden and secret decision of Putin to resign the government using article 117 part 2 of the Constitution just three weeks prior the day of the elections became the central object in the pre-election public discussions and in the comments of the politicians and political scientists.

This political maneuver that caused controversial evaluations both in Russia and abroad is fitting the frames of the strategy and tactics of the policy conducted by Putin, we can state that this is logical continuation of his policy. The new thing here is only unexpectancy of the decision, incidentally, not peculiar to the governing style of the president and as it was precisely underlined by several dailies in Russia (“Komsomolskaja pravda”, “Nezavisimaja gazeta”, “Moskovskij komsomolec”) it corresponded to the traditions of the sudden „castlings“ of the governments during Jelcin’s

<sup>28</sup> “Вступительное слово на совещании с членами Правительства”, 8 декабря 2003 г. [http://www.kremlin.ru/appears/2003/12/08/1931\\_type63378\\_56843.shtml](http://www.kremlin.ru/appears/2003/12/08/1931_type63378_56843.shtml), 2004 10 09.

management. Using the constitutional right to resign the government at his discretion, and in that case just two weeks prior the date of the elections, the president had demonstrated his political potency and expressed that in the short phrase – “I can, thus, I think”. No doubts, the contrary action when the government is resigned as well according to the Constitution but at once after the elections of the president would witness about the constancy of the policy of the Kremlin and more democratic character.

At the same time the resignation of the government created the favourable occasion to realize into practice the expressed earlier the election programme statement of the “United Russia” about formation of the executive power depending on the results of the State Duma. About what seriousness of the political intentions did the assurance of the party leaders and especially of B. Gryzlov who became the Chairperson of the Duma witness to observe the provision that formation of the government “should be based on the majority in the Duma” and the persuasion – “we are convinced in the necessity that the candidates of the party pretend to have the posts of the ministers in the future government”<sup>29</sup>. The party expected at least to be the heads of the separate ministries and selected 5-6 possible candidates from the deputies’ Corps<sup>30</sup>.

Suspicious that it is only the question of time were strengthened by the recognition of Putin expressed before the elections about the mood to discuss the issue of the government’s formation with the majority in the parliament. Such political decision would be evaluated favourably by the Western countries as the concrete and serious step strengthening the democracy elements of the political institutional system that by itself would serve to settle quickly progressing doubts about deviation from the democratic line. But the party has achieved only the minimum result – there were several consultative meetings with the president as the result of which it succeeded to receive the post of the first vice-premier in the technical government. This is all what the first politician of the country could afford. Such consultation of the president reminded more the formal step of politeness than the solid political consultations, what was openly acknowledged by Valerij Bogomolov, the secretary of the “United Russia” party, in one of his interviews but backing himself saying that that was his personal opinion<sup>31</sup>.

And the only cadres appointment to the vice-premier post can be evaluated as compensation for the experienced moral wrong and too high expectations confirmed by the public statements at the same time to forestall possible spontaneous disappointment. But voting for non-political candidature of Premier Michail Fradkov gained the votes of the State Duma constitutional majority (352).

The way to adopt decisions about the resignation of the government and appoint-

<sup>29</sup> “Борис Грызлов за формирование правительства парламентского большинства”, <http://www.edinros.ru/news.html?rid=43&id=50860>, Борис Грызлов. “Решение Президента – стратегическое”, <http://www.edinros.ru/news.html?rid=43&id=51380>, 2004 06 12.

<sup>30</sup> “Единороссы” могут предложить несколько кандидатур”, <http://www.edinros.ru/news.html?rid=43&id=52084>, 2004 06 04.

<sup>31</sup> Speaking about the peripeteia of the consultations V. Bogomolov, known for far more open speeches than other leaders of the party, has stated: “All decisions more or less cardinal ones, the president is adopting by himself”. “Фрадков мне сказал: расскажи о ЕР...”, *Независимая газета*, 2004 03 5 arba <http://vbogomolov.ru/index.php?smi=27>.

ment of the new one obviously witnessed that president Putin is not inclined to change the usual practice of political “power vertical” – to share though and minimally and with the propresidential (demonstrating adherence with each step) party – political resources, obligations and responsibility. The terminology used by Aleksandr Zudin, the Carnegie Moscow research centre politologist, “equally remote” (ravnoudalejmost) is precise characterizing the relations of the president with other players of the political regime: oligarchs, military and political elite, also we can include propresidential party “United Russia” which at least at that moment was the closest to the president<sup>32</sup>.

But the most important is that such principal decision of the Kremlin gave the serious ground to think that the further structural liberalization of the political system, first of all of the political power institutions, is considered to be neither the priority task nor the more serious political problem, in other words, they are satisfied by the achieved minimalist results on the level of the “election democracy”. They are satisfying just partly optimizing and perfecting it what is called the administrative reform and in the case of the new government means to decrease the number of the ministries by a half<sup>33</sup>.

Why pragmatic president Putin has refused the more radical political decision especially bearing in mind the existing complex of the favourable conditions can be explained only by the carefulness of the president speaking about ensuring political stability that is mentioned in every more important official speech<sup>34</sup>. To tell the truth, composing the government by appointment of the ministries representing the parliamentary majority and especially propresidential position surely has no even minimal influence on the president’s power. Maybe the question „why“ is in the list of the unanswered questions and it is in the column “Who is Mister Putin”? So, in this case the power status quo (legitimizing such political course by the way of the elections) has been preserved and it is even possible to state that it strengthened potency of Putin and the personalized governing what corresponds to the long traditions of Russia’s authorities.

#### 4. Presidential Electional Marathon

The last and the most essential even of the election cycle agenda had to be the elections of the president but it was clear before that they would be just formal political procedure because there was no alternative political figure capable to be at least minimum serious competitor of the candidature of Putin. The pre-election sociologic polls witnessing very high rating of the president’s popularity (up to 80%) have not left even theoretical possibilities for other participants and determined the final of the elections beforehand. That stabile and clearly controlled pre-election situation has repeated the elections to the state Duma as it has eliminated the main driven component from the elections agitation part, namely – competition and the fight of the programmes and the elections have essentially become only the issue of time.

On the other hand, the further election actions of the preconceived winner

<sup>32</sup> Bielinis, (note 4); Hale H. E., “Russia’s Single-member-district Elections and The New Duma”, *The Moscow Times*, 2003 12 09.

<sup>33</sup> Указ № 314 “О системе и структуре федеральных органов исполнительной власти”, [http://www.government.gov.ru/data/news\\_text.html?he\\_id=158&news\\_id=13732](http://www.government.gov.ru/data/news_text.html?he_id=158&news_id=13732). 2004 10 12.

<sup>34</sup> “Послание Федеральному Собранию Российской Федерации”, 26 мая 2004 года, <http://www.kremlin.ru/sdocs/appears.shtml?type=63372>, 2004 10 25.

have discredited even the formal content of the democratic elections. First of all, wide usage of indirect agitation – trips all over the country showed as the president's working trips and at the same time refusal to participate in the elections debates are unambiguously evaluated as incompatible with the democratic standards. Secondly, the clear strategical plan of actions as the integral document of the election programme was not presented to the electorate. The ordinary elector was able to learn (thanks to the translations of the state TV channel RTR) the short reasonings of the president on the main directions of the development of the country from the meetings with so called Authorized persons summarizing the results of the four years presidency<sup>35</sup>. It looks that usage of such indefinite election strategy consolidating supporters from various groups of the society is fully justified as the analogical tactics was used during the first elections as well<sup>36</sup>.

But the way to present the essential information knowing that it was not widely discussed in the course of the elections confirms once more that the president is absolutely independent adopting the principal decisions and the political elite, essentially, has no real possibility to participate in the process. On the other hand, the political statements of the president presented more clearly than before are worth to be discussed more attentively and broadly because it helps to understand deeper the direction of the general policy and at least minimally to reveal the content of its agenda – what questions of the internal policy are considered to be priority and if they are related to the problem of our concern – perspective of democracy and what are the ways to solve it?

Listing the brightest achievements of the first term (stopping the process of the state disintegration, regulating the process of the oligarchs' polarization, stabilization of the economic situation), Putin has newly rose and concentrated attention on the main priority problem: "rise of the living quality of people" and foresaw the main channel of economic actions to achieve it. First of all, acceleration of the economic development continuing the started reforms and initiating the new ones: proving the inhabitants with housing, in the spheres of energetics, taxes, communication and social area decreasing the certain factors of too high participation of the state in economic processes<sup>37</sup>.

Not going deep into the nuances of the economic policy it is necessary to state that the arsenal of the modernization measures is formed exceptionally by the reasonable methods reminding at least from the first sight the best times of „perestrojka“ when the attempts are made to improve the separate elements of the regime by the partial measures what is reflected in the words "to stimulate, to try, to strengthen, to rationalize". It is obvious lack of concrete and clear view to the existing problems and the ways to solve them.

The second priority direction of activities makes only one page by the volume

<sup>35</sup> "Главе государства не следует заниматься собственной рекламой...", <http://www.vip.lenta.ru/doc/2004/02/12/putin/>, 2004 10 12.

<sup>36</sup> Гельман В., "Второй электоральный цикл и трансформация политического режима в Рооссии", [http://www.eu.spb.ru/socio/files/cycle\\_2s.pdf](http://www.eu.spb.ru/socio/files/cycle_2s.pdf), 2004 11 12.

<sup>37</sup> "Выступление Владимира Путина перед доверенными лицами", <http://www.putin2004.ru>, 2004 10 23.

and it is encoded in the phrase “only a free person can guarantee prosperity of the state”. Guaranteeing the democratic continuity of the further political reforms Putin is concretizing it relating to strengthening self-governments, it is said about the necessity of the civilized political competition that is possible only having influential and large political parties and it is promised to finish the reform of the legal system. The most important proliberal position of the president is reflected in the expressed statements about the necessity to form “full value, effective civil society in the country”. But how concretely the speaker was not concretizing it mentioning only one nuance that “I will state separately: it is not possible without free and responsible mass media. But such freedom and responsibility should be supported by the legal and economic basis the creation of which is the obligation of the state”<sup>38</sup>. What was meant speaking about responsibility we can only guess remembering the best times of “Kremlinology”<sup>\*</sup> or just to wait till such project is started to be implemented in practice.

The proposals of Putin on liberalization of the political regime should be evaluated double. First, the actions foreseen in the agenda for future are not just unclearly defined referring to the content but are of minimalistic character that should be evaluated only as small changes—perfections able to create the conditions for the cardinal perfection on the scale of the state as the creation of the civil society in the remote future. We can state that the liberal position of the president did not become clearer. Second, there are no doubts that the credo of Putin cannot be evaluated as the final and justified programme of actions where the priority actions are indicated, the same can be applied to the economic proposals, whether they will be implemented successively or as it is indicated by many politologists there will be new reformatic actions based on the concrete political situation<sup>39</sup>. By the way, even the majority of the Russian experts are the most skeptic about the implementation of the president’s democratic intentions speaking about all proposals<sup>40</sup>. Thus, we can state that even in the case of their implementation they won’t have bigger influence on the democratization of the political regime.

The election behaviour of the candidates-outsiders was precisely adequate to the existing conditions – after refusal of the main leaders of the parties to participate in the elections their places were occupied by the persons who just mechanically filled up the vacuum or to solve exceptionally local party and personal problems: the communists nominated Nikolaj Haritonov, and Irina Hakamada representing the liberal positions used it for her advertising. The ideology leader of patriotical forces Sergej Glazjev was trying to resist more seriously but his agitation machine was working more to ensure the political dividends in the future. Chairperson of the Supreme chamber of the parliament Sergej Mironov, the most devoted supported of the president, has nominated his candidature as at the Olympic games just wanting to

<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>39</sup> Kremlinology is the discipline that is trying to determine in the way of presumptions having no concrete and confirmed information what was happening inside the Kremlin walls during the times of the Soviet Union.

<sup>39</sup> Rogoża J., “Wydźignęliśmy się z zapaści”: wystąpienie przedwyborcze Władimira Putina”, <http://www.osw.waw.pl/pub/koment/2004/02/030219.htm>, 2004 10 13.

<sup>40</sup> Предвыборная кампания глазами экспертов: В. Путин и другие, <http://bd.fom.ru/report/map/special/elecprez/d040938>, 2004 11 10.

participate and to prolong the list of the candidates. The same political performance was prepared by the permanent participant of the elections of the president, the liberaldemocrates leader eccentric Vladimir Zhirinovskij providing the participation possibilities to his personal bodyguard Oleg Malyshkin.

Speaking about the elections it should be noted that in the calm and boring procedure course there was one problem of the minimalistic character as on the basis of the sociological polls (only 48 % of the respondents stated that they are sure to participate in the elections) it was possible for Putin not to collect over 50 % of votes necessary to be elected in the first round of the elections. To mobilize the activity of the electorate the usual method was used – “administrative resources” and the agitation motto was announced - “everybody to the elections”. Here again as in the case of the elections to the State Duma the independent diligence and initiative of the bureaucratic apparatus has been expressed but the endless will to serve to the preliminary known winner achieved broader scale although there was no necessity to do it.

The ESBO conducted monitoring of the state and private televisions proves that special attention was allotted to the existing president and referring to time it exceed the on-air time of all other candidates together, especially it was reflected in the regional state and the private televisions (with several exceptions)<sup>41</sup>. Such position as undoubtedly violation of the standards of the democratic elections is fixed and in the final report of that organization where the following moments are stressed: discriminative role of the mass media towards the candidates what influenced the narrowing the competition among the different political positions and limited the possibilities to realize “purposeful pluralism”<sup>42</sup>.

Remembering the characteristics of the presidential elections in 2000 when there was certain free competition among the candidates the information means resources were more or less balanced and even sharp-eyed and principal international observers have limited themselves to the temperate evaluations, that is why the latter elections are unanimously evaluated as the concrete step back<sup>43</sup>. And really the results of the elections as it was expected have not presented any surprises, the participation of electorate with the help of the mobilizing “administrative resource” made 64,39 % (comparing with the activity at the previous elections of 68,7 %), and Putin won quite easily collecting 71,31 % percent of votes, i.e. 18,4 % more comparing with the previous elections, and the rest 5 pretendents – outsiders have collected 22,60 % of votes, among them representative of the communists Haritonov gained more (13,69 %), democrat Hakamada was on the fourth position (3,84 %) following Glazjev (4,10 %)<sup>44</sup>.

Trust of the electorate for Putin is impressive without doubts – he has received

<sup>41</sup> Russian Federation: ODIHR Election Reports. 2004. Media Monitoring Results (Television) 12 February – 12 March, Media Monitoring Results (Regional State Television) (5 March 2004); Media Monitoring Results (Regional Private Television) (5 March 2004) <http://www.osce.org/odihr/index.php?page=elections&div=reports&contry=ru>, 2004 10 12.

<sup>42</sup> “Russian Federation. Presidential Election. Final Report”, 14 March 2004 (2 June 2004) [http://www.osce.org/documents/odihr/2004/06/3033\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/documents/odihr/2004/06/3033_en.pdf), 2004 11 10.

<sup>43</sup> Зудин А., “Кремль как субъект избирательной кампании”, *Россия в избирательном цикле 1999–2000 годов*, Москва: Гендальф, 2000, с. 107–108.

<sup>44</sup> *Выборы Президента Российской Федерации 14 марта 2004 года*, Протокол Центральной избирательной комиссии Российской Федерации о результатах выборов Президента Российской Федерации, <http://www.pr2004.cikrf.ru>, 2004 10 12.

over 50 % in all regions: the least – in Belgorod region - 54,8%, the most in – Ingushetija Republic – 99 %. Over 90 % voted for Putin in Mordovia, Dagestan, Bashkirstan, Kabarda–Balkaria regions<sup>45</sup>. The answer to the question what influenced such indicators repeating the election indicators and spirit of the Society times is hardly explainable measuring by the scale of democratic elections. Such political participation voting almost without choice (the difference between those who came and those who voted for Putin made 1-3 %) can be called to be conjuncture, the violations can be stated, but the reasons should be looked for in the social–cultural traditions of these groups of the society.

The high legitimacy expressed by the citizens of Russia towards the centristic political position of Putin could be explained by different reasons: personal charisma of the politician, support of the power party, positive conjuncture in the country (partial stabilization of the political and economical situation, rise of the inhabitants' income, etc.), usage of administrative resource, fight with oligarchs, but ideological attitude of the electorate that is based on partialistic understanding of the state as the main for to organize and to lead the society is of major importance. The strong states ensuring safety of the citizens, their welfare and corresponding international status, such propaganda of the general goals of the state Putin has initiated already during the first elections campaign and reminded it to the nation at each occasion during the term of his presidency. Fight with the oligarchs also was advertised one-sided as the biggest evil and obstacle in the process to strengthen the state because they represented only narrow interests of their group<sup>46</sup>. This is the context of the present day political and public realia in Russia.

## Concluding Remarks

The finished election cycle of the power changes has finally defined the status of power at least for the nearest future and the result is more than obvious – further consolidations of the “power vertical” involving the lower chamber of the parliament, narrowing their political autonomy status. The democratic political initiatives of the Presidential party “United Russia” at least minimally to extend the area of the political activity of the State Duma and the government have obviously failed by the decision of the dominating political player. It proves about the further deepening of the misbalance of the state power balance concentrating political potential exceptionally in the hands of the president and his administration. To tell the truth, the clear shape of the “power vertical” has not achieved the level and has not rooted as widely and deeply as in authoritarian Belarus, but is essentially disposing absolute personal and uncontrollable power, thus, we can agree with the opinion of Kiril Privalov that since the times of Stalin no one in Russia had such lever of total power<sup>47</sup>.

Democracy represented by one person is based on the principle that victory at

<sup>45</sup> “Rinkėjų aktyvumas mainais į pinigų”, *Atgimimas*, Nr. 11, 2004 03 19-25.

<sup>46</sup> On the basis of the polls the electorate of all parties except the communists gave the priority not to the leaders of the parties but for Putin, for example, the “Union of the right forces” supporters gave 47 % of votes to the present president and 11 % for Hakamada. Седов Л. А., “О чём вещают голоса избирателей?”, *Общественные науки и современность*, 2004, №. 5, с. 70–72.

<sup>47</sup> Privalov K., “La recette russe: la démocratie autoritaire”, *Le débat*, Paris, mai-août 2004, numéro 130, p. 45, 62.

the presidential elections provides the winner with the right to rule the country at discretion that is formally regulated (what Putin likes to stress) by the frames of time and functions established by the Constitution. At the same time the State Duma and the state press have certain possibilities in the determined frames to criticize the political decisions of the president weakly or stronger. The development directions of the post-election political system in Russia – the solid obstacles to strengthen the resources of the power monocentric potency can be such factors as size of Russia, progressed independence of the separate regions, especially ambitions of the separate regional leaders, and finally hardly controllable licence of huge bureaucracy.

Understanding this Putin looks for and finds the ways how to prolong the potency concentration process that is proved by the most vivid example, new proposal – to annul the right of the citizens to elect the heads of the regions in the direct elections, and this procedure is left to be conducted by the president, to be more precise, the candidates proposed by the first politician are confirmed by the regional legally represented institutions. Traditionally strengthening of monocentrism officially is motivated as the only effective way in the conditions of Russia (there is no civil society and really functioning party system) to solve the accumulated problems of power efficiency and at the same time the problems of the further modernization of the state.

These steps show that Putin is trying (his following phrase is very eloquent: “the art of politics makes the ability to find the golden middle between what is necessary and what is possible”, helping to understand and to prognose minimally the actions of the politician) to create the model of the strictly centralized state constitutently and methodically where the president and bureaucracy are playing the role to govern the society, in other words, the interests of the nation are interpreted independently from its will. Thus, the personalized power limits and narrows the fixed mission of political socialization, leaving weak perspectives to the society to develop independent public spirit what is very important knowing the level of the political culture of the ordinary citizens.

It should be acknowledged that in any case, even under the most favourable conditions, progress towards more real democratic process in Russia will be slow, in different directions and probably only partial. The tendency positivism can be mostly formed from the top, i.e. under control of the state, gradually reforming internal problems of the society formed during many years but it will require much time and abilities and especially the political will.