

The Origins of Dominant Parties

Building Authoritarian Institutions
in Post-Soviet Russia

Ora John Reuter



In many autocracies, regime leaders share power with a ruling party, which can help generate popular support and reduce conflict among key elites. Such ruling parties are often called dominant parties. In other regimes, leaders prefer to rule solely through some combination of charisma, patronage, and coercion, rather than sharing power with a dominant party. This book explains why dominant parties emerge in some nondemocratic regimes, but not in others. It offers a novel theory of dominant party emergence that centers on the balance of power between rulers and other elites. Drawing on extensive fieldwork in Russia, original data on Russian political elites, and cross-national statistical analysis, the book's findings shed new light on how modern autocracies work and why they break down. The analysis also provides new insights about the foundations of Vladimir Putin's regime and challenges several myths about the personalization of power under Putin.

"Reuter's impressive *The Origins of Dominant Parties* significantly revises our understanding of the United Russia Party's role in Russian politics. While many dismiss the party as little more than a shell held in place solely by Putin's personal appeal, this book shows that it plays a much more important role in Putin's regime than most experts currently think. This will be the go-to book for anyone wanting to know about United Russia, and essential reading for understanding Russian politics in the Putin era."

Henry Hale, *George Washington University, Washington DC*

Cover illustration: Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin delivers a speech to the congress of the United Russia Party November 27, 2011 in Moscow, Russia. Putin accepted the nomination to return to Russia's presidency ahead of the election in March. (Photo by Sasha Mordovets/Getty Images)

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Post-Soviet Russia*

Ora John Reuter

University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee



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Ora John Reuter is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee and a Senior Researcher at the Higher School of Economics in Moscow. His articles on elections, authoritarianism, and political economy have appeared in leading social science journals, including the *Journal of Politics*, *World Politics*, the *British Journal of Political Science*, *Comparative Political Studies*, and *Post-Soviet Affairs*.

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Abbreviations

BNP	Bangladesh National Party
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
DIP	Department of Internal Politics
DPC	Dispersion per Capita
GOLKAR	Party of the Functional Groups (Indonesia)
KANU	Kenya Africa National Union
KMT	Kuomintang (Taiwan)
KPRF	Communist Party of the Russian Federation
LDPR	Liberal Democratic Party of Russia
NDR	Our Home Is Russia
NDP	National Democratic Party (Egypt)
OKS	All-Russian Coordination Council
ONF	All-Russian People's Front
OTAN	Fatherland (Kazakhstan)
OVR	Fatherland–All Russia
PDCI	Democratic Party of Cote d'Ivoire
PDP	People's Democratic Party (Nigeria)
PRES	Party of Russian Unity and Accord
PR	Proportional Representation
PRI	Institutional Revolutionary Party (Mexico)
SMD	Single Member District
SPS	Union of Right Forces
UMNO	United Malays National Organization (Malaysia)
UR	United Russia

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