

The Metamorphosis of the Russian Opposition Parties

Since 1993 to the Present Day

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Abstract

This thesis considers both crucial and decisive factors of the Russian political system behind the development of the Russian opposition parties' role, since 1993. Schattschneider (1942) defines political parties as a corner stone of democracy; whose place within the system determines the system's nature. Consequently, the analysis of the opposition parties' functions within the Russian party system is supposed to draw reasonable conclusions concerning the character of the Russian political system.

Four political parties are under investigation in this thesis: the United Russia, the Communist Party of Russian Federation, the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia and the Fair Russia. This thesis presents a relevant theoretical framework with regard to party politics and more precisely to the role of the opposition parties in political systems. It also touches upon the construction as well as the testing of six hypotheses. My conclusions will be based on the analysis of several factors in Russian politics. First of all, the impact of the electoral law reforms on political representation since 1993 will be demonstrated. Secondly, the parties' location on the left-right ideological dimension will be determined. Finally, the parties' manifestos will be scrutinised in order to compare the ideological position of the opposition parties to the one taken by the party in government.

The main conclusion of this research is that opposition parties winning seats in the parliamentary elections remain weak and their role has been decreasing since the creation of the United Russia. Russian opposition parties are subdued to a figurative role in order to ensure the perpetuation of the political order created by Putin since his ascension in power.

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List of Abbreviations

CPRF: Communist Party of Russian Federation.

CEC: Central Electoral Commission.

LDPR: Liberal Democratic Party of Russia.

OSCE/ODIHR: Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe/ Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

IFES: International Foundation for Electoral Systems

Chapter1

Introduction

1.1. Theme and Research Question

This thesis undertakes research into the process of transformations related to opposition parties in Russia since 1993 parliamentary election. The main aim of this thesis is to contribute to the understanding of the role of political opposition in Russia. In order to accomplish this purpose I intend to conduct a qualitative case study on opposition parties in Russia from 1993 to nowadays.

The research question, which is guiding the analysis, is the following:

How have the functions of the opposition parties developed in Russia since 1993? What is the present role of the Opposition within the Russian political system?

In order to answer the research question two main data sources will be analysed. First the electoral results for the parliamentary and presidential elections from 1993 to 2007 (Appendix1). Secondly, the political manifestos of the four selected parties will be translated and then examined (Appendix2).

1.2. Why Should We Study the Opposition in Russia?

The existence of the Opposition that is able to challenge the government during elections is one of the prerequisites of a strong democratic system (Dahl 1969). Dahl (1969:xvi) defines political opposition as follows:

“Suppose that A determines the conduct of some aspect of the government of a particular political system during some interval. We need not specify the interval exactly; it may be a period in the past, the coming year etc. Suppose that during this interval B cannot determine

the conduct of the government; and that B is opposed to the conduct of government by A. Then B is what we mean by “an opposition”. Note that during some different interval, B might determine the conduct of the government, and A might be “in opposition”. Thus it is the role of opposition that we are interested in, we are concerned with A and B only insofar as they performs that role in different ways.”

This definition introduces a double goal of this thesis; the first step will be to determine how the opposition's role in Russia evolved since 1993 while the second step will analyze the opposition's present role. The absence of political opposition, or coercion of the Opposition by the government, is a sign of democratic weakness or even inexistence. Przeworski (1999) defines democracy as a set of practices inside the political system, which guarantees the uncertainty of electoral outcome caused by an open political competition. The comparison of parties' manifestos will be based on the idea that political parties in a democratic society represent different policies and different policy objectives.

Studying the characteristics of the interactions between opposition parties and the party in government will provide the reader with a clear perspective in the structure of the Russian party system. The level of democratic configuration within the party system will define the nature of the Russian political system.

This research is conducted with a double purpose. First, the evolution of the rank and functions of the Opposition since 1993 will be studied. Secondly, the analysis will be finalised by a conclusion concerning the present position of political opposition within the Russian political system.

The leading inspiration of this research is to demonstrate which tendency the Russian party system has been following since 1993 with regard to the democratisation process. If the party system is weak and dominated by one party, pessimistic conclusion about the level of democratisation in Russia will be presented at the end of this thesis. However, if the competition among the parties is strong and the parties defend democratic principles, the conclusions can be more optimistic about the democratic transition in Russia.

1.3. The Importance of Political Opposition in Democracies

A research project should give answers to the questions that are relevant in the real world and therefore should have implications and contributions to literature in a specific field of

research (King, Keohane and Verba 1994: 15). My research question addresses the existence of deficiencies in democratising regimes. My aim is to study how failed democratisation can be caused by the weakening of opposition parties and by the manipulations of the party in government. This research topic is relevant to the field of comparative politics because of its ability to improve the understanding of why democratisation is more successful in the states with the strong Opposition compared to those ones without.

Several signs in the evolution of the Russian politics can be shown as examples of the fact that the Russian political system is fragile. Rose and Munro (2009) show that during the election in 1999 there were twenty-six competing parties, in 2003 there were twenty-three parties while in 2007 the number of parties able to enter the electoral competition was decreased to only eleven. The Freedom House report shows that since 1999 all the indicators of democracy have been deteriorating in Russia.

Dahl (1969) considers party competition and the existence of the Opposition as a cornerstone of democracy. Consequently, this study of political opposition can additionally give useful insights into the role of party politics for effective democratisation. The government in power is obliged to know which party is supportive and which party is opposing in order to conduct its policies (Downs 1957). On this basis this case study of Russia also shows how a government can manipulate the Opposition in order to create an authoritarian democracy.

The effectiveness of a democratic government when it comes to pursuing its goals is based on three conditions (Downs 1957): the existence of opposition parties, uncertainty in electoral outcome and rational voters. My thesis shows how Putin's government ensured its maintenance in office by eliminating these three conditions. Therefore, my conclusions will mention the strategies that must be avoided in order to create a competitive democracy.

Nonetheless, the creation of stable institutions, which are able to guarantee political competitiveness, is a long-run process depending on the historical past and peculiarities of culture of the country (Dahl 1969). Hence, taking into account the decades of the communist past as well as the centuries of authoritarian power will be relevant to reveal how institutions can be manipulated in Russia.

I am determined to contribute to the comparative politics with my definition of political opposition in Russia and by clarifying its meaning. Dahl (1969) defines two types of political opposition as either active or passive. Consequently, my aim is to place Russian opposition parties in one of these categories. The precise definition of the Opposition can improve understanding of its goals as well as its strategies.

Parties can use this categorisation in order to emphasize or to conceal their strategies of opposition. My analysis of the electoral system and electoral results has the ambition to contribute to the literature concerned with the effectiveness of elections as an institution which promotes accountability and responsiveness of elected officials. I also propose to analyse to which extent Russian elections guarantee the uncertainty of results and the alternation of governments, which is crucial for any democratic development.

There are two types of evaluations of the Russian party system and its development in the past decade. Firstly, some claim that there is a slow but evident development of an institutionalised party system and party identification in Russia (Miller and Klobucar 2000). Secondly, there is a debate about the decreasing importance of political parties, about the Opposition being repressed by the 'United Russia' - the only party in power (Hale 2006; Reuter 2007; Sakwa 2008; Kulik 2010). My hypotheses are structured in order to contribute to the debate, concerned with the democratic decline in Russia. The last section of my introduction presents the way my thesis will be structured in order to achieve this objective.

1.4. The Thesis Structure

To answer the research question this Master's thesis is organised in several chapters. In the second chapter I discuss the method I follow as well as the data used in the empirical sections. First, I discuss the reasons why I have chosen to conduct a case study and will argue for and against this method. Then I present the main characteristics of my thesis as a qualitative study. Finally, I present the data sources and examine their reliability. I predominantly use the data from Rose and Munro (2009) data collection and from the official web sites of Russian political parties. Despite the official character of these sources, I need to consider several limits to their reliability.

Chapter 3 provides a theoretical framework for this Master's thesis and the hypotheses that guide the next analytical chapters. The first paragraph defines the concept of the Opposition as well as the structures of political parties in opposition. The second paragraph presents different functions which opposition parties are supposed to be responsible for within a political system. These functions are introduced within three sections: the structure of the political system, the level of cohesiveness among opposition parties and finally their goals and strategies. The third paragraph defines the role of elections in the development of opposition parties within an authoritarian regime.

In Chapter 4, I discuss the role of elections and how they affected the development of the Opposition within the Russian political system. First, the transformations of the electoral rules since 1993 are presented. In this paragraph I analyse how these changes affected the opposition parties' representation in elections. Secondly, it is demonstrated how the Opposition's strength within the system is influenced by the Central Electoral Commission (further CEC) and the media. Finally, I analyse how the rules of electoral funding and the existence of such a strong party as the United Russia changes the status of the Opposition within the political system.

Chapter 5 is the second empirical chapter which includes the analysis of the political programs of four main political parties in Russia. The study will be initially focused on the comparison of the main policy issues the parties raise on their platforms. This comparison will allow me to position the parties alongside the left-right ideological dimension. Secondly, I will characterise the role of the Opposition in Russia by cross tabulating the main issues debated within the four manifestos. The build up of the comparison aims to analyse the difference of political ideas between the Opposition and the dominant party. Consequently, at the end of this chapter I will be able to assess the level of political pluralism within the party system. Furthermore, a conclusion will be made about the Opposition's ability to challenge the party in government.

In Chapter 6, I present my conclusions as well as the possibilities of further research into the role of political opposition in Russia.

Chapter2

Methodology and data

2.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the method and methodological issues that this thesis is going to be confronted with. First of all, I define my research as a case study and justify my methodological approach. Secondly, I discuss the relevance of my research within a qualitative framework. The last section highlights the issues related to the data reliability as well as to the choice of units that are under investigation.

2.2. The Case Study

The general framework of my thesis is the study of political opposition in the case of contemporary Russia. This thesis can hence be qualified as a case study. Consequently, I am not aiming to draw conclusions about the variation of the role of political opposition in several countries.

Gerring (2004:342): defines a case study as an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units. Furthermore, he also specifies a unit as a spatially bounded phenomenon. This research is a case study investigating over a case within the cases; here the case is Russia while the cases are political parties. Therefore, there are two units of observations: first the opposition parties and second across the time comparison.

According to Landman (2008), choosing a case study implies also that it will exclude a variable oriented approach because its focus will lie on a specific case. For practical reasons I am unable to include all the parties which are in opposition in the analysis of my work. My choice of parties will therefore be justified later on in this chapter.

Since my intention is to analyse the change of political opposition over time and because of my interest in several particular parties within the Opposition, my case study can be defined as the within-study of several units diachronically (Gerring 2004:343). One

drawback for this kind of case study might be weak generaliability (Gerring 2004:348). King et al. (1994:10) emphasises the importance of generalisation since each case is a member of a class of events.

The collapse of USSR as well as the move of Russian political system away from the pure authoritarianism defines political particularity of this country. Therefore it will be difficult to generalise the conclusions from this thesis to other post-communist countries. The research question of this thesis is the guiding line to analyse how the role of the Opposition influences Russian democratisation.

Therefore, I am interested in understanding first of all how X (political system) affects Y (political opposition) and secondly, what are the consequences of this interaction. The main advantage of the case study is that it gives room for a more detailed analysis that will result in more profound understanding of the complex issues being at stake, namely political parties in opposition.

Doing a case study makes the research open to new hypothesis and conclusions; this is not the case in quantitative studies where the case is organised around a set of fixed observations (Ragin 2004). The hypotheses of this study are going to be oriented around the ontological consideration (Bryman 2008). This asserts that the main contemplation of the research is that the principal actor (dominant party) influence the role of the political opposition.

This constructionist approach implies that the response to the research question is guided by the idea of social phenomena being produced through social interaction and is constantly under revision (Bryman 2008: ch1). King et al. (1994:34) remarks that the descriptions and causal explanations are both of paramount importance. Causal explanations fail to be relevant without well-constructed descriptions; however, the description itself is not relevant if it is not linked to causal relationships. Thus, the description of the Opposition as well as the political system will precede the causal explanation of the present situation inside the Russian political system.

Mahoney (2003) and Landman (2008) emphasize that a case study can be limited by a selection bias. It means that when defining independent variables some other variables might be excluded intentionally, or omitted by mistake, leading to a selection of dependent variables. This has a direct effect on conclusions, if the excluded variables are added to the model it might change the conclusions. As a consequence, before choosing the opposition parties, I am inclined to study electoral results for all opposition parties that have been present in presidential and parliamentary elections since 1993.

Proceeding in this manner I will be provided with a general overview on the changes which have occurred in the party system since the fall of the USSR. I will justify their choice in the next paragraph. The selection of these parties can cause exception fallacy problems in my research (Landman 2008). This means that the analysis of the development of these particular cases can falsify my general conclusions about political opposition in Russia.

Another limitation to a case study is the phenomenon of conceptual stretching (Sartori 1970). This occurs when the attempt to apply concepts from the case study to a broader range of cases fails. Conceptual stretching may also occur when after defining the concepts, the researcher tries to measure them ignoring the fact that measurement of a concept may lead to a loss of its pertinence. Thereby, making a quantification of a concept may provoke a poor logic of the analysis. In order to avoid the conceptual stretching I am not aiming to apply my findings to other countries. As it was stated before, the purpose of this case study is to analyse the role of political opposition in a particular case of the Russian political system.

A case study as a method is not included in a range of traditional comparative methods in political science. A method of analysis is considered as comparative when the analysis is performed around situations with few cases and possibly numerous variables (Przeworski and Teune 1970).

However, I consider that my study can be defined within the logic of comparative politics for two reasons. First of all, my analysis is comparative in the sense that my ambition is to analyse the evolution of the Opposition within the Russian political system over time. This very fact classifies my study as longitudinal. I am not just interested in describing the present status of the Opposition in Russia but I also intend to classify how its role has changed since 1993 in relation with the changes that have occurred in the electoral system. Secondly, my analysis is comparative in the sense that I compare several theoretical debates about the role of political opposition in modern democracies. Finally, I am comparing political position of the several opposition parties with the party in power: the United Russia.

2.3. A Qualitative Study

For my qualitative study I make use of a deductive approach (Bryman 2008). On these grounds the next chapter presents theories on political opposition and political parties' role in the development of opposition. I will subsequently present my hypothesis assumed from the theoretical part. The third step then will be to test these hypotheses by observing the electoral

results and party platforms. The last step of my thesis will be to conclude if my hypothesis are confirmed or rejected by the observations made earlier.

At the same time as the hypotheses are developed, the researcher must ask himself two questions (Gerring 2004:349): Can the testing of the hypothesis bring development to theory? Is the purpose of my hypotheses more theory-testing? If the testing of the hypothesis stimulates a new theory development, the study is explorative. However, if the hypotheses' testing engenders the confirmation of the theory already presented by the study, the research is considered confirmatory. Consequently, my thesis tends to be both confirmatory and explorative.

This study can be defined within three characteristics. Firstly, it has a descriptive aim, which is to describe the role of the Opposition in Russia. Secondly, my research is relational since I investigate the relation between the Opposition's strength and the political system in Russia. Finally, because of the fact that the purpose of the conclusions is to determine what affects the present development or underdevelopment of political opposition, my study will also be causal.

The last step of the research will be to test the internal validity of the study. It consists of comparing the observations from the empirical analysis to the theoretical ideas presented earlier in the thesis. This comparison between theory and empirical observations is a strong point of the qualitative study (Byman 2008). The empirical research is a strong part of the qualitative analysis because it allows to compare the empirical findings to the already existing data about the phenomenon. The extent to which statistical logic of analysis allows this comparison can be questioned as pointed out by McKeown (1999). Therefore, the choice of a qualitative method cannot be considered as a weakness of this study.

2.3. Data

There are three types of data used in the empirical analysis of this thesis. First, I analyse electoral results for parliamentary and presidential elections from 1993 to 2007 at the federal level. This data, which is of quantitative nature, is retrieved from Rose and Munro (2009) book. Secondly, I compare political manifestos issued by the main opposition parties. This set of data is qualitative and obtained from the parties' official programs found on their websites. The third kind of data used during the analysis is a public opinion survey with regard to the

policy priorities of the government. This quantitative data is provided by the Russian analytical centre: Levada.

There are three methods to establish policy preferences of political parties: the first one measures the perception of these preferences in public opinion pools, the second one uses an expert survey while the third one analyses the content of the manifestos. The latter method is the one I am planning to use in my research project. During the content analysis of the manifestos I code the statements within the classified categories defined by Klingemann, Volkens, Bara and McDonald (2006).

During the coding of the statements arises the problem of reliability (Klingemann et al. 2006; Mikhaylov et al. 2008). The method of hand coding that I use can be criticised because of the problems of its reliability. Nevertheless, the validity of this method generally speaking is higher than the one of the computerised coding (Klingemann et al. 2006). The weak reliability of my analysis is due to an inter subjectivity problem which might occur with regard to the classification of some statements. The coding error is thus a weakness of this analysis, which cannot be omitted. However, it can be minimised by a thorough application of Klingemann's et al. (2006) concepts definition to the statements.

The internet as a source for the collection of the parties' manifestos has some limitations with regard to the content validity. Nevertheless the official character of these web sites signify that the party itself admit the accuracy of the information published on these pages. Hence this internet data source is respecting the five criteria of web document evaluation: accuracy, authority, objectivity, currency and coverage (Kapoun 1998:522-523). Political parties can change their political manifestos every other year. I made the translation of the political programs in January 2011. Hence, my analysis is related to the ideas defended by the parties at that particular period of time.

Rose and Munro (2009) provide a large database amassed from CEC data sources for the parliamentary elections from 1993 to 2007 and for presidential elections from 1996 to 2008. As a consequence, the data I use in my analysis covers the same chronological period. These different sources of data are the base of a scientific purpose of this study defined as inferences: ways of using the facts we know, namely data and observations, in order to learn about the facts we do not know (King et al. 1994: 46).

The opinion poll data has been collected from the annual Russian Public Opinion book (Levada Center: 2009). Levada Center is an independent non-governmental organisation which is responsible for performing sociological and marketing surveys. The generalizability of the sample to the whole Russian population can be questioned due to its low number: 1600.

However, it can convey a general idea about the trends of the Russian public opinion concerning policy priorities.

Trochim (2006) defines sampling as a method of choosing units from a population of interest so that the study of this sample allows us to apply the results to the whole population later. Applied on my case the sample is represented by the particular parties in opposition and all the opposition parties in Russia constitute the population. This ability to generalise the finding is called external validity. Meanwhile, the importance of the particularities of the Russian political system cannot be underestimated in order to prioritise generalisation. Skocpol (2003) supports the idea that generalisation of a given phenomenon should not be over prioritised in comparison to its particularistic character.

In the Appendix 1a-c I present the electoral results for parliamentary and presidential elections for all the political parties present in the electoral ballot from 1993. The opposition parties present in the elections since 1993 will be my theoretical population. However, the study population is the political parties that were able to win seats in legislative elections or to present a winning candidate in presidential elections at least once since the period being observed. Nevertheless, this kind of parties can be classified as unstable opposition (Dahl 1969; Sartori 2005); hence I have to narrow my analytical criteria since the focus of this paper is on well-established opposition parties.

When selecting my sample I need to determine exactly which part of the political opposition I consider analysing (Trochim 2006). Political opposition parties can be divided into four categories: permanent opposition, unsuccessful opposition, parliamentary opposition and temporary opposition. Due to the lack of time and to the limit of space imposed by the Master's thesis, I will not focus on all the four kinds of the Opposition. Consequently, I decide to select the political parties that satisfy the criteria of permanent and parliamentary opposition.

Permanent parliamentary opposition is more likely to play a significant role within a political system comparing to the other kinds of opposition. As a result, I have chosen three criteria in order to select my sample. The first two criteria are additive and, thus, must both be present in the party's electoral result characteristics for the party to be part of the analysis. The first requirement that I impose is a minimum win of 5 per cent of votes in the parliamentary elections. This is a cutting point within the electoral results in order to eliminate minor parties from the analysis. Secondly, I choose the parties who have won seats in at least three parliamentary elections in order to be focused on the permanent opposition. Finally, I will add parties that won seats in the last parliamentary election. This last

prerequisite will give a complete chronological perspective to my analysis. As a result, I will be able to analyse contemporary parties which just entered into the electoral competition and are not yet a part of permanent opposition but which are in the parliamentary opposition already.

The number of political parties in Russia is changing from one election to another. In the first place, this is due to the disappearance of certain parties from the political scene and secondly, because of the alliances that have been established between different parties. Therefore, the political parties which political platforms I am going to analyse are: the United Russia, the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (further: CPRF), the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (further: LDPR) and the Fair Russia.

The sampling frame will be the electoral results presented in Rose and Munro (2009). In conclusion, the method I intend to employ is called nonprobability sampling (Trochim 2006) because I am not randomly selecting my sample. The issue caused by this method of sampling is that we cannot be sure about the probability of accurate representation of the population. However, due to the important fluctuations in the number of parties represented for the elections; purposive sampling seems to be more appropriate in order to answer the research question (Trochim 2006).

2.4. Conclusion

This Master's thesis is a case study, which is a within-study of a single unit diachronically. The main limitation within a case study is its lack of generaliability. However, considering the particularity of Russian society and political culture, the obstinate enthusiasm in generalising conclusions in this case might lead to unclear conclusions. Therefore, generaliability is not the aim of this study.

My intention is to make an in depth analysis of political opposition in Russia. The analysis presented in the next chapters uses the qualitative approach based on the deductive method. The database used is both qualitative and quantitative. The empirical part is going to be based firstly on the analysis of electoral results since 1993 and, secondly, on the analysis of the political programs uploaded on the official web sites of the political parties in January 2011. The next chapter introduces a theoretical debate regarding parties in opposition and the role of the Opposition in democratic societies.

Chapter3

On Political Parties in Opposition

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents a theoretical framework regarding political parties in opposition. I intend to refer to and propose classical theories concerning the western type of political opposition that will build the foundation for the subsequent analysis of Russian opposition parties. The definition of political opposition as well as political parties' role in opposition will be the first thing to be provided. The second paragraph deals with the tasks of opposition parties within a political system. The last part of this chapter introduces the functions fulfilled by the elections for the existence of political opposition within a political system.

3.2. Defining Political Parties in Opposition

3.2.1. Introduction

This paragraph offers the reader the main definitions of political parties in opposition. First, I provide the primary definition of political opposition. Afterwards, the paragraph continues with the presentation of different structural patterns of parties in opposition. The last section highlights crucial issues for political opposition within an authoritarian regime.

3.2.2. Basic Definition of Political Opposition

Opposition and protest have always been the characteristics of human societies. It is a distinctive feature of all societies to have a group of individuals that are in favour of some policies and groups that protests against it. However, the degree to which opposition will develop and unfold within the political system, among other things as well, depends on the level of tolerance of the political system that this opposition is confronted with.

An opposition movement can also be regarded as a jeopardising force of the legal authority since it can fail to accept the ruling political system itself (Ionescu and Madariaga

1968). Consequently, the Opposition can comprise a group of parties that will in general have opposing beliefs towards the policies that the current government is trying to accomplish. The paradox within the concept of the Opposition is that it can challenge the system within which it functions (Ionescu & Madariaga 1968:75).

Political opposition as an institution reflects the nature of the government to which it has developed itself in response. It has to accept some rules of political interaction, created by the government, in order to be able to propose alternatives to it. The party in government, in order to secure its hegemony, attempts to limit the institutionalisation of the Opposition. Therefore, for successful manifestation of the Opposition within a political system, it is necessary for the Opposition to have easy access to the same information the government receives. Without this access the Opposition will not be able to offer alternative policies to the ones followed by the government and thereby will sever its connection with the electorate.

However, stable development of the Opposition is also influenced by the political past of the system (Lipset and Rokkan 1967, Dahl 1969). As an example, the continuity of authoritarian and totalitarian political regimes in the Russian political system and the absence of a multi-party system, has affected the development of the Opposition since the fall of the USSR. Ionescu and Madariaga (1968) assert that the existence of both a multifaceted public opinion and a parliamentary system are beneficial for the reinforcement of political opposition. Citizens must be able to obtain freely all the information necessary to forge an opinion about the political system; and they must be able to share their opinion with other citizens. These authors perceive Parliament as a field for expansion of political opposition; where parliamentary opposition can represent the group of citizens whose ideas it expresses.

However, in the parliamentary states where institutions are well functioning, political opposition remains temporarily restricted to a minority status due to a failure of convincing a large enough electorate (Ionescu and Madariaga 1968). If parties in opposition have the same ideological basis, there is a risk that voters may give their vote to the majority party since they consider the competition to be artificial. This ideological bias can weaken the Opposition since its major objective concentrates on the mobilisation of the electorate. Additionally, the importance of political parties in opposition can also be undermined by the increasing role of interest groups (Ionescu and Madariaga 1968).

Political opposition can be divided into two categories (Dahl 1969). The first category is called active opposition. This type of opposition undertakes a specific set of actions in order to change particular governmental conduct. Passive opposition, on the other hand,

occurs when the conflict of interests is recognised but no actions are taken in order to prevent governmental conduct.

Political opposition in Western democracies can further be systematically divided into six different patterns (Dahl 1969:302). The first pattern deals with the fact that the Opposition can be organised in mutual ways and that its concentration will depend on the nature of the party system organisation. Following this pattern, political opposition can be concentrated in several small parties (in a multiparty system) or in one-single party (in a two-party system). The second pattern is the degree of competitiveness of the Opposition. Competitiveness is defined with relation to the gains and losses of political opponents in elections. Parties are considered as competitive if their strategies can bring them to a winning coalition. In a multi party system strict competition is less frequent since parties always have the possibility to join or create alliances to form a majority. When the Opposition makes an effort to alter the government's policies by using its political resources, it is called "site" (Dahl 1969:338). This is the third pattern of political opposition. The principal sites are (Dahl 1969:339): the national parliament, parliamentary elections and the media. The fourth pattern is the degree of distinctiveness of the Opposition (Dahl 1969); it is a result of cohesion, competitiveness and the importance of the sites. The fifth pattern is the ability of the Opposition to define their goals. There are short-run as well as long-run goals. The sixth pattern comprises the strategies chosen by the Opposition as the means to achieve their goals. The selection of strategies depends on the characteristics previously developed (Dahl 1969). These patterns can be used in order to classify political opposition in Russia; Dahl (1969:342) presents a table helping the classification of parties. Table9 of the last chapter in this thesis aims to classify Russian parties in opposition, based on the analysis of their political platforms.

3.2.3. The Structure of Parties in Opposition

The opposition movement can be structured by several organisations; political parties do not possess the monopoly of oppositional power. In this thesis I hope to analyse the role of opposition parties because it is political parties that play one of the most significant roles in order to promote democracy. Lipset (2000:47) presents opposition parties as essential to the establishment of democracy. Consequently, if society and the government in power accept the existence of the Opposition and its active participation within the system, a stable development of democratic order is enhanced.

The Russian political system is characterised by multipartism, however, the degree of its pluralism and independence can be questioned. Sartori (2005:14) defines political pluralism in terms of existence of independent and noninclusive groups; therefore, the fundamental point for pluralism is neither consensus nor conflict but dissent. As a consequence, the analytical part of this thesis investigates to which extent this concept can be applied to the Russian political system. Sartori (2005:17) differentiates between three types of political parties: the party that is external to the government, the party that operates within the ambit of the government but does not govern, and the party that governs. The focus of this thesis is oriented toward the second category: the party that has won at least once seats in the parliamentary elections since 1993 but has never been the governing party. As an institution, political parties must assume the role of a social organisation. As such, first of all, they are able to influence the selection of representatives in the government by presenting their candidates for the elections; secondly, to affect the government's policies in line with the party's platform (Sartori 2005:53).

Sartori's definition of a political party is the following:

"The party is any political group identified by an official label that is presented at elections, and is capable of passing through elections (free or non-free), its candidates for public office" (Sartori 2005:56).

In order to define an organisation such as a political party, the criterion of elections as a selection tool cannot be omitted. If parties fail to win elections, they just have a role of labels. For this reason, the party differs from: a faction, political movement and political association. The sub-party anatomy can be analysed along four dimensions: organisational, motivational, ideological and left-right positioning (Sartori 2005:67). During the analysis of political platforms I will take into consideration these four dimensions.

Sartori (2005:117) characterises polarised pluralism with four types of opposition parties: anti-system parties, bilateral opposition, central positioned parties and irresponsible opposition. Anti-system parties are the ones challenging directly the regime's policies and the ones which are in vehement opposition to the majority party, consequently, these parties are less durable than the parties supporting the main ideology. When all opposition parties oppose the government, they can form an opposing coalition; however, if the Opposition is divided into two separate groups that are mutually exclusive and unable to create any form of alliance, this type of the Opposition is called bilateral (Sartori 2005:118). Multipolar opposition is characterised by the presence of parties in the centre of the left-right axis of political orientation. These parties will continuously lose votes for one of the extremes; the

competition in the centre is low, since the very existence of parties in the centre discourages the creation of additional parties with the same ideological position (Sartori 2005:119). The last type of the Opposition is irresponsible opposition (Sartori 2005:122). The Opposition is responsible only if it is expected to fulfil its promises.

3.2.4. Opposition Within an Authoritarian System

Within an authoritarian system the character of free and fair elections is undermined. The candidate of the leading party is not opposed freely and without fear despite the outcome. The political system is defined as sub-competitive if the main candidate is not challenged because it is not worth the effort to oppose him (Sartori 2005:191). The non-competitive system is one that does not allow contested elections. However, since there are elections in Russia, the system cannot be categorised as non-competitive.

At the times of Rousseau, Tocqueville or Diderot it was unthinkable to define democracy within a state where one-party has an over represented superiority over other parties. Nevertheless, due to a changing world and new observations, scholars are speaking now about one party system with references to its dominance or hegemony *over other parties* (Sartori 2005:42). Thus, the states with a dominant party regime are now considered as transitional regimes toward democracy and not as a system without any potential for democratic changes.

In dominant party system the state and the party strengthen each other and the state's point of view prevails over the party's, while in a multiparty system they are separated and parties are positioned in the middle between the state and the citizens (Sartori 2005:44). In a multiparty system the party has a majority within the government, as far as it represents the citizens' interests and is responsive to their opinion, in a dominant party system the party governance is permanent.

The culture of a country is the interplay between the present situations and what was learned from the past experiences and the consequences from it. In some countries due to the cultural structures of behaviour, people will be more prone to oppose the government; while in other countries the existence of an authoritarian order can be seen by the citizens as a necessity or as an accustomed feature of political life (Dahl 1969).

Some other characteristics of the political system can be negative for the empowerment and maintenance of the Opposition (Dahl 1969:352). In the first place, a specific structure of the constitution can limit citizens' identifiability and support of an

opposition group, encourage diffusion and construct barriers to strict competitiveness. Secondly, federalism can be negative for: decisiveness of one site, concentration, distinctiveness and strict competition (Dahl 1969:352). Hence, additionally to the cultural and historical aspects of society, its institutional structures have also an important function in the reinforcement of the Opposition's role. The focus of this thesis is the institutional aspect of the Russian system, while historical and cultural aspects can be the objects of further research. The decision of the party in power whether to coerce or tolerate the Opposition is purely strategic (Dahl 2005: xiv). If the government considers that the attempts to coerce the Opposition might fail, the Opposition is likely to become legal. Additionally, even though the coercion might be successful, if it reveals that its cost is higher than the cost of tolerance for the regime, the Opposition might be tolerated within the system. The regime is likely to start peaceful negotiations if it does not have enough resource for coercion. However, the potential for coercion of the Opposition is decreasing if the Opposition's popular support, economic resources or the number of opposition parties is increasing. The need for coercion arises from the dominant party when elites and citizens start developing the sense of nationhood with liberal ideas and channel their efforts toward more internal stability. Furthermore, if opposition parties are institutionalised and legally protected, the cost of coercion increases and sparks off a revolutionary movement since the government have to change the constitution.

3.2.5. Summary

In this first paragraph I defined what the parties in opposition are; how they can be organised; and I also spotlighted different challenges the Opposition is usually confronted with within an authoritarian system. The second paragraph of this chapter presents different roles the Opposition is supposed to fulfil within an authoritarian system. Additionally, my intention is to introduce my hypothesis which will be tested in the empirical part of this thesis.

3.3. The Functions of Political Opposition

3.3.1. Introduction

Comprehension of the role of political opposition within a political system is fundamental in order to gain useful insights into its democratisation process. Stepan (2001:160) suggested that when one is interested in studying tasks performed by the Opposition, the governmental structure fails to produce useful insights into the real role of the Opposition. Therefore, the main point of the following analysis will focus on the relationship between the party in power and the parties in opposition. This paragraph will also highlight the means the Opposition can use for strengthening its position as well as its role within a political system.

3.3.2. The structure of the Political System

This section demonstrates how a particular arrangement of a political system and, thus, institutions can influence the interaction between the Opposition and an incumbent party. The Russian state is a semi-presidential state; this stipulation is confirmed by Duverger's (1980) definition of semi-presidentialism. He presents the following features of the semi-presidential political system. In the first place, the president is popularly elected and he (she) shares his (her) executive power with the prime minister. Secondly, the president has constitutional authority and, thus, can propose changes in the constitution. Thirdly, the prime minister (in theory) can be voted out of office by legislature.

If legislature by voting no-confidence jeopardises its own existence, it has insignificant control over the selection of the prime minister and the Cabinet. Consequently, this will first of all undermine political parties and afterwards, will strengthen the creation of the executive which is not dependent from party support for strengthening its position. As a result, the role of political parties as a link between the state and society is attenuated if not suppressed.

Within a semi-presidential system there is a hierarchical relationship between the executive and the legislative. Hence, as is states by Shugart (2005:5) the characteristics of the party system as well as the role of parties are defined by this relationship. The strength of this relationship as well as of the one institutional branch comparing to another varies from one system to another. The president's ability to dismiss the Cabinet and the prime minister as

well as the assembly's right for the vote of confidence are two criteria which make the biggest difference between the semi-presidential systems (Shugart 2005).

Shugart (2005:334) presents Russia as a semi-presidential system. First of all, the president has the initiative to name the prime minister but also to dismiss him (her). Secondly, there are restrictions to the assembly's right of the vote of no-confidence for the executive. And, finally, the president cannot dismiss the assembly by its own initiative but only due to the assembly's behaviour i.e. a vote of no confidence or failure to approve a new government. These characteristics might influence the creation of a weak party system, and, thus, the existence of strong presidency is crucial for the well functioning of the parliamentary system (Shugart 2005:338). Political parties and the role of the Opposition within the system influence considerably the performance of the political system.

The political system of Russia can be characterised within the federal dimension. Lijphart (1999) defines a federal state with several typical features distinguishing this logic of political configuration from a unitary state. As a result, within a federal system there is a guaranteed division of power between the central and regional governments. Additionally, strong bicameralism, a rigid constitution and strong judicial control can be other distinctive features of federalism (Lijphart 1999). Hence, by definition, the existence of a federal chamber signifies strong representation of regions and, thus, strong regional governments.

Accordingly, in our case, we are faced with a dual aspect of political opposition: first of all on the national level and, secondly, on the regional. This thesis centres on the political parties in the national parliament; the study of the regional assembly can be the focus of further research.

The basic role of the Opposition which arises from the definition of political opposition itself is to oppose the incumbent party. By accomplishing a particular role within the system political opposition can contribute to the development of democratic institutions. Active opposition might be able to challenge the incumbent party. Nevertheless, opposition parties can be regarded as generators of political instability and this point of view can have an increasing predominance within the new nations, where political order is initially unstable (Apter 1962:156). Therefore, the Opposition must oppose ideas and policies without obstructing the creation of political order (Apter 1962:158). The Opposition creates a more considerable impact on the citizens in its actions if it has the support of pivotal political players.

In order to be able to challenge the incumbent party in a democratic way the Opposition must be able to come up with a realistic and innovative party platform. From this assessment I draw my first hypothesis:

H1: If the Opposition is not able to differentiate itself from the party in government by presenting an alternative political platform, then the Opposition will not be able to challenge the party in power.

The assumption behind this hypothesis is that voters choose parties on the basis of information about the parties' policies. To become a winner the opposition party's political program must be different from the incumbent's, but also credible. Voters must perceive the alternative as a credible option.

I intend to proceed to empirical testing and operationalization of this hypothesis by studying political platforms of opposition parties as well as the electoral results in Presidential and Parliamentary elections from 1993 to 2008. This operationalization will allow me to characterise opposition parties in Russia within the four categories of opposition parties presented earlier (Sartori 2005). Once these parties are identified and labelled as anti-system parties, bilateral opposition, central positioned parties or irresponsible opposition, I can develop a hypothesis about their ability to challenge the incumbent party by offering alternative programs to the citizens.

Additionally, this analysis enables me to locate Russian opposition within the six patterns of the Opposition elaborated by Dahl (1969). The analysis will further assess to which extent the role of the Opposition in Russian can be compared to the role performed by its Western counterpart.

Consequently, H1 is supported if there is evidence that the political platform of a given party in opposition challenges the ideas within the political platform of the incumbent party. Additionally, there must be evidence that during several elections the number of seats won by the opposition party increases.

However, H1 will be weakened if the political platform of the opposition party neither promotes any meaningful ideas nor challenges the ideology of the incumbent party. Furthermore, if the opposition party's electoral results fail to reflect substantially popular adherence to their ideas, this party is less likely to challenge the regime.

If H1 is supported, the multiple functions of the Opposition defined by Stepan (2001:171) are realised. These functions are:

- Staying in or coming into existence
- Resisting integration into the regime
- Guarding zones of autonomy against it
- Disputing its legitimacy
- Raising the costs of non-democratic rule
- Creating a credible democratic alternative

3.3.3. The Importance of Cohesiveness Between the Opposition Parties

Lindberg (2009) states that the Opposition must be able to cooperate with each other for successfully countering the government. However, it is almost inconceivable that the Opposition will agree upon a general set of policies in order to challenge the existing government. The Opposition must be able to organise itself around a set of common rules for a peaceful democratic contestation that wages an efficient struggle in such issues like social and economic equality (Stepan 2001). Consequently, for the purpose of efficient contestation, consensus among opposition parties must be achieved about the course of actions, even if they face disagreement about the results coming from these actions.

Nevertheless, the whole democratisation process is in jeopardy if the Opposition fails first to focus on the actions against the but, instead, on policy issues, which ultimately will lead to a process of fragmentation within the Opposition. If democrats are able to act, they can undermine the authoritarian regime in several consequential ways. First of all, by creating a united bloc to offer an alternative to the regime and thus undermining the fundamental nature of the authoritarian system. Secondly, by organising this opposition front, democrats can demonstrate their potential to the elite, which will allow them to pursue their interests under the new system.

Therefore, once elites are convinced about the strength of the Opposition's cohesiveness and the low cost of democratic reforms, they are more likely to give their support for the democrats. In this way the Opposition undermines old relationships and creates a new set of relationship which is credible and stable enough to attract new supporters and to activate passive supporters. Accordingly to Dahl (1969) and Lindberg (2009) when the support for the Opposition grows, the cost of coercion for the regime increases while the cost of toleration decreases. Consequently, if the Opposition is cohesive, the regime is more likely to collapse (Blondel 1997:486; Lindberg 2009). The second hypothesis resulting from these points is the following:

H2: If there is no cohesiveness between opposition parties, then they have fewer chances to replace incumbent party.

Blondel (1997) acknowledges the establishment of diffuse opposition within a party system where several parties possess the same strength, though if one of the opposition parties is stronger than the others, the Opposition's structure will tend to enjoy more cohesiveness. Therefore the existence of one strong party that can assume the leadership inside the Opposition usually favours alliances between parties, but if there is no such party, the opposition parties will be more divided and not prone to cooperate with each other. I intend to analyse the level of cohesiveness among the parties by comparing their political platforms.

As stated before if parties are able to present themselves as a united front with respect to some major issues, the elite and citizens can consider them as an alternative solution to the regime. However, the risk is that the political platforms of all opposition parties deal with the same issues without offering any realistic set of alternatives. Hence, the citizens and the elite might regard the support of the incumbent party as the safest way to guarantee their standard of living and to maintain order.

Table 7 cross tables the main solutions to the issues presented in the platforms and the parties that present them. Parties that have the most of issues in common or offer the most similar solutions to the issues at stake will be considered more likely to cooperate with each other (Sartori 2005). Parties that do not share any ideas will be considered as mutually exclusive, and hence unable to form any kind of political cooperation. Sartori (2005) defines them as bilateral opposition. Additionally, Dahl (1969:39-52) argues that the existence of: separation of powers, proportional representation and federalism will lead to more diffusion within the Opposition. I will focus on this argument during my analysis of the electoral system in Russia.

This hypothesis is supported if the ideas presented in each party platform can be organised around a set of common issues and if they can be considered as solutions or alternatives to the solutions of the incumbent party. The hypothesis is weakened if all parties debate about very different issues and if there is no common set of actions regarding policy implementation. Additionally, the hypothesis will be weakened if parties present a common set of issues but they cannot be considered as an alternative to the program of the majority party.

3.3.4. Goals and Strategies within left-right Dimension

Several factors account for the variation of the Opposition's strength, and it will therefore be relevant to determine under which conditions some factors are more influential than others. Dahl's (1969) six patterns of the Opposition can be reduced to "a two-dimensional space of types of political opposition" (Blondel 1997:468).

The first pattern deals with cohesiveness followed by the second factor called distinctiveness which results from cohesion, competitiveness and the importance of other settings (Dahl 1969:340). More difficult to distinguish in practice is the third and fourth patterns which are goals and strategies respectfully (Dahl 1969, Blondel 1997), consequently, these two patterns can be considered as a joint characteristic of the Opposition. The fifth pattern mentioned by Dahl (1969) is called "site". This pattern expresses the field where the Opposition employs its strategies against the government. That can be assimilated into the Opposition's goals and patterns since the choice of the site can be related to the Opposition's goals and strategies (Blondel 1997:469).

When speaking about goals and strategies, political parties can be divided into two groups: interest and ideology oriented parties (Lipset 2000). The former comprises private interests and is not characterised by an active role within a system as opposition. The latter contains principles and dogmas. The classification of Russian opposition parties within these two categories will clarify the role parties in opposition are planning to play. If the parties' goal is merely to represent interest, one cannot expect them to play any significant role in democracy building.

In order to characterise the Opposition according to the system described above we first need to determine if it is cohesive or diffusive. Secondly, we need to identify its goals and strategies; finally, it will be necessary to know what is the nature of the bodies taken in the process (Blondel 1997:469). The first and the second characteristics have two-dimensional nature. The overall picture of the nature of the Opposition can be shown by the contrasts that exist among opposition parties represented by the distance between the goals of each of these parties and those of the government (Blondel 1997:470).

From this we can draw conclusions about how diffusive or cohesive the Opposition is and how intensive the conflict with the government will be. The Chart2 exemplifies the distribution of the four parties within the left-right dimension (Downs 1957:121). Downs (1957) argues that when two parties are represented very closely to each other on the left-right

scale, they can be defined as moderate parties competing for the middle voters and for this reason their manifestos and actions are very similar. Because parties are rational actors, they will adapt their ideas to a more moderate version if they can win more votes in the centre than in the extreme area. However, within a multiparty system, parties will try to differentiate themselves from their opponents and thus to maintain their ideology (Downs 1957).

The aim of my analysis is to determine to which extent political parties are different in their ideology and how they provide several alternatives to the voters. The left-right distribution can also show the range of difference between the goals and strengths among the Opposition and the government. Goals are defined by the party's position on the left-right axes, while the score of the party's ideological tendency represents the party's strengths. For example, the higher the score is and the more the party is on the left side of the axis, the stronger the party is and the more representatives support its goals of the left-wing ideology.

Apter (1962:158) presented different functions of the Opposition, the goals of the Opposition might be thus organised around these functions. First is the interest representation: the Opposition represents interests neglected by the majority party. This function is similar to the one introduced by Downs (1957), Dahl (1969) and Blondel (1997), which were addressed earlier. Secondly, the role of the Opposition is to provide the government with information concerning the public reaction vis-à-vis official policies (Apter 1962:160). Citizens can be afraid to express their real opinion towards a policy if the party in power is too coercive.

As a result if people can express their opinion about the Opposition, it provides the government with the valuable information regarding public opinion. That enables the government to modify its policy according to it. For that reason political opposition favours political goals that are more realistic to pursue and that will help the government to assess the effectiveness of its policies. Thus, the Opposition must voice criticism and provide alternatives to the government in power (Apter 1962:161). By expressing criticism and offering alternatives the Opposition helps the government to channel its policies towards deeper public satisfaction. The third hypothesis is the following:

H3: If the ideological position of the opposition parties alongside the left-right dimension is different from the ideological standpoint of the party in power, then these parties will be able to fulfil the basic opposition's role.

The empirical testing of this hypothesis will be made during the analysis of political platforms. The operationalization includes the counting of the number of left and right

statements made by the parties (Appendix 3a-b). First, the ideological position and, secondly, the ideological strength of the parties will be compared, both aspects will be represented on the left-right ideological axis.

This hypothesis will be confirmed if, first, the statements from the manifestos allow a representative positioning of the parties on the left-right ideological dimension and, secondly, if opposition parties represent opposite ideological interests to the ones represented by the party in power. However, H3 will be weakened if the political ideas presented in the manifestos are not characteristic of a left-right ideological division, which will be unable to be represented on the left-right graphical representation. H3 will also be undermined if once represented on the left-right dimension, it turns out that opposition parties and the party in power defend the same ideological position.

Simonsen (2001:269) states that in Russian politics, politicians' and voters' personal interests often prevail over ideological convictions. Thereby it can be assumed that during a campaign, candidates would rather emphasise their personal relation to the state than to the party platforms or policy issues. Since there is a limiting space for policymaking, in this manner there will be no debate over policy. Parliamentarians will not be able to influence the government due to the fact that they are imbedded inside a patronage network providing selective benefits. Only those candidates who have developed close relations with the state are more likely to enter the race. Due to the priorities different to democratic principles, political parties remain weak and unable to play a pivotal role in coordinating potential candidates. To conclude, the logic driving the candidates and the voter tend to reproduce the regime. My fourth hypothesis will be the following:

H4: If there are no coherent policy proposals coming from opposition parties, then these parties are likely to serve the role of regime perpetuation within the system.

It is my intention to examine this hypothesis by analysing political platforms of opposition parties. This hypothesis is confirmed if during the electoral campaign policy proposals are not as important as the leader's relations toward the regime. H4 is rejected if opposition parties are able to present policy proposals and that their electoral campaign is not clientele based.

3.3.5. Summary

In this paragraph I presented the main role of democratic opposition within an authoritarian system. From this set of roles I built my first three hypothesis regarding the Opposition's abilities first to challenge the party in power; secondly, to evolve within a cohesive environment and, finally, regarding its ability to present goals similar to the ones presented by the government in order to minimise political conflicts. In the concluding part of this thesis I will be able to state either the hypotheses were confirmed or rejected. The last paragraph of this chapter will analyse the importance of elections for the role of the Opposition within an authoritarian system.

3.4. Elections and the Opposition Within an Authoritarian Order

3.4.1. Introduction

The last paragraph of this chapter produces theories and hypothesis regarding elections within an authoritarian system. The aim of this theoretical section is to demonstrate what the role of the elections is, within an authoritarian regime, for opposition parties' evolution. First, I expose the functions exercised by the Electoral Management Body (further coming as: EMB) in the electoral process. Secondly, I demonstrate how the manipulation of the electoral law can control the Opposition. Subsequently, theories about the effects of electoral fraud for opposition parties will be debated.

3.4.2. Electoral Management Body

The EMB is an institution which is assigned by the electoral law to organise elections in a given country. Consequently, it is the role of the EMB to ensure that elections were organised and held according to the constitution and legal acts. If there were any violations regarding the electoral law, the EMB has to condemn it publicly. The quality of the electoral administration is characterized through the perception of the elections given by the international and domestic observers (Elklit and Reynolds 2002). However, the quality of an election is defined by the perception of the whole electoral process as legitimate by political

actors. Therefore, the analysis of electoral rules and results in Russia will bring useful insights into the impact of elections for the role of its opposition parties.

Elections in transitional regimes are of utmost importance because they prepare citizens for democratic practice, but the existence of political opposition is crucial for the elections which are supposed to successfully serve this purpose. Thus, even non-competitive elections can play an important role in democratisation process by placing the regime under pressure and, additionally, by offering both the citizens and elites the possibility of democratic practice within the system (Teorell & Hadenius 2009). Therefore, the initial role of elections inside an authoritarian system is to promote civil liberties and facilitate democratisation.

Elklit and Reynolds (2002) specify five characteristics of the EMB which must be analysed in order to define its efficiency in the electoral process. The first characteristic is the organisational structure of the EMB. Hence, I have to analyse from which institutions commissioners were selected, if they had any commitment regarding political actors and if they represented ethnic groups. After that I intend to analyse the EMB's independence from political forces. The third characteristic includes the internal motivation of the staff to see their organisational development. The fourth aspect is the staff's individual interests (salary, working hours) and their chances to compromise the organisation's ability to adhere to the budget. The last characteristic touches upon the transparency of the EMB. This last feature asserts that the improvement of the EMB's legitimacy is dependent on its ability to give insights to the voters and to the parties about the decision-making process within an electoral context. Consequently, in my analysis of the Central Electoral Commission I will try to define its role with regard to the following three criteria, which are: commitment, independence and transparency. The hypothesis I will test is thus the following:

H5a: If the actions of the CEC neither aim to promote a democratic electoral system nor favour free and fair elections, then the opposition parties will be negatively affected by:

- **The registration rules**
- **The rules to nominate a candidate**
- **And will have difficulties to win seats.**

I plan to examine this hypothesis by analysing the development of the role of the CEC within the Russian electoral system from its foundation in 1993. I intend to define its development within the three concepts introduced before: commitment, independence and

transparency. The empirical testing will include comparing the level of these three concepts with the progression of the number of opposition parties winning elections since 1993.

H5a will be confirmed if I come to the conclusion that the CEC is highly independent, committed and transparent while at the same time the number of opposition parties winning elections is constantly increasing. I also assume the possibility of negative confirmation of this hypothesis. This will occur when a low level of commitment, independence and transparency of the CEC is correlated with a low number of parties winning elections. This hypothesis will be rejected if the CEC is highly independent, committed and transparent while the number of opposition parties winning elections is low. Nevertheless, if H5a is rejected if neither the CEC represents an irrevocably negative prospect for the Russian democratisation process nor if it gives any reasons for opposition parties to assume that they cannot play any role within the political system of Russia.

The electoral process can become a very challenging matter for new political parties within a transitional system. The parties must be able to present the electorate coherent policies packages that they promise to implement. However, parties and especially opposition parties are usually too weak, and are not able to present alternative accountable policies to the citizens.

Carey and Reynold (2007) suggest two pillars which must be developed within a political system in order to create an accountable government. The first pillar is electoral practice; the other one is governing practice. In new democracies it is often the case that neither of the pillars is solid or only the second one is present (Carey and Reynolds 2007). In the Russian political system both pillars are present, nonetheless the governmental accountability can be questioned. During the empirical testing of H5a it will be relevant to test what role of the Opposition in promoting accountability in the Russian political system is.

3.4.3. Electoral law manipulation

Since its creation, the Russian electoral law has been modified several times and it seems that these modifications hinder the free and fair electoral process. The following question arises: why there are still elections and political parties in Russia? What is the purpose of their preservation?

Schedler (2002) argues that the role of elections within an authoritarian system is to give the regime legitimacy deprived from the democratic uncertainty. For that reason the regime will first use all the means available in order to eliminate uncertainty of the electoral

results during elections and, secondly, it will attempt to limit the role of opposition parties in elections. Schedler (2009) defines an electoral authoritarian regime as a system in which opposition parties lose elections. However, the non-alternation of power can occur even in a democratic regime, for example, Sweden, where the same political party was in power for several decades. But if there are manipulations of the electoral law by the government in order to be re-elected, Schedler's definition can be applied. The regime will try to manipulate the electoral law when its popular support decreases. Thus, manipulation and popular support substitute each other and the role of any political opposition is to limit manipulation while increasing popular support for its own benefits.

In this type of the regime there is a two level game between the Opposition and the government (Schedler 2009). First, both actors fight for the votes, and, next, the government tries to manipulate the electoral law in its favour while the Opposition stages protests against this manipulation. As a result, one important role of the Opposition is to prevent the manipulation from happening and to denounce it on the national and international levels. The Opposition can achieve this goal by promoting civic education, monitoring elections and by denouncing acts of intimidation and violation of the electoral law (Schedler 2009). This theory allows the specification of H5a:

H5b: If the electoral law has been changed in order to make it harder for new parties to register, or the thresholds for nomination of candidates has been revised, then the role of the Opposition will diminish.

This hypothesis will be tested out by the empirical analysis of the evolution of the Russian electoral law, and more precisely its modifications. Electoral manipulation can turn counterproductive for the regime and destroy it, especially when the government represses the opponents physically. Thereby, on the official web pages of the opposition parties I will try to find signs of opposition protests against electoral reforms as well as its impact.

H5b will be confirmed if I can find signs of manipulation of the electoral law but I cannot find any proof for active protests denouncing it, organised by the Opposition. And if additionally the modification of the electoral law, which is negative for the Opposition, is correlated with the decrease of opposition parties represented in the electoral ballots. H5b will be rejected if despite the manipulation of the electoral law and the existence of an organised protest by the Opposition, its representation still decreases in the elections.

The question of manipulation creates several dilemmas both for the government and the Opposition (Schedler 2009). If citizens are indifferent toward democratisation, the cost of manipulation is minor and the government can manipulate the electoral law without fearing for its legitimacy. However, if citizens are democratization oriented, manipulation is pointless and democratization is the only solution.

Since democratic experience is absent from the Russian political history, and, thus, the citizens' democratic conviction can be very fragile, I can expect to find manipulation of the elections being a very powerful tool for the regime in power. Regarding the Opposition, the dilemma will be oriented toward protest organisation. If voters believe that the current regime is democratic, they will give few credits for the Opposition's protests. Meanwhile, boycott of elections seems the worst solution for the Opposition, since it ruins any chances to win seats. When participating in manipulated elections, the Opposition can be seen as legitimising the regime since it plays its game. Elections related protests can play a key role but boycott can only undermine the Opposition's chances of survival.

A dominant party can use electoral fraud in order to ensure its perpetuation. Free and fair elections are one of the prerequisites of democracy. Elections are often held too early in the transition process, before that, institutional reforms must be made in order to achieve free and fair elections prerequisite (Elklit & Svensson 1997).

Freedom comes first and then the fairness of the electoral process, these two characteristics are necessary and sufficient conditions for any elections to become a fundamental institution playing a decisive role in the democratisation process. Birch (2008:3) points out three threats to electoral fairness. The first threat is the skewed electoral rules, this occurs when one actor is favoured comparing to others. The second threat is the manipulation of voters' choice by offering unequal access to information. The third threat is characterised by the voting process being rigged through electoral administrative practice.

Consequently, if the regime manages to use these tools in order to influence electoral outcome to its advantage, it will guarantee its perpetuation. Lust-Okar (2009:226) demonstrates that authoritarian regimes which organise elections, maintain in power longer than those who fail to have elections. Hence, elections are not the area where the Opposition and the incumbent party compete for voters, but where the incumbent party tests and demonstrates the power of its regime. For the presidential election the aim is to discredit the opponents by showing that the incumbent party is able to mobilize an increasing number of voters in comparison with the previous elections.

Lust-Okar (2009) characterizes elections in hegemonic authoritarian regimes as the competition over state's resources. In this type of the system defined as competitive clientelism (Lust-Okar 2009) voters vote for the candidates or parties able to deliver services to them. For that reason citizens consider the party that fails to collaborate with the regime to be useless. As a consequence, voters' actions can be defined within a double logic. Firstly, the voters will not vote for the candidate unwilling to collaborate with the elite. Secondly, they usually pay little attention to the parties and their political platforms (Lust-Okar 2009).

3.4.4. Summary

The consequences of the electoral manipulation by the authoritarian regime for the Opposition are presented in the last paragraph. As a result, it is shown that if the Opposition is not active in order to counter these manipulations, its role could be marginalised if not suppressed completely within the system.

3.5. Conclusion

First, the concept of the Opposition and political parties was defined in this chapter. Secondly, the functions the Opposition might fulfil within an authoritarian system were introduced. Finally, it was demonstrated how the role of political opposition could be weakened by electoral manipulation. The hypotheses formulated in this chapter are summarised in Table 11. The next chapter is the first empirical chapter of this thesis.

Chapter4

Elections and the Opposition in Russia

4.1. Introduction

This chapter is the first analytical chapter of this Master's thesis. The aim of this chapter is to analyse first of all election reforms and to conclude how they affect the evolution of the Opposition's role in Russia. The second aim is to analyse the institutions like the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) and the media in order to understand what their role for the parties in opposition is. The third purpose of this chapter is to analyse campaign funding issues and the struggle between the United Russia Party and other political parties.

4.2. Transformation of the Electoral Rules¹

4.2.1. Introduction

The Russian Constitution and the electoral system have their roots in violent conflicts occurred in 1993. The period from September to December 1993 was characterised by confrontations between President Yeltsin's supporters and the representatives from the Congress of People's Deputies. As a result, on the 12th of December 1993 a new Constitution draft was presented for popular approval. The new constitution endorsed a president directly elected by universal suffrage for maximum two consecutive terms. The creation of the bicameral parliament was stipulated in the constitution. On the one hand, the Lower Chamber is the State Duma, with 450 elected members. On the other hand, the Upper Chamber is the Federation Council with two representatives from each 'subject' (republic or oblast) of the Federation. In 1993 both presidential and parliamentary terms were limited by a four-year mandate. However, in 2008 President Medvedev proposed to increase the next presidential

¹ The data used in this paragraph is based on the book published by Rose & Munro (2009), where changes in the Russian electoral system were indexed with valuable details for this analysis.

term to six years and the next Duma term to five. Now this proposal has been passed as a law. Since the Russian electoral system has always been the subject of numerous changes, these changes are analysed more in details in the next paragraphs.

4.2.2. Electoral Changes for Presidential Elections

Russian presidential elections adhere to the principle of the majority rule. In order to compete in presidential elections, the candidate must be 35 years old, be a Russian citizen and must live in Russia for the past ten years. The candidate can run independently or may be nominated by a political party. In 1996 the right to nominate was given to parties registered with the Ministry of Justice at least six months before the election and to the groups of at least 100 000 citizens formed to support an independent candidate. In 2004 the right to nominate was changed and increased to the group of at least 500 000 citizens and to parties registered with the Ministry of Justice on the day of the announcement of the election.

The increment in the size of the partisans' group from 1996 to 2004 is clearly directed to decrease the number of independent candidates represented by small groups. This reform can be considered as a success. When looking at the results of presidential elections (Appendix1b) before this reform during the 1996 and 2000 presidential elections, the number of independent candidates was from 4 to 5 persons. Meanwhile after the reform in the 2004 elections there are only 2 independent candidates presented and only 1 candidate in the 2008 elections. The consequence of this reform is the reduction of choice for voters. In the Table1b (Appendix) it is shown that the number of candidates in presidential elections went from 10-11 in 90s to 6 in 2004 and 4 in 2008. Consequently, the Opposition's candidates had fewer opportunities to present themselves as an alternative in the elections ballot.

All the candidates are required to present information about their income over the past two years. In 2000, in addition to his own income sources, the candidate had to present the property and liabilities of his/her spouse and children. In 2004 the candidate's and their family members' declaration of income and property was extended to four years. Nevertheless, the failure to present these declarations was no longer the reason for rejecting the candidate's nomination; these declarations became an optional prerequisite.

It seems that the financial credibility and reliability of presidential candidates is no longer important. The changes in these two nomination rules demonstrate two points. On the one hand, the system has become more rigid and closed for the Opposition; while, on the other hand, it is less constrained regarding the rules which might suit better the incumbent.

The following Chart shows the changes in the rules for the collection of signatures required for the nomination to be complete. These rules were changed before all presidential election.

Table 1: Variation in the Rules for Signature Collection for Presidential Elections

Election Year	Number of required signatures	Allowed percentage to exceed the required number of signature to allow the invalid signatures	Remarks
1996	1 000 000		
2000	500 000	15	
2004	2 000 000	25	
2008	2 000 000	5	Parties that won seats in the previous Duma elections were not required to collect signatures

Source: Rose & Munro (2009)

The most observable fact is the decline in the allowed percentage margin of signatures to allow invalid signatures. The change from the 2000 to 2004 elections follows a logically proportional path: if the number of required signatures increases, the margin of additional signatures increases as well. It is the reform for the 2008 elections that displays some inconsistency. The number of required signatures remained the same; however, the percentage allowing the margin for invalid signatures was decreased by 20 points. Additionally, the parties that won seats in the previous Duma elections were no longer obliged to collect signatures for their candidates.

This change clearly favours the parties already present in Parliament. The parties that have to collect signatures are seemingly handicapped by the new 5 percent margin allowed to prevent the party from disqualification due to invalid signatures. When speaking about new parties, their electoral prospects seem extremely limited. New parties that inspire to present a presidential candidate have to collect 2 million signatures and even if they cope with this task, they still can be disqualified due to invalid signatures. Table of the Annex1b confirms these observations. In the 2008 presidential elections the parties that won seats in the 2007 Duma elections supported 3 out of 4 competing candidates. Therefore, parliamentary Opposition has greater chances to present a presidential candidate for the election than opposition parties that are outside of the legislature.

The last point of this paragraph shows that parties in opposition must prioritise to win parliamentary elections in order to increase their chances to put up a candidate for presidential elections. The next paragraph will introduce the changes in the electoral law for State Duma elections. The purpose of this next analysis is to see how important open parliamentary elections are for the Opposition in Russia.

4.2.3. Electoral Changes for the Duma Elections

From 1993 to 2003 half of the 450 Duma deputies were elected by a party-list PR system while the other half of the representatives were elected by the Single Member District (SMD). In order to win a SMD seat, a plurality of votes was sufficient. All candidates also had to hand in their income and property declaration together with their nomination papers.

The following table presents a chronological overview on the number of parties that won seats in the elections compared to the pool of all existing parties at the same election year.

Table 2: Chronological Variation in Electoral Representation of Political Parties

Year	Number of Existing of Political Parties/Associations	Number of Parties that Presented lists of Candidates	Number of Parties that Submitted Nomination Petition	Number of Disallowed Parties	Number of Parties presented in the Ballot	Number of Parties that won seats in the election
1993	130	35	21	8	13	12
1995	273	69	51	8	43	17
1999	139	34	31	5	26	14
2003	44	26	23	-	23	11
2007	15	14	14	3	11	4

Source: Rose & Munro (2009)

The difference between the numbers in the second and the third columns of Table2 is determined by the party’s ability to collect the necessary number of valid signatures. For example, in 2007 none of the parties were disqualified due to the invalid signatures. However, as it is shown in the fifth column (Table2), in 2007 there were three parties disallowed for other reasons than the missing signatures.

The SMD system was abolished by a change in the electoral law in 2005. As a result, the number of parties that presented their lists of candidates for the 2007 elections was

heavily affected. The number of parties competing in the election decreased from 23 parties in the year 2003 to 11 parties in the 2007 elections. This means that from the 2003 to 2007 elections the number of parties present in the ballot diminished by 53 percent.

When looking at the number of parties that won seats in the 2003 and 2007 elections, their number decreased by 64 percent after the 2005 electoral reform. Moreover, the same tendency can be noticed in the number of existing parties and political associations whose number was reduced by 66 percent from 2003 to 2007.

The electoral changes represent a general trend of the Russian electoral system toward a system with fewer political parties competing for political representation. During the whole pre-millennial period, the number of existing political parties or blocs lied well above. By contrast the number fell far below 100 and amounted to 44 in 2003 and 15 in 2007. This significant decrease is even more noticeable when looking at the number of parties winning seats in the state Duma. From 1993 to 2003 on average 13 parties were represented in the Duma, in 2007 however, only 4 parties entered Parliament.

These results support the view that only a few (and even these few tend to decline) parties are able to present themselves to the electorate and are able to win seats. As previously mentioned in one of the chapters, Sartori (2005) defines political parties that never win elections as labels. When looking at the last Duma election, 11 out of 15 parties can be considered as labels according to Sartori (2005) and not as representative political parties. Nonetheless, in the nineties the number of political labels was higher: in the 1993 election the number of existing parties that did not win seats was 118, in the year 1995 the number of political labels existing in the system was reported to be 256. As a result, only a fraction of parties can be associated with parliamentary opposition and even less can be referred to as permanent opposition.

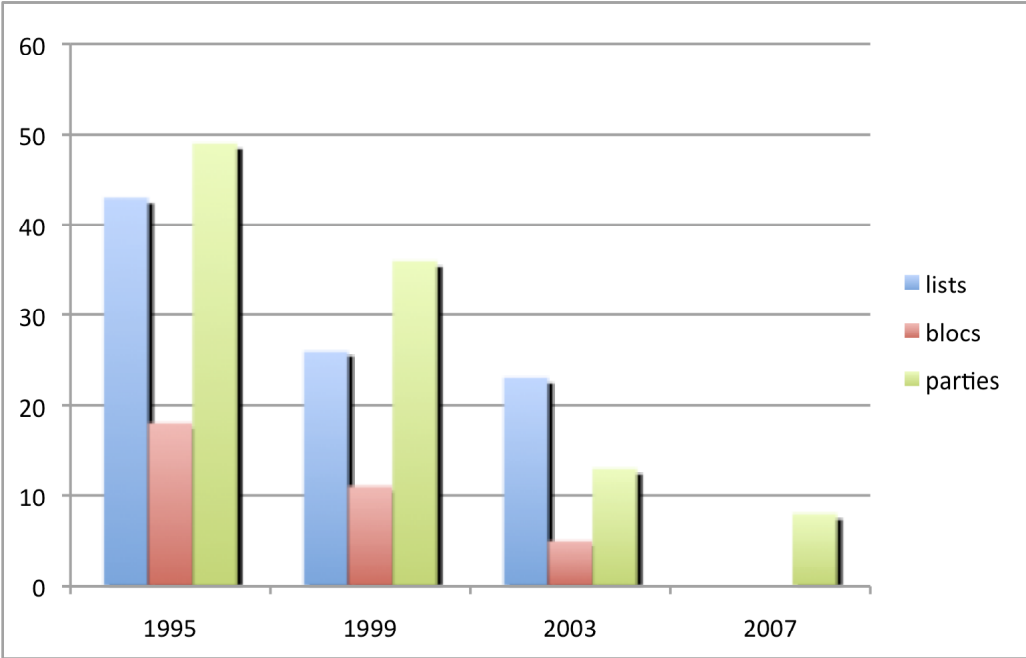
Sartori (2005:53) claims that an opposition movement turns into a political party only when it is able to present a candidate for the elections. In case of the Russian party system it is possible therefore to assert that opposition parties are in decline. However, this data is not sufficient enough to make any conclusions about the impact of this decline for the role of the Opposition within the system. Even if there are fewer parties in opposition, they still can be powerful representatives of the electorate. This point will be further analysed in the next chapter by comparing the political platforms of the main opposition parties.

In 1993 the electoral threshold was established and set to five percent, which forced small associations with little electoral support to create combined electoral blocs (Rose & Munro 2009). Before the 2007 election, the threshold was increased to seven percent. In

addition the voting option “against all” was removed and the possibility for parties to create blocs was eliminated.

The following chart illustrates the number of lists, blocs and parties for all elections since 1995. Electoral lists display the electoral blocs competing in given elections; additionally, a political bloc can be composed of several political parties. Since the possibility of blocs’ formation was abolished for the 2007 elections, the bar for political blocs of the respective year is given no value in the chart. For the year 2007, the only bar visible is the one for political parties represented in the ballot.

Chart 1: Repartition of Political Lists, Blocs and Parties since 1995



Source: Rose & Munro (2009)

From 1995 to 2003 the chart shows a decrease in the number of electoral lists, political blocs and political parties. The fact that the number of political parties within the blocs is higher than the number of blocs for every election is very noticeable in the chart.

The evidence that there are more parties represented within the given number of blocs can be studied with the help of the density ratio. The scale of the ratio is defined by the number of electoral parties divided by the number of electoral blocs. In 1995 the density ration was 2.7 while for the 1999 elections the ration was the highest with 3.2 value and in 2003 the ration was 2.6.

As a result before the electoral reform for the 2007 elections, political parties with little electoral support used blocs to run for elections, a method that helped increase their chances to pass the threshold. Moreover, the new seven percent threshold can be considered as even a higher barrier for small parties to enter Parliament.

Consequently, the survival of small opposition parties was complicated by these changes in the electoral system. In effect, more and more Russian citizens have been losing their political representation. Smaller movements such as the Green Party or the Feminists have had almost no chances to obtain seats in Parliament since the latest reform.

Another aspect within the Russian electoral system is the degree of disproportionality for the distribution of votes and the number of seats. The Table3 displays the percentage of wasted votes in each parliamentary election since 1993.

Table 3: Proportion of Wasted Votes in the Parliamentary Elections

Year	Proportion of Wasted Votes (in percent)
1993	13
1995	49
1999	17
2003	28
2007	7

Source: Rose & Munro (2009)

Rose & Munro (2009:256) argue that the number of votes wasted for the parties that have no chances to win any seats in the Duma elections is high. The percentage of wasted votes indicates the existence of high disproportionality in the Russian electoral system (Rose & Munro 2009:256). The principle of disproportionality means that parties that cross the threshold will gain a larger share of seats in Parliament than the share of votes the party has achieved in the ballot. The biggest parties benefit the most from the system.

In 1995 the Communist party won 44 percent of the listed seats with only 22.3 percent of the valid votes. In 2003 the United Russia won 53.3 percent of the list seats with 37.6 percent of the vote. In 2007 there were fewer parties in the ballot and with total support for the United Russia the disproportionality level was lower than for the previous years. As

shown for other domains of the electoral system earlier, small parties are seemingly discriminated by such organisation of the electoral system.

When dealing with the proportion of votes, the financial sphere of the parties is also affected. Parties that win more than three percent in the Duma or presidential elections receive state funding in proportion to the number of gained votes. This funding is especially important for small parties that try to compete with big ones. This issue will therefore be discussed more precisely in the paragraph concerning electoral funding.

The changes within the Russian electoral system were analysed in order to confirm the validity for H5b. H5b was formulated the following way:

H5b: If the electoral law has been changed in order to make it harder for new parties to register, or the thresholds for nomination of candidates has been revised, then the role of the Opposition will diminish.

The conclusion I can arrive at is that it is harder for new and small political parties to nominate candidates due to the changes in the electoral law. Moreover, small parties experience an obvious disadvantage compared to the incumbent party because of the changes in the electoral law. Shvetsova (2004:382) defines the Russian electoral law as “endogenous” because the president can change the law by decree, which allows him to limit or even eliminate any institutional bargaining on this subject. According to Hale (2006) the present legislation is favouring the strengthening of the dominant party (the United Russia) and at the same time is marginalising the other parties.

Additionally, OSCE (2000) reports on the presidential elections in Russia mention a sheer lack of clarity in the electoral law embodied through a risk of subjective interpretation during the candidates’ registration process. Consequently, H5b can be confirmed by these findings. Electoral manipulations characterised the previous regime that was totalitarian by nature. The contemporary system on the other hand refrains from manipulating elections. However, due to the institutional framework set by the electoral law, the political system remains in some ways not democratic with respect to the outcome.

4.2.4. Summary

The results presented in this first paragraph demonstrate several consequences of the changes made within the electoral law since 1993. Firstly, parties that win seats in parliamentary

elections have more chances to present their candidate for presidential elections. Secondly, it was shown that the manipulation of the electoral system by the Kremlin lowered the chances of the parties to be represented in parliamentary elections. Furthermore, due to these changes of the electoral law the number of parties able to win seats in the Duma elections is decreasing considerably. The next paragraph deals with an analysis of the CEC and the Russian media in order to investigate the role of these institutions for the Russian opposition and draw logical conclusions.

4.3. Opposing within a System of Biased Institutions

4.3.1. Introduction

The purpose of this paragraph is to analyse how the CEC and the media shape the role of opposition parties in Russia. If the CEC acts as a democratic institution, then it should not be biased against the Opposition and play a neutral role within the system. However, it can also restrain the Opposition's development if the CEC misses an opportunity to act according to democratic principles. The media can also be regarded as an institution that can have positive as well as negative effects on the existence of the Opposition.

4.3.2. The Role of the Central Electoral Commission

The CEC was created for the 1993 elections in order to implement the whole electoral process and has fulfilled this task for each election since then. The CEC is composed of 15 members: the President nominates five members, so does the State Duma and the Federation Council (Sakwa 2008). The CEC is an independent body which serves for a four-year term and is supported by its own secretariat.

During the 1999 Duma elections and the presidential election in the year 2000 the CEC was functioning as an independent electoral structure and fulfilled its aspiration for organising elections (OSCE 2000:4). During these elections the CEC tried to denounce illegal and abusive use of the mass media during the campaign. OSCE (2000:17) report shows three resolutions drafted by the CEC to improve the functioning of the media: (1) to stop the use of propaganda; (2) to identify the kind of violation committed within the media; and (3) to demand the General Prosecutor and Subject Election Commissions to strengthen control over

the compliance with the legislation and to prosecute violators. However, this initiative from the CEC was not endorsed by the institutions involved in the implementation of these changes.

Furthermore, before the election the CEC adopted a resolution which stated that only candidates, blocs and parties were allowed to campaign in the mass media. This entailed that if journalists expressed any positive or negative opinion about a candidate or a party, they could be charged with flouting the law (OSCE 2000). This resolution made it very difficult for the media to cover the electoral campaign and therefore to present meaningful information to the electorate for fear of judicial persecution.

When speaking about the level of transparency of the CEC, the reports of the OSCE (1996; 2000; 2003; 2004) mention that the commission is functioning in a transparent manner and is organising elections in a satisfactory and a professional way. However, when it comes to supporting elections held according to democratic principles and values, the CEC fails to make any relevant or clear decisions (OSCE 2003).

One of the salient issues during an electoral campaign is the control over the use of administrative resources. Consequently, the OSCE in its 2003 report submits recommendations to the CEC to improve its control over the abuses in this domain. Furthermore, the CEC must put more resources into the control over the candidates' equal coverage in the media. In the 2004 Duma elections OSCE reports conclude that the CEC failed to limit the bias within the state controlled media.

To conclude, the actions of the CEC lead to more disadvantages for opposition parties in the electoral ballot rather than give them equal chances with regard to the incumbent party. This fact is not surprising; Sakwa (2008) argues that the current president of the CEC got his nomination only due to the fact that he comes from St.Petersburg and that he was Putin's class mate. Nominations offered on the basis of personal ties resemble nomination practices that were present in the former USSR nomenclature. It is therefore not surprising that the administration of the CEC has made no attempts to control equal representation of candidates in the media.

On the other hand, the CEC organises elections in a regulatory way and therefore contributes to the foundation of a democratic practice (OSCE 1996; 2000; 2003; 2004). The argument made by the OSCE is that any elections are better for the development of a democratic system than no elections at all. From these facts it can be assumed that H5a is confirmed. H5a was stated in the following way:

H5a: If the actions of the CEC neither aim to promote a democratic electoral system nor favour free and fair elections, then the opposition parties will be negatively affected by:

- **The registration rules,**
- **The rules to nominate a candidate,**
- **And will have difficulties to win seats.**

Therefore, the existence of the EMB in the Russian electoral system fails to make any significant contribution to the improvement of the democratisation process. On the contrary, opposition parties are marginalised during the electoral campaign due to the passiveness of the CEC. The result is embodied in the decreasing number of opposition parties since 1995.

4.3.3. Representation of the Opposition in the Media

After the downfall of the USSR the Russian media industry had to adapt their organisation according to new market principles. New sources of income for the media now stem either from product advertising or from the discovery of scandal scoop (Sakwa 2008). Additionally, the political sphere has divided the media into two parts. On the one hand, the government has selected its favourites while, on the other hand, governors have been creating their own regional media on the regional level. Sakwa (2008) and the Freedom House report on the press freedom in 2010 also emphasizes an increase in the media ownership by oligarchs, which is considered as a threat for the freedom of press.

In the year 1993 98.7 and 95.9 percent of all Russian households had access to television and radio respectively (White, Rose and McAllister 1997). During the parliamentary elections in 1993, the freedom of the media was so strongly curtailed by authorities that the issues concerning the media were still handled according to former Soviet traditions. For instance, the Russian Ministry of the Press and Information banned without any legal authority publications of the Opposition during the electoral campaign (White et al., 1997: 116). Additionally, the Russian government took over the parliamentary paper: *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*; while some newspapers like *Sovetskaya Rossiya* or *Pravda* were allowed to publish their articles regarding the elections only a few days after the elections were held.

The disparate representation in the public media of opposition parties when compared to the main party was also rooted to different financial possibilities of these parties. For example, in the 1993 Duma elections, the Russia's Choice Party had campaign expenditures that were twice as much as those of the LDPR and ten times as large as those of the

Communist party (White et al., 1997). President Yeltsin aimed to correct these inequalities by a decree stating that radio stations and television companies had to provide free airtime for all the parties involved. The problem, however, was that it did not include regional broadcasting or paid advertising. Consequently, divergences in the media representation of different parties remained.

The election law determines that each candidate running for presidential elections will have 80 minutes of free airtime on TV channels and radio stations on workdays of which half of this time must be spent on televised debates (IFES: International Foundation for Electoral Systems 2001). It seems that the media fails to play the role of an independent institution during electoral campaigns that favours democratic elections by providing voters with necessary information for their choices (OSCE2000; IFES 2000; Freedom House 2010).

A starting point for the Kremlin's attempt to hide the media's loss of objectivity and freedom can be found in the year of presidential elections in 1996. At this point in time, the authorities could not manipulate the media as openly as they did during the 1993 election. The fact is that citizens became more aware of the media's democratic task and would rather have boycotted the candidate who tried to manipulate the media too openly.

Hence, Yeltsin used significant financial resources from banks and other financial structures to promote his costly electoral campaign in the media in order to be re-elected in 1996. Except for the media that supported the Communist party, an overwhelming part of the media gave their voluntary support to Yeltsin in the belief that if the Communists won the elections, they would lose their freedom. When Yeltsin got his heart attacks, the majority of the media deliberately conspired around this event to limit its negative consequences for the elections (White et al., 1997). As a result of Yeltsin's successful election, the part of the media that was supportive for his re-election benefited from investments made by financial groups in addition to some state privileges.

After Russia's debt default in 1998, most media outlets became fragile due to a distinct lack of financial resources and thus more prone to the state's and regional administrations' manipulation (IFES 2000). The worsened economic conditions gave rise to even more manipulation of the media.

The campaign in the 1999 parliamentary elections was characterised by complaints from the opposition bloc Fatherland-All Russia and its leaders. They were accusing the media for waging a campaign against their own party while creating supportive propaganda for the Unity bloc (IFES 2000). At that time, the Unity was only a two-month-old block that without

the support from the media probably could not have achieved any substantial success in the elections.

As a result the IFES (2000) report alarmingly spotlighted the declining role of the media as an independent institution in the Russian political system. The European Institute of the Media (EIM 2000) also criticised the partial and negative coverage of opposition candidates during the same parliamentary elections in Russia. The same report from EIM characterised the media coverage of the presidential campaign as dominated by Putin and neglecting other candidates. Indeed, radio was defined as the least bias of media in Russia (EIM 2000). The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE: 2000) also criticised the media coverage in both elections. The particular point of criticism from OSCE concerned the decline of credible media pluralism and the pressure on the media from the dominant party and its candidate. OSCE (2000:4) report states that media coverage of the electoral campaign was influenced by the respective media's ownership and, in addition, that executive authorities were openly supporting candidates in the media.

As a result, the formation of public opinion was influenced and distorted. During the electoral campaign, the media provided a sharp focus on corruption scandals of single candidates or party leaders. Because Russian parties did not have any relevant political platform that the media could criticise, the negative campaign concentrated instead on corruption scandals of particular individuals (OSCE2000: 18). The criticism related to the media coverage during the 1999-2000 elections can be regarded to have its cause in the increasing number of the state-owned media that had risen during the previous four years to the elections. Hale (2006:89) argues that in 2003 CPRF was affected by the negative news coverage from the state-owned media. This development paved the way for manipulations of the media that consequently affected the election process.

The OSCE (2004) report for the 2004 presidential elections shows that the media failed to present a non-discriminative coverage of the candidates. This statement was made against on the background of the fact that the dominant party exploited the media in order to discredit the candidates of the Opposition. The coverage of Putin's campaign compared to other candidates was crossing all legal boundaries on the allocated media time (OSCE 2004). According to the OSCE, the Russian media failed to offer equal treatment to all candidates as the law stipulated it.

For the 2007 Duma and 2008 presidential elections the OSCE's Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) refrained from sending international observers to the elections because of the CEC's restricted terms of electoral observation. The Bureau of the

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) observed the elections instead. They concluded that both elections were conducted in an unfair manner because of certain aspects of the electoral law, a biased media and the abusive use of administrative resources for campaigning.

All in all, the Russian media lacks a significant degree of independence from the state that prevents them from fulfilling their task to provide citizens with impartial and politically balanced information during elections. Moreover, the state authorities' intervention and the intimidation of journalists and broadcasters is a serious violation of freedom of speech in Russia.

The quotas set by the electoral law are threatening the survival of small opposition parties. The Duma Election Law has a provision which states that political parties that obtained less than two percent of the votes on the federal level must reimburse the state media the cost of its free air time. Consequently, the representation of the candidates in the media is disadvantageous for small opponents since they face an additional risk of eventually being forced to pay for their coverage in the media. It seems that with the new regulations it will be harder for international observers to obtain new information about the development of the media with regard to their role for the Russian opposition.

4.3.4. Summary

In this paragraph two major facts about the issues with which opposition parties are confronted with during the electoral campaigns are elucidated. The first point is that the CEC, despite its ability to organise elections, fails to promote fair and free elections that offer equal chances for victory for the Opposition as well as for the incumbent. The second point presented evidences for the fact that the media systematically tends to rule out opposition parties, a trend that seems to have increased since the 1993 election. The next paragraph will first of all shed light on funding rules and inequalities between the Opposition and the incumbent parties in this matter. Secondly, disparities in the electoral campaign between the Opposition and the United Russia Party will be emphasized.

4.4. Opposing the Almighty Incumbent Party

4.4.1. Introduction

The last paragraph of this chapter first describes the Russian funding system for electoral campaigns. The aim of this first section is to analyse the rules of campaign funding and to examine their ramifications for the development of the Opposition. The second paragraph focuses on the controversy concerning the role of the United Russia Party in weakening of political opposition in Russia.

4.4.2. Financing Electoral Campaign

The finance of the electoral campaigns can be divided into two major aspects: disclosure and legal enforcement. The first entails the control of political donors as well as of political funds in order to provide public opinion with necessary information and to control political money. The second mechanism promotes the creation of the system that directly controls cash flow in politics.

There are several obligations which candidates and parties have to fulfil in order to be allowed to run for elections. These requirements are part of a legal enforcement procedure that disregards any disclosure procedures for political donors in Russia. Candidates to both presidential and parliamentary elections have to open special electoral accounts in the Savings Bank of the Russian Federation. Additionally, they have to keep transfer records enlisting money donated to and spent from their electoral funds, which at the end has to be sent to the electoral commission within a given time period. Finally, the electoral commission has to transmit all copies of the financial reports to the mass media within five days after having received these reports.

There are several sources for financing the electoral campaign for a political party. The 2001 law 'On political parties' provides that parties which win at least three percent of the general vote in the Duma or presidential elections can receive public funding. Additionally, a political party may also generate its financial income by collecting membership fees and by pursuing other legal commercial activities. This law introduced radical institutional changes of the party finance, however, these changes failed to produce an impact on the party funding system. (Wilson 2007).

At the federal level the maximum permitted campaign expenditure is 400 million rubles of which a maximum of 50 percent can stem from the party's own resources. Foreign companies, citizens and organisations as well as Russian companies with more than 30 percent of foreign capital are not allowed to make campaign donations. The CEC may ask the Supreme Court to withdraw a party's registration on specified grounds (Rose & Munro 2009:255). A candidate in the election for the State Duma is prohibited to spend on his campaign more than the amount which is equal to ten thousand times of the existent minimum wage. A Federal law determines the latter. The electoral funding of a political party or association cannot exceed 250 thousand times the minimum wage (IFES 2001).

The system of electoral funding in Russia can promote equality within the political competition and the political system. However these rules can be characterised as highly deficient if they are applied only to the opposition parties. For example, article 45 of the Law for the Election of the President limited the donation of a single person for the presidential election in 1996 to 577 US\$ for the candidate (Sakwas 2008).

Additionally, maximum expenses for the campaign per candidate were set to 2,887,500 US\$ (Sakwa 2008). These numbers mean that in the country of 142 million inhabitants the donation allowed equalled slightly above two cents per person. This kind of unrealistic financial regulations induces parties and candidates to hide their real spending for the campaigns and the sources of their funding (Wilson 2007).

For instance, in 1996, Yeltsin financed his campaign from sources outside of his direct organisation and which made it impossible to control the legality of the funding. As a result, the overall amount spent on his political campaign exceeded the legal limits (OSCE 1996). During the 1999 Duma elections OSCE (2000) reports show that the funding for electoral campaign was not transparent enough and, moreover, that the role of criminal organisations with regard to financing the campaigns was not an open issue during the debates. Moreover, the contributions of big companies to parties' funding and, hence, dependence of the parties on these donors should not be underestimated (Wilson 2007). However, in the 2000 presidential elections the transparency level concerning campaign financing was improved (OSCE 2000).

Violation of financing rules either leads to the rejection/annulment of the registration or to a removal of the mandate. These kinds of sanctions raise doubts about the fairness of their applicability; they can be used within a corrupt system to eliminate opponents from the electoral campaign. The Russian campaign funding system can be summarised in the following table:

Table 4: Summary of the Campaign Funding in Russia

<i>Subsidies</i>	
Any Public Funding	YES
Any Tax Relief	NO
Any Free Broadcast	YES
Any Subsidies in-kind	YES
<i>Regulations</i>	
Any Public Disclosure	YES
Any Contribution Limits	YES
Any Spending Limits	YES
Ban on Foreign Donations	YES
Ban on Paid Political Advertising	NO

Source: IFES (2001)

The implementation of the funding rules seems to produce another proof of the difficulties that opposition parties encounter when trying to engage in an electoral competition. Consequently, these underestimated financial limits have failed to build an honest and open political financing system. As a result of this failure, the confidence in the system of political financing regulations is undermined. Hence, the increase in the level of public funding and the change in the structure of campaign sources might result in improvement for the political financing system in Russia.

4.4.3. The Battle Between the United Russia Party and the Opposition

Before the year 2001 there was no dominant political party in Russia which was able to monopolise the power for more than one election. Regional elites were still autonomous from the Kremlin, and Putin was not making any substantial efforts in order to attract the elite's support for his party. The turning point came about when the Unity and the Fatherland-All-Russia Parties merged in 2001 which resulted in the creation of the United Russia (Hale 2006; Sakwa 2008).

Since its creation the United Russia has attempted to recruit governors inside the party with the aim to increase its regional power (Hale 2006; Reuter 2007). It was for the Duma elections in 2003 that Putin for the first time openly showed his need for the governors'

administrative resources in order to promote his party the United Russia at the regional level (Riggs & Schraeder 2004; Kryshantovskaya & White 2005; Reuter 2007; Reuter & Remington 2009). This strategy confirms the argument made by Riggs and Schraeder (2004:141) regarding the important role of elites in the establishment of the dominant party system in Russia. The Kremlin's strategy can be considered as a success for Putin because the United Russia won two thirds of the seats in the 2003 Duma elections (Appendix 1a).

The second strategic move was made in 2004 when the United Russia changed the legislation so that governors, the president and ministers could hold leadership positions within political parties. By offering high ranked positions to members of the latter group the United Russia continued to extend its influence over the regions. Because of its majority in Parliament and the president's open support, it was easy for the United Russia to marginalise the role of the parliamentary opposition.

After the 2007 Duma elections this fact became even more prevalent since only four parties were able to win seats in Parliament. Sartori (2005) differentiates between the parties that win seats in parliaments and the one that do not, which he defines as labels. It seems that even parties that manage to win seats in the elections for the Russian Parliament remain labels due to the overwhelming majority of the United Russia.

Furthermore, the abolishment of direct elections for the regional executives incited governors to join the United Russia in order to secure their political positions. The party's membership is reported to 1.5 million nationwide, which is the biggest mass support for a political party in Russia. Hale (2006) as well as Reuter and Remington (2009:502) observe that the Kremlin has made several changes to the electoral and party legislation that favours the party in power during the elections and additionally intensifies its role at the institutional level.

In the press conference of the 1st February 2007, Putin characterised the creation of the Fair Russia Party as positive. For Putin, the existence of this new party will allow the part of the electorate with social-democratic ideas the possibility to vote in the election (Sestanovich 2007). Sestanovich sees the role of this new "Opposition" party as preventive because by allowing this party to exist, the Kremlin is trying to eliminate any possibility for the creation of real opposition parties that might act against its will.

The creation of the Fair Russia reveals two points about the United Russia's own perception of its present situation within the political system. Firstly, this governing party is certain about its ability to control the political sphere and its democratisation process by imposing its own rules of political engagement. Secondly, this new party can be a sign of

weakness and doubt present among the United Russia's leadership that is concerned about its ability to rule the country without invented and controlled opposition. After the Soviet experience, a one-party regime is no longer an option for the "sovereign democracy" in Russia and it seems that controlled opposition is the solution for the United Russia's perpetuation as a ruling party (Sestanovich 2007:124).

The United Russia has no intention to offer any additional power to the Opposition, on the contrary, the main aim that became apparent since its creation is organised around a double logic. First of all, the party is aiming to decrease the number of political opponents and, secondly, it seeks to increase the role of political parties in the system in order to have the monopoly of power (Hale 2006; Reuter 2007; Reuter and Remington 2009). Morini (2011:10) states that Putin's political reforms changed the relations between Parliament, government and political parties.

In 2001 'The Law on Political Parties' created new barriers for small and regional parties to enter the political domain. In 2005 the shift to the fully PR system was the most decisive move to favour big political parties. Furthermore, the new electoral threshold increased the barrier to entry from five to seven percent. Elimination of elections could not be an option for Putin because it will create too much instability. In addition, it would also undermine the efforts of actors that are interested in the continuity of this process.

The Russian government tries to criticise the observation methods of the OSCE/ODIHR in order to renegotiate the establishment of electoral observations. As a result, since 2004 Russian invitation for ODIHR to observe elections is subject to limitations, which makes it impossible to fulfil their mission. Civil servants and public resources are abusively used in favour of the United Russia, undermining fair competition among candidates. The legislators frequently use the reason of 'invalid signatures' in order to eliminate the strongest candidates from the Opposition. Furthermore, once registered, it is next to impossible to successfully lead an electoral campaign due to the pressure from the dominant party. Therefore, by encouraging the development of national political parties the Kremlin intends to decrease the level of uncertainty in elections (Reuter 2007). The United Russia is thus playing the role of a strong political party able to contest and win competitive authoritarian elections (Hale 2006).

4.4.4. Summary

In this paragraph it was demonstrated that the lack of clarity within the rules for the campaign funding is the main reason for the existence of the illicit funding. Due to this lack of clarity the interpretation of these rules is dependent on the subjective interpretations and manipulations. The second point presented in this paragraph was the dominance of the United Russia over the Russian party system. It was argued that since its entry into the government in 2001, the United Russia manipulated the party system organisation in order to strengthen its own position within it by weakening the role of other parties.

4.5. Conclusion

This first analytical chapter went through the examination of electoral reforms as well as electoral results since 1993. In the first paragraph it was pointed out that the electoral reforms offered access for opposition parties to the electoral ballot more restricted if not impossible. Small opposition parties are more threatened by these measurements. The second paragraph outlined the effect of the CEC and the media on the development of the Opposition. The main conclusion is negative; both of these institutions are playing along with the incumbent party and are disfavours other parties. The final paragraph presented the limited reach of the Russian funding and donation system for political parties in electoral campaigns. Finally, it was demonstrated that the role of opposition parties was reduced to the role of political labels within the parliamentary system due to the overwhelming dominance of the United Russia and its interferences. In this chapter two hypotheses were tested. The first hypothesis H5a concerning the negative role of the CEC in the advancement of the Opposition was confirmed. Secondly, the hypothesis H5b that deals with the incidences of the changes in the electoral law made by the incumbent party for its own advantage was also confirmed. The next chapter is the last of this Master's thesis. The main concerns here will be the analysis of the electoral platforms for the main opposition parties and the United Russia in order to test the remaining hypotheses.

Chapter5

Understanding the Political Role of the Opposition

5.1. Introduction

An assumption in the theory on party politics and democracy is that the opposition will offer alternative policies to the one of the governing party. Is this the case in Russia? The last chapter of this thesis analyses political programs of the main parliamentary opposition parties as well as of the majority party in the state Duma, the United Russia. The selective criteria of these parties were explained in the methodological chapter. A list of parties can be found in Appendix1c. The first paragraph of this chapter will place parties according to their ideological values alongside the left-right axis. The second paragraph summarises the results of the investigation within the political programs in a cross tabulation describing the main issues debated in the programs. This last paragraph of the chapter aims to characterise the role of opposition parties in Russia.

5.2. Mapping Russian Parties Within a Left-Right Dimension

5.2.1. Introduction

The aim of this paragraph is to locate the four parties analysed in this thesis on the ideological left-right axis. In order to achieve this goal, central points of the selected parties' programs will be cross-tabulated them over several relevant categories. The description of this method will be given in advance. The analysis proceeds by identifying the number of right and left-wing statements in the respective party program. In this manner it will be possible to pinpoint the parties on the ideological axis.

5.2.2. Framework for Analysing Political Programs

The political programs that are subject to analysis were taken from the official websites of the respective political party in Russia. Since the websites are in Russian, I made the translation of each party's political programs. The translations are given word by word. Therefore the names of the paragraphs in the manifestos correspond to the original titles and subdivisions given by the parties themselves (Appendix2a-d). However, the space and amount that the parties assign in their program to different political issues vary enormously from party to party. In order to create a clear overview for the reader, the summary of some points is therefore necessary.

The accuracy of the translation constituted the major difficulty for the analyses. All political programs were translated in January 2011 and corresponded at that moment to the latest information. The methodological issue concerns the analysis of the programs itself. The creation of the cross tabulation for the main issues of the party programs gives rise to the problem of inter subjectivity. In order to analyse the programs, the main characteristics and ideas have to be chosen for the analytical framework. The concern in this process is that the chosen characteristics and categorisation can differ from the results found by other researchers. Consequently, the reader must be aware of this subjectivity when reading the analysis. Unfortunately, this methodological weakness cannot be solved within the scope of this thesis.

I have chosen the classification made by Klingemann et al. (2006) and applied it to four Russian parties in the analysis. In order to determine the selection of issues that appear in the classification, Klingemann et al. (2006) uses a multiple discriminate analysis. Due to the lack of time and space I will take over this classification of Klingemann et al. (2006:45). When applying the categories defined by these authors to the current political programs of the Russian parties, I will require the same definition of these political areas as presented by Klingemann et al. (2006:45).

The first category of statements defined by Klingemann et al. (2006) is the "State Policy". For these authors the party's declarations can be defined as belonging to this policy category and debating the following issues. First comes the importance of freedom, human rights and hence democracy within society. Secondly, when the party makes positive statements about the existence of a constitution and when the party positions its ideas about the organisation of the political system as being in favour of centralised or decentralised institutions. When speaking about the statements on the importance of centralisation, several

parties mentioned in their programs the importance of unity within the Russian state. These statements were positioned under the category “Centralisation”.

The third set of statements is related to the government’s effectiveness as well as the reforms that must be done in order to improve it. For example, in the Fair Russia’s manifesto the third point of the second section “Plans and Reforms” is the following: *“Corruption must be considered as a betrayal at the state level”* (Appendix2a). This declaration was coded as a statement related to “Modes of Government” (Appendix3c). And, finally, when there are statements in the manifesto that suggest a positive or negative influence of the communist past for the effectiveness of the present government.

The second category of the parties’ policy orientation is “Economic Policy”. The statements which are considered as being related to this category are the following: firstly, the favouring of the development of the market economy by the party and, thus, the limitation of the state’s intervention in the economy; secondly, when the party favours the development of the planned or mixed economy and, hence, promotes a positive role of the state in the economy; thirdly, such kind of statements are related to the party’s desire to achieve progress and modernisation in science, infrastructures and production; and, finally, when the party clearly expresses its support for environmental protection and agriculture.

For example, in the third section of the CPRF’s manifesto the third statement is the following: *“Organise the nationalisation of industries and natural resources in order to use their benefits for the improvement of living standards for all citizens”* was positioned in both “Planned or Mixed Economy” and in “Welfare State Expansion” categories. This can be explained by the fact that the first part of the statement addresses the issue of state’s intervention in the economy; while the second part is concerned with the problem of fair distribution of resources, which is clearly a part of a welfare policy as it was defined by Klingemann et al (2006:48).

The statements belonging to the category “Social Policy” can be summarised such as: party’s support for the preservation of traditional morality and solidarity, the development of law and order; party’s approval of cultural liberalism and opposition to traditional values; party’s statements presenting arguments for or against the welfare state; and when the party positions itself as the party favouring policies with regard to a distinct social groups.

The last category is “Foreign Policy”, the statements venturing the party’s opinion on this issue are related to: the conservation or development of the military strength; the promotion of peace and détente; strong claims on the importance of nationalistic values and patriotism; support of international cooperation; and positive or negative referral of special

relationships with other countries and nations. For example, the LDPR's declaration in the twelfth part of the fifth section "Security and Defence": "*The LDPR supports the existence and development of the Cossacks*", was counted in the category «Special relationships».

It was noticed by (Van Biezen 2007:448) that during the analysis of party manifestos one should always have in mind that these documents are a combination of ideological as well as strategic considerations and it is hardly possible to distinguish between them. Consequently, in my analysis I do not take into consideration this distinction, in order to preserve the clarity of my analysis.

The next section of this paragraph places the four parties on the left-right ideological scale. To locate the parties on the left-right axis, I use the same grouping of issues as Klingemann et al. (2006:5). These authors compare the parties' manifestos over time from 1990 to 2003. However, the aim of this investigation is to analyse more recent manifestos in order to draw conclusions on the opposition's current place within the system. It was explained by the authors (Klingemann et al. 2006, Chapter 4) that the use of their data allows defining the dynamic aspects of party positioning on the left-right ideological dimension.

Simonsen (2001) observed the following peculiarity in the ideology of Russian parties': some parties' ideology might be more representative through their nationalistic arguments than through their left or right-wing policy-oriented claims. As a result Simonsen (2001:264) suggests that during the content analysis of the manifestos' in order to position parties within a left-right dimension one should differentiate between: economic, political and nationalistic statements. In this investigation statements related to nationalism were not differentiated from the two other types of statements, in order to ease the clarity of the analysis and of the findings. However, this differentiation must be made if the research exceeds the limitations of a Master thesis.

During the classification, all the sections presented in the political programs of the parties will be examined in order to improve the exactness of the analysis. In the CPRF manifesto, for example, three sections can be found: "the ideas", "the three steps toward socialism" and "the program" (Appendix2b). I intend to evaluate these three sections with the same importance with the intention of determining the place of the CPRF alongside the left-right spectrum.

Another point that must be mentioned with regard to the ideological positioning of the parties is that the coding of the left-right statements fails to represent the degree of extremity in these statements. Therefore, the results of Table5 only define the statements as being left-wing or right-wing oriented without specifying how extreme they are when compared one to

another. For example, the first statement made by the Fair Russia in the first section of its manifesto “The Values of the Party” is the following: “*The equality of rights and freedoms*”. In the coding table (Appendix3a-b) this statement will be positioned as a right-wing idea within the category: “Freedom, Human Rights” and no further specification will be given on the degree of extremity of this statement.

Klingemann et al. (2006) scores the concepts in percentages and I am going to follow the same method. For example, a party that makes 20 total statements where ten (or 50 percent) of them can be identified as left-wing issues and five (or 25 percent) as right-wing issues will receive a score of -25 (i.e. 25-50). A party with this score is located on the left hand side of the axis as a party that supports more left-wing ideas.

The methodological issue caused by this classification is concerned with the tendency to position radical right-wing parties in the centre of the axis. This is due to the fact that those parties which avoid expressing their ideas with regard to several policy categories defined by the authors, will by default occupy a centrist position alongside the dimension (Van Biezen 2007:447). This problem can occur with regard to the positioning on the axis of the LDPR, since it is the only party of the sample that was defined by numerous writers as being an extreme right party.

In order to classify the parties I use the same coding as Klingemann et al. (2006:5). As a result the parties with a negative score will be defined as the left wing while parties with a positive score are representative of the right-wing. The minimum and the maximum score a party can achieve will be -100 and +100 respectively. Nevertheless, in practice it is less likely that any party will be found on any of these extremes. A centrist party, for example, would be situated at zero.

First, I will use the grouping of the concepts from Klingemann et al. (2006) and summarise them in a table. Secondly, I will extend these findings as representation of the parties in a left-right dimension chart.

5.2.3. Left-Right Location of the Political Parties

Political competition among parties often takes place along a left-right dimension (Downs 1957). A party’s position on the left-right axis is determined by the party’s ideology manifested in the program. The party will seek to implement this program if it assumes political power within the system. As it was defined in the theoretical section, political parties

are channels that unite those with reciprocal political opinions (Dahl 1969; Ware 2003; Sartori 2005).

In their volume on the party system Lipset and Rokkan (1967) present a model of a party system structure. According to their theory pairs of opponents reflect the competition within the political system. For example, an agrarian party that represents the interests of the rural electorate is likely to compete against an urban party representing the interests of central society.

When analysing competition among Russian opposition parties, it is difficult to characterise them within a traditional framework of social cleavages. This can be explained by the fact that during the transitional period parties were too weak to establish the typically observed dynamics that exist between social cleavages and parties (Sakwa 1995; Evans and Whitefield 1998; Riggs & Schraeder 2005).

Indeed White et al., (1997:147) do not observe any patterns of competition between Russian political parties that could be explained as the result of conflict lines within the society. It seems that parties avoid opposing their ideological opponents but instead try to mobilise voters in a different way. The parties' ideology and campaign are centralised around their own values and not on the idea to oppose some other parties' ideas.

There are a number of political scientists who argue that Russian parties are weak in the sense that they are not deeply rooted to the Russian political society (Reddaway 1994; Rose 1995; McFaul 2001; Stoner-Weiss 2001; Hale 2006; Bäck and Teorell 2009). One of the reasons identified for the parties' weakness is related to strategic decisions made by individual actors that had the aim to weaken the party sphere.

The weakness of the party system can pose a threat to the development of a competitive democracy. The Freedom House report shows that since 1999 Russia has regressed in all indicators of democracy and become in that respect the worst transitional regime in Eastern Europe. After the 2003 Parliamentary elections McFaul (2003) evidenced that in addition to the left-right division among the parties, a new issue focused on nationalism appeared in the debates.

It can be argued that the individuality of Russian history and culture as well as some distinguishing developments of the political system after the fall of the USSR gives a different signification to the left-right dimension in the Russian politics (Evans & Whitefield 1998:1023; Morini 2011:7). Consequently, applying the Western definition of the left-right ideological dimension to the present Russian parties' ideology can be considered as slightly misrepresentative. Nevertheless, the aim of this investigation is to acquire a precise idea on

the positioning of the four parties along this dimension, which the coding schema of Kilngemann et al. (2006) makes it possible despite its limitations.

The positioning of the parties on the left-right dimension is representative of the ideas and values defended by the parties given in the manifestos. These documents represent the parties' public status during the elections. Ware (2003) adds that there are other values and ideas which might not be presented in the manifestos. These unwritten ideas are part of the party's belief system, and the party's leadership considers them as self evident without the need for special emphasis. Hence, they remain unwritten but play a pivotal role during the decision making process if the party is in charge. This analysis does not take these ideas into consideration but only investigates the written manifestos.

The aim of the following analysis is thus to determine how parties can be positioned along the left-right dimension. Table 5 contains a summary of the left-right statements that are stated in the political manifestos of the four selected parties. The frequency of these statements will in the end give the possibility of a graphical representation of the parties' ideological positions (See Chart 2).

Table 5: Summary of the Left-Right Statements from the Parties

Parties	Right-wing Statements		Left-wing Statements		The Total of Statements		Total Score for Statements
	Nb. of Statements	% of Statements	Nb of Statements	% of Statements	Total Nb	Total %	
CPRF	9	29	22	71	31	100	-42
LDPR	25	48	27	52	52	100	-4
Fair Russia	20	49	21	51	41	100	-2
United Russia	19	61	12	39	31	100	22

When looking at the total scores of the statements it appears that none of the parties is positioned on the extreme left (represented by the value -100) or extreme right (represented

by the value +100). Additionally, the centrist position (represented by 0) is also not represented by any of the four parties. In the meantime, these classifications are in the expected directions, since in practice no political party can represent these absolute values on the ideology dimension.

The LDPR and the Fair Russia lie slightly to the left of the focal point. Both parties can consequently be expected to embody the centrist ideology with a left-wing tendency. Anderson (2010:400) argues that the LDPR's arguments with regard to nationalistic values often conceal the general centrist orientation of the party's ideology. In addition, Evans and Whitefield's (1998:1034) national survey findings display that the LDPR's supporters are the ones defining their ideas as centre oriented. Consequently, not differentiating nationalistic statements of the party from other ones as it was advised by Simonsen (2001) did not impede the relevance of my findings.

However, the results for the LDPR contradict the arguments made by McFaul (2001) regarding the rising extreme-right position taken by the LDPR. Additionally, there are several scholars such as Myagkov and Ordeshook (1997), Simonsen (2001), Riggs and Schraeder (2005), Hale (2006) and Morini (2011) who also define the LDPR as a nationalistic and extreme-right party. Moreover, Myagkov and Ordeshook (1997) demonstrate that during the election period from 1991 to 1996 most parties were taking either a reformist or non-reformist ideological position but none was defined as a centrist party.

The difference between the findings can contain a double explanation. Firstly, the manifesto analysed here was published in 2011, by implication it could be possible that the LDPR might have changed its electoral strategy since then. Or, secondly, it can be due to the methodological weakness in the positioning of the radical right-wing parties debated in the previous paragraph (Van Biezen 2007).

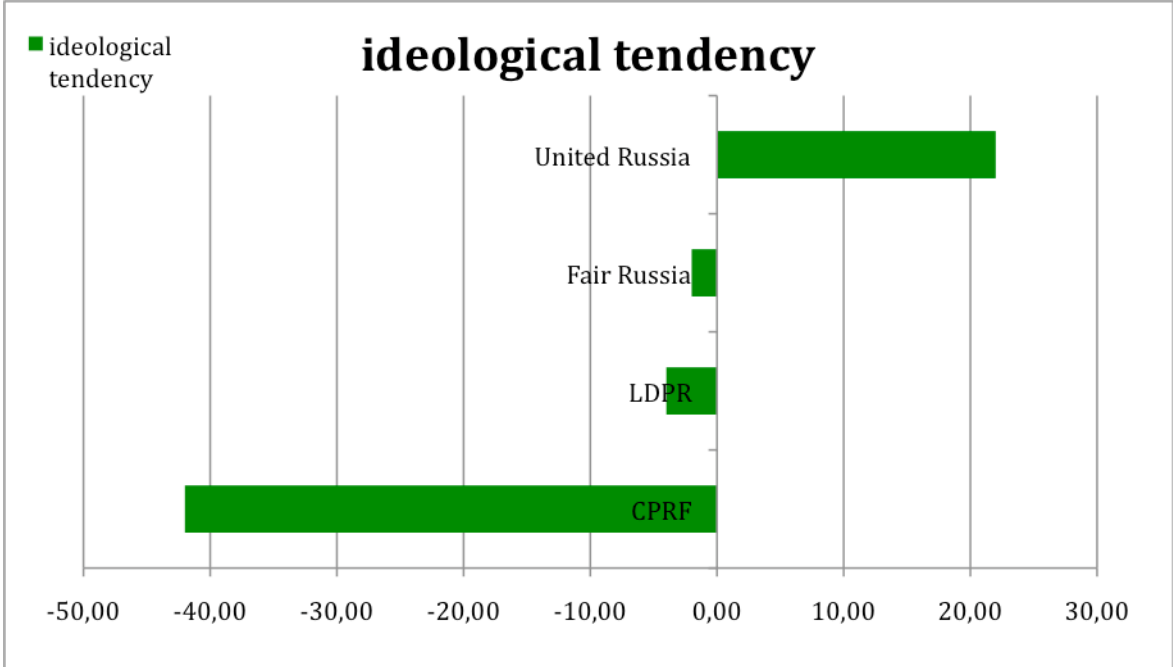
The CPRF and the United Russia are the two parties whose political position is the most pronounced. The CPRF is clearly a leftist party since 71 percent of its statements can be identified as left-wing ideas, which confirms the claims about the CPRF ideological position made by Simonsen (2001), Riggs and Schraeder (2005) and Hale (2006). This score confirms the statement made by Simonsen (2001) and March (2002) that the CPRF orients its policy proposal toward a more moderate strategy and it is something that differentiates the party from more radical leftist parties.

The United Russia has 39 percent of the statements oriented towards a right-wing ideology. With the resulting positive score on the left-right dimension, the United Russia can be defined as a right-wing party. Nevertheless, the United Russia's ideological position can be

considered as ambiguous (Anderson 2010:402). When Putin (the present party’s leader) succeeded Yeltsin, he supported Yeltsin’s centre ideology in opposing the communists. Meanwhile Putin’s past career in KGB and his identification with liberalism after the fall of the USSR gave his character also a right-wing dimension (March 2001, Hale 2006, Anderson 2010). These factors can explain why the right-wing score of the United Russia indicates that its right-wing position is less distinct than the position of the CPRF on the left-wing side.

Taken in absolute values, the CPRF’s score is two times bigger than the score made by the United Russia. This indicates that the CPRF’s ideological position is twice as strong as the one of the United Russia. Hale (2006) and Morini (2011:7) similarly defines the CPRF as the only Russian party possessing (to a limited extent) the organisational structure of a mass party with strong ideology. Hale (2006) argues that the CPRF’s presence within the Duma since 1993 has allowed the party to strengthen its ideological position. The position of both the CPRF on the left hand side and of the United Russia on the right hand side of the axis oppose McFaul’s (2003) argument about the erosion of the left-right division within Russian political parties.

Chart 2: Left-Right Ideological Position of the Parties



The ideological tendencies of the four selected parties that are indicated in Chart2 show that the CPRF and the United Russia have the strongest ideological position within the Russian party system. Their goals and strategies are more pronounced alongside the left-right

dimension when compared with the other parties. Blondel (1997) demonstrated that when the ideological tension between two parties is high, it is more likely that a political conflict will be stronger between them than between other parties.

The ideology of the remaining parties such as the LDPR and the Fair Russia can be located on the centre-left point of the axis. They are less extreme in their ideological goals relative to the previously mentioned parties expressed through much lower scores. These two parties can be defined as moderate parties (Downs 1957; Anderson 2010) in the sense that their ideas presented in the manifestos do not reflect extreme policy orientations. The percentage of left- and right-wing statements from both parties differs only by one percentage point for each category. Thus, it is possible to state that these parties represent similar interests and compete for the same part of the electorate (Downs 1957).

Even though these parties manage to win a few seats in the elections, they fail to form a strong opposition to big parties. These results manifest the LDPR and the Fair Russia as parties doomed to play a marginal role within the system. Their poor electorate support can be explained by their ideological position. While most of the voters give their preferences to the left-wing or to the right-wing parties, only a margin of voters shares moderate preferences.

The ideological scoring of the Fair Russia² and the LDPR is very unexpected since the ideas of both parties run under opposite political labels. After its creation the Fair Russia was supposed to be an alternative for voters with social welfare concerns and socialist ideas (Kulik 2010:74). Despite this fact, however, the party ended up by supporting Medvedev for the Presidential elections in 2008 (Kulik 2010). The LDPR, on the other hand, is labelled as a liberal party and should hence be a complete opposite to the Fair Russia and its political ideas and strategies. These results should be considered with caution, due to the methodological issues with regard to the positioning of the radical right-wing parties (Klingemann et al. 2006).

The ideological tendency of the parties also highlights the parties' different functions (Apter 1962). One of the main functions of the opposition is to represent interests overlooked by the majority (Apter 1962, Dahl 1969, Blondel 1997). In the case of the four analysed parties, the CPRF is the party that successfully represents interests that are not covered by the

² Fair Russia= Rodina + Russian Party of Life + Russian Pensioners Party + People's Party + Socialist United Party of Russia + Green Party + Party of Constitutional Democrats + Party of Social Justice + Party of Entrepreneurship Development (Kulik 2010).

United Russia. According to these results the CPRF is the main opposition party to the dominant party in its ideological goals and political strengths. This statement is similar to the one made by Hale (2006:45) about the political strength of CPRF.

March (2002) explains the success of the CPRF by the fact that the party's leadership was taken over by moderate forces in 1993. The party was therefore able to maintain its traditional ideological direction and at the same time redirect its strategies to manage the transition into a new political situation. The LDPR and the Fair Russia also represent different ideological ideas compared to the ones delineated by the United Russia. However, their ideological strength is significantly lower than that of the United Russia and the CPRF. It will therefore be harder for the two last mentioned parties to present a coherent alternative to the party in power.

Furthermore, it appears that a coalition among the CPRF, the LDPR and the Fair Russia is impossible. First of all, this fact can be explained by the ideological gap among these parties on the left-right ideological axis. Another reason is the CPRF's high ideological strength, which is an obstacle to its alliance with the two other oppositional parties. Both of these reasons contribute to each other. Theoretically speaking, if these three parties were positioned not far from each other on the left-right dimension, the CPRF's ideological strength could have been a leading force for the establishment of a coalition.

As a result H3 was confirmed in this analysis. H3 was presented in the following way:

H3: If the ideological position of opposition parties alongside the left-right dimension is different from the ideological standpoint of the party in power, then these parties will be able to fulfil the basic opposition's role.

The analysis of the political statements given in the manifestos allowed a graphical representation of the parties along a left-right dimension. Additionally, this representation shows that the CPRF is an opposition party in the sense that it represents the most opposite ideas relatively to the party in power. And, finally, the LDPR and the Fair Russia were identified as the most moderate parties within the political system.

The results of this analysis and the corroboration of the hypothesis are in line with the election results for all the four parties (Appendix 1c). In Table 6 the average percentage of votes won by the parties in the parliamentary elections over the past five elections are displayed. These results are then represented in Chart 3.

Table 6: Average Share of Votes in the Parliamentary Elections 1993-2007

Party/Year	1993	1995	1999	2003	2007	average % of votes
LDPR	14,3	11,3	3,8	8,2	8,9	9,3
CPRF	10,7	34,9	25,1	11,6	12,7	19
United Russia	-	-	-	49,6	70	59,8
Fair Russia	-	-	-	-	8,4	8,4

Source: Rose & Munro (2009)

Chart 3: Share of Votes Won in the Parliamentary Elections 1993-2007

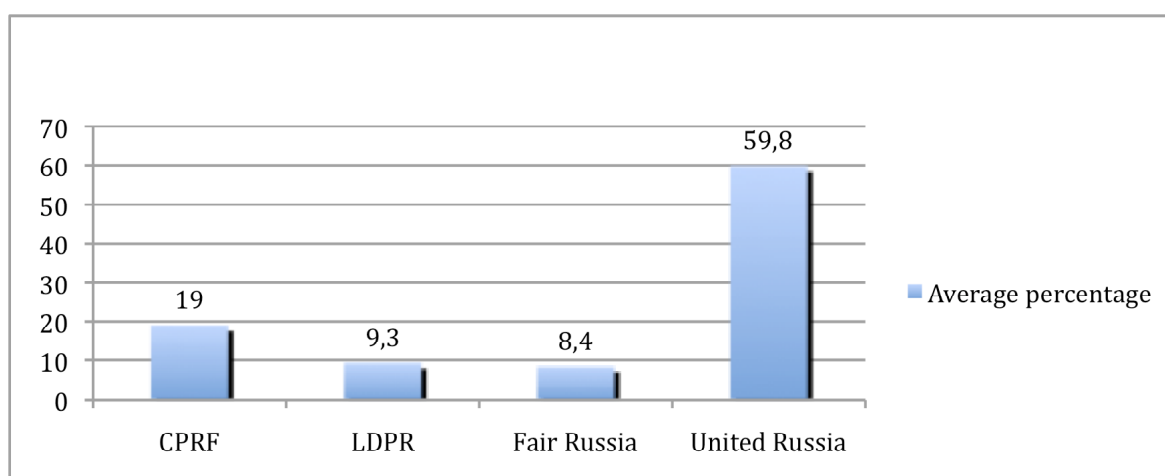


Chart3 displays the dispersion of the average electoral support for the parties in five parliamentary elections from 1993 to 2007. The weakness of this representation is that it is not evocative of the differences in the voter turnout for each election year. Nevertheless, this chart can give a suggestive overview of the case.

The average electoral results reproduced in the chart confirm the point made in the analysis of the ideological statements given by the manifestos of the LDPR and the Fair Russia. It becomes clear that especially the LDPR and the Fair Russia fail to mobilise any representative electoral support. Consequently, their position as moderate parties is not effective in a sense that the moderate voters only represent a smaller portion of the electorate.

Moreover, Kulik (2010) argues that in the 2007 elections, the Fair Russia won seats at the expense of the LDPR. This confirms the argument made earlier in this section that these parties are competing for the same moderate type of voters. However, these electoral turnouts

contradict the argument made by Anderson (2010) as well as by Evans and Whitefiels (1998). In their research papers these authors argue about the increasing number of voters defending centre-oriented ideas.

On the other hand the CPRF and the United Russia succeed in wining more votes on the election day. By positioning their party's ideas on the left and on the right of the ideological line respectively, they advance to be the most developed parties in Russia. To sum up, a parallel can be drawn between the results of the parties' ideological position and the parties' success in the elections.

However, one should not underestimate the weakness of this parallel. Bäck & Teorell (2009) finds that only 40 percent of Russians are "partisans", which means that the party's ideology is only one factor among many that influences voters' choices. Klingemann et al. (2006:27) also suggests that with regard to different international political contexts other policy dimensions can be considered in order to explain party politics in Russia. The similarity between the results of Chart2 and Chart3 demonstrates that ideology is still an important factor to win elections. Nevertheless, due to manipulations of the electoral system performed by the Kremlin, strong ideological party profiles might not be sufficient enough to win more votes or play an important role within the system as stated in Chapter4.

5.2.4. Summary

In this first paragraph the ideology of the four parties under investigation were located on a left-right dimension. This operationalization allowed the confirmation of H3 as well as the establishment of the ideological strength of the parties. The next paragraph will go on with the investigation of the parties' manifestos. Here is the cross tabulation of the main topics presented within the programs, which will help to determine how coherent the manifestos are.

5.3. Characterising the Role of the Political Opposition in Russia

5.3.1. Introduction

In the last paragraph of this chapter an analysis of the Opposition's aptitude to challenge the party in power by presenting an alternative program to the electorate will be performed. In this section H1 and H2 will be tested. From the analysis of the cross tabulation, it will be possible to describe the role of the Opposition within the Russian political system. The last section of this paragraph will describe the patterns of the Russian opposition and H4 will be tested.

5.3.2. Opposition's Ability to Challenge the Party in Power

It was evidenced in Chapter4 that modifications in the electoral law for the past decade not only significantly weakened the role of the parties in Russia but also their chances to win elections. Sartori (2005:53) argues that as an institution, a political party must be able to affect the government's policies in accordance with the party's platform and ideas.

The following Table 7 presents a cross tabulation of the main topics presented within the four manifestos. This analysis is based on the 'saliency theory' of party competition; consequently, it is assumed that parties do not compete by opposing each other on the same issues, but instead by accentuating different issues. One would expect from the idea of a 'political opposition' that opposition parties would deviate from the policy position of the incumbent party on at least some of the issues in the manifestos. This table will be used in order to determine how different the three main opposition parties are compared to the party in power, the United Russia.

The results represented in Table7 show the degree of preference presented by each party within their manifestos for different policy strategies. A more detailed table illustrating the number of times each party says something with regard to distinct sub-categories is presented in Appendix3c. This analysis is not representative of either the parties are for or against a set of policy issues presented in Appendix3c. It is evocative of whether these parties pronounce themselves about these issues in their programs and if they do, it was counted how often they do so. Consequently, the differences of percentage among the topics mentioned within the programs can be suggestive of the parties' policy orientations.

Table 7: Summary of the Statements' Cross Tabulation within the Political Programs

Categories/Parties	CPRF		LDPR		Fair Russia		United Russia	
	%	Nb	%	Nb	%	Nb	%	Nb
State Policy	32	12	22	20	22	11	21	10
Economic Policy	21	8	30	27	27	13	25	12
Social Policy	39	15	35	32	43	21	40	19
Foreign Policy	8	3	13	12	8	4	15	7
General Economic Orientation	Nationalisation		Protectionism		Interventionism		Interventionism	
Total	100	38	100	91	100	49	100	48

This cross tabulation shows that the manifestos for the main parties are organised around a set of principles and ideas that these parties claim to be supportive of. The presence of the policy propositions found in the programs demonstrates that parties are ideology oriented (Lipset 2000). The aim of the following analysis of the party programs will, however, not find out whether the parties are actually going to apply these ideas in practice or not. The mere existence of these principles, however, illustrates the general tendency that Russian parties try to follow the Western principle of party organisation.

As a result, opposition parties can perform at least their primary role namely to introduce democratic principles to the electorate. During the Soviet era citizens could not even dream of the political system where several parties were able to present their different programs.

When reading through Appendix3c one can easily notice a general tendency on the part of the parties' manifestos. It appears that the parties with regard to the same categories have the same strategies: ignoring, referring only once or enunciate its concern about the same category several times. Therefore, for the pertinence of this analysis, Table7 represents the result in percentage to allow the comparison of the importance each party attributes to different policies.

It appears that the issues related to the social policy implementation are given the most serious considerations from all the four parties. The percentage difference among the parties on debating social policy is not significant. All the four parties are approximately devoting 40 percent of their programs statements to this policy category.

The performance of the state policy and economic policy is positioned on the same level of importance for all the parties. In general, approximately from 20 to 30 percent of each party's manifesto are aimed at both of these policies. Nevertheless, two points of

differentiation can be mentioned. Firstly, with regard to the state policy, the CPRF is the party that raises ten percent more of this policy issue in its program comparing to the other parties which are almost equal with regard to the statements on this topic. Secondly, the Fair Russia and the LDPR are the two parties which devote a little bit more attention to the issues related to economic policy.

Foreign Policy seems to be the category debated the least by all the parties. The CPRF and the Fair Russia devote the same attention to this category in their manifestos with eight percent of statements being oriented toward this domain. While the LDPR and the United Russia consider foreign policy to be worthy 13 and 15 percent respectively of their statements within the manifestos. Simonsen (2001) and Morini (2011) both noticed the development of nationalistic ideas within the parties' ideology. Therefore, it can be assumed that for Russian parties the idea of Russian supremacy and patriotism is more important than the question of international cooperation.

The last category shows that the United Russia and the Fair Russia agree upon the strategy concerning the general economic orientation of their economic policy. Generally speaking in this category, none of the parties excludes the state from economy. On the contrary, they promote the state's active role in the economic development. This unified support can be explained by the remaining communist culture still present within the party system. Hence, it seems to be natural for the state to intervene in the economic development.

The findings presented in Table7 show that party competition in Russia is not reflective of the 'saliency theory'. This is due to the fact that instead of organising political competition around a set of different issues, opposition parties and the United Russia assign nearly the same proportion of their manifestos to the debate about the same policy issues. Therefore, political pluralism defined by Sartori (2005:14) is nearly nonexistent within the Russian party system.

The previous results prove weak plurality of the Russian party system and exemplifies that the difference within Russian opposition parties and between these parties and the United Russia is nearly non-existent. This fact demonstrates that Russian opposition parties are unable to present an alternative political program to the one supported by the majority party. As a result, these opposition parties are inept to challenge the incumbent party during elections. Consequently, the parties lack a substantial support from the electorate, which is reflected by low electoral turnouts.

However, the lack of plurality concluded from this analysis of the statements on the policy issues was not clearly demonstrated in the analysis of the left-right statements. The

positioning of the four parties on the left-right dimension shows that they defend different positions with regard to the left-wing or right-wing ideas.

These findings confirm H1 but only when speaking about the parties' policy orientations and not about their left-right ideological position. H1 was presented as follows:

H1: If the Opposition is not able to differentiate itself from the party in government by presenting an alternative political program, then the Opposition will not be able to challenge the party in power.

The confirmation of H1 implies that the accomplishment of the opposition's functions presented by Stepan (2001:171) is jeopardised. It seems that these three parties managed to accomplish only the first function: "staying in or coming into existence". The remaining five functions cannot be performed by the parties whose political programs resemble the manifesto of the party in power and whose political support is decreasing.

Within the system of free and fair elections, electoral results reveal voters' preferences over policy issues defended by different political parties. The previous analysis presented data on issues mostly debated by the parties.

Morini (2011:8) argues that because of the low availability of the manifestos for the voters and, additionally, because of the citizens' scepticism regarding these documents, the relevance of parties' programs in Russian politics can be questioned. As a consequence, the next step of analysis will be to determine how much the public opinion polls on policy preferences are similar to the policies debated in the manifestos.

The following Table8 represents public opinion trends collected consecutively in 2008, 2009 and 2010 by Levada Center. The survey was conducted with 1600 respondents who were asked the same question and had to choose between a fixed set of answers.

Table 8: Public Opinion Perception of the Government's Priorities

Which of the following areas of government activities should be regarded as a top priority now?	2008	2009	2010
	x	iii	iii
Combating unemployment	-	49	47
Price-cutting	44	44	43
State control of prices	45	44	38
<i>Fighting corruption and the plundering of public property</i>	34	27	38
<i>Indexation of wages, pensions, investment in accordance with inflation</i>	33	34	28
<i>Financial support of agriculture</i>	24	28	28
<i>Combating the drop of production</i>	-	27	26
Reinforcing order and legality, fighting crime	16	18	21
Financial support for Russian producers	-	19	19
Strengthening the rouble, increasing the exchange value of rouble	31	27	16
Return of enterprise in key sectors of the economy to state ownership	15	17	16
Paying off back payments of wages, pensions and scholarships	11	16	16
Stenghtening the defense industry, increasing defensive capabilities	11	8	8
Supporting civil peace and reconciliation in the country	10	7	7
Guaranteeing the development of private industry	7	6	6
Supporting the banking system, guaranteeing investment	11	6	5
Tax administration	6	5	5
Supporting diversity of commercial goods	5	4	5
Difficult to answer	2	1	3

- Question was not asked N=1600

Source: Levada Analytical Center, Russian Public Opinion (2009:89)

The issues that raise the most of concerns for the respondents are unemployment and the prices control. Klingemann et al. (2006:45) defines the problems of prices control and unemployment as being a part of state intervention against the economy.

Consequently, when the parties in their manifestos mentioned these points, in the analytical table of Appendix3c these statements were located within the category of economic policy under the title “Planned or Mixed Economy”. When looking at the percentage representing the place the parties allocate to the statements on these issues, the results are alarming. Only 13 percent of the CPRF and LDPR statements respectively debate the states intervention against the economy. The Fair Russia allocates only ten percent of its manifesto to the statements concerning these issues while the United Russia is the one devoting not more than four percent of its manifesto’s statement to these points.

It appears that the Opposition partially fails to cover the economic issues which are the most important for the citizens. This can be one of the reasons explaining their failure to win a majority in the elections. However, the results for the United Russia are the ones presenting the biggest paradox of the Russian party system. How has the party that devotes only four percent of its manifesto to the issues considered by the citizens as the top priority for the government managed to win a majority in all elections since 2000? The answer to this question was given in the previous chapter: by jeopardising the mechanism of free and fair elections in particular and manipulating the electoral system in general.

Notwithstanding scant regard the parties pay to economic issues in their manifestos, the parties’ position on the left-right ideological dimension shows that they clearly define their economic orientation. For example, the CPRF’s left-wing and the United Russia’s right-wing positions on the axis indicate to the electorate the kind of economic policies and reforms these parties are supportive of.

Furthermore, the support of agriculture is positioned by the respondents as the second level of priority for the government. However, each party makes the only one statement about agriculture in their manifestos. This is another example showing that parties’ priorities described in the manifestos are not related to the one pinpointed by the citizens.

The findings of the Table8 show general concerns of Russian citizens about issues related to the economic policy. However, in the manifestos the issues related to the implementation of economic policy is positioned on the second place, all four political parties prioritise the social policy implementation. As a result, it seems that the main Russian parties unsuccessfully debate citizens’ interests in their manifestos. However, the parties’ ideological

position on the left-right dimension can be seen as an indicator for the electorate of the parties' priorities with regard to the economic policies.

The next section aims to classify the three parties within Dahl's (1969) patterns of the Opposition. This classification will allow determining to which extent the Russian opposition is westernised. Additionally, H4 will be tested.

5.3.3. Defining the Patterns of Russian Opposition

The first categorisation regarding the political opposition described in Chapter3 has a double distinction. The opposition can be either defined as being active or passive (Dahl 1969). The conclusions made in Chapter4 and at the beginning of this chapter demonstrate that the Russian opposition takes a passive role in the political system. The changes applied to the electoral law have showed that the Kremlin and the party in power use the legislation in order to limit the role of other parties. Hale 2006; Reuter (2007) and Sakwa 2008 also observe Kremlin's negative influence on the opposition parties' degree of competitiveness during the elections. Neither the media nor the CEC contribute to the development of a party system where political opposition can play a significant role.

These facts are confirmed by the electoral results for the opposition parties. These results show that these parties increasingly continue to lose votes in the elections. Despite a clear differentiation between the parties on the left-right ideological dimension, the scrutiny of the party manifestos exhibited a significant lack of differentiation among the parties with regard to the policy issues. This statement confirms the assumption that the Russian opposition is more prone to play a passive role within the system than an active one.

The second classification of the opposition is related to its six different patterns (Dahl 1969:302). Table9 illustrates these six patterns that are applied to the three main opposition parties. The sign + is placed when the party bears signs of this pattern while the sign – is positioned for the parties that do not possess the respective pattern.

The first pattern of the Opposition is organisation. In the case of the three selected parties they match this pattern because they are organised within a multiparty system, possess an electoral strategy and a political program. As it was demonstrated by electoral results and the parties' manifestos, the degree of competitiveness of the Russian opposition is low. Annex1c exemplifies the fact that parties' share of won votes has a general tendency to decrease and is very low comparing to the United Russia which since its creation has increased the percentage of won votes by 20.4 points. Additionally, Chart3 reproduces a

general picture of electoral results since 1993. Here, the LDPR and the Fair Russia are revealed as parties which are unable to mobilise significant popular support. For these reasons I conclude that these two parties fail to hold the pattern of competitiveness. The CPRF seems to be the only party that has managed to compete with the United Russia due to its electoral results and ideological strength.

Dahl (1969:339) defines sites as: the national parliament, the media and parliamentary elections. When speaking about the parties' ability to use these different sites to empower their position, it appears that the three selected parties are limited in their ability. It was evidenced in the previous chapter that the party in power manipulates elections and the media in order to weaken the Opposition while the Opposition fails to do that. As a result, the opposition parties appear to be weak compared to the United Russia in the Duma. Consequently, none of the opposition parties occurs to possess the site pattern.

The analysis of the manifestos has proved that none of the parties reaches a degree of distinctiveness, defined by Dahl 1969. The results from the examination of the parties' left-right statements and Hale's (2006) research represented the CPRF as the party having the strongest ideological position since the party's goals are ideologically more distinct. Therefore, the CPRF is the only party that shows signs of the fifth pattern of the Opposition. Because only the CPRF manages to achieve its goals compared to the other two parties, it includes the pattern of strategy while the other parties are not. However, the presence of these patterns within the CPRF's structure should not be overestimated. Despite its strength since 1999, the CPRF has shown signs of weakness about its structure and organisation (March 2001).

The classification can be debated due to the problem of inner subjectivity as mentioned earlier in this analysis. Therefore, my classification can be disputed. Nevertheless, the goal of this study is to make foundational conclusions that could open up the possibility of further research in this field.

Table 9: Patterns of the Main Russian Opposition Parties

Patterns of Opposition	Parties		
	CPRF	LDPR	Fair Russia
Organisation	+	+	+
Competitiveness	+	-	-
Site	-	-	-
Distinctiveness	-	-	-
Goals	+	-	-
Strategies	+	-	-

The six patterns defined by Dahl (1969) were originally used in the case of Western democracies. Applying these patterns to Russian opposition parties could show to which extent these parties approximate the Western definition of political opposition. The results of this table manifest the general tendency of Russian opposition parties being weakly westernised.

The CPRF is the only party that manages to employ some successful strategies for increasing its competitiveness against the United Russia. Nonetheless, the CPRF cannot be defined as an opposition party able to play a representative role within the system. When compared to other opposition parties the CPRF is certainly the strongest one, but the party’s ideological coherence and unity still can be questioned (March 2002).

Additionally, the position taken by the CPRF in the party system reveals the weakness of the Opposition as a whole. It appears that the only real opposition party existing is the one of the old regime. The CPRF presents an alternative to the governing party but an alternative which is directly linked to the past. As a consequence, in the future the CPRF is doomed to lose voters because the partisans of the old regime are going to be replaced by a new generation of citizens supporting new ideas.

The particularity in the structure and characteristics of Russian opposition evidences that ideology is not representative of the parties’ strength. It is a party’s ability to offer a new service or an alternative to the incumbent’s policy that matters on the election day (Riggs and Schraeder 2004). Since opposition parties fail to accomplish this, voters consider them as superfluous. In this sense opposition parties secure the perpetuation of the current regime in Russia.

The weakness of opposition parties thus can be seen as a result of the Kremlin’s strategy to secure the regime’s perpetuation. Hale (2006:149) exemplifies that Russian political parties experienced a period of growth in the mid-90s. In 1999 the creation of the

Fatherland-All Russia was a major challenge to the Kremlin. This alliance nearly won the presidential election of 2000. It is the creation of the opposition bloc Unity which later became the United Russia that saved the incumbent government from losing the elections. Since then, the state officials have realised that political parties need to be maintained weak in order to preserve the current regime (Riggs and Schraeder 2004; Hale 2006). Because of this weakness party competition in Russia is resumed around a competition over the access to the state resources (Riggs and Schraeder 2004). This implies that the theory of Lust-Okar (2009) on competitive clientelism in authoritarian countries is confirmed in the case of the Russian political system. As a result, it can be asserted that H4 is confirmed. This hypothesis was presented as follows:

H4: If there are no coherent policy proposals coming from opposition parties, then these parties are likely to serve the role of regime perpetuation within the system.

The confirmation of this hypothesis could have been better if the analysis of the campaign speeches and debates would have been performed. It is relevant to see if during the campaign candidates emphasise their policy proposals or their personal relation to the state. This operationalization was not possible within the scope of this Master’s thesis but it can be seen as an opening for further research.

The cross tabulation of the issues defended in the manifestos (Table7) as well as the positioning of the parties on the left-right ideological dimension (Chart2) allows classifying the Russian opposition according to the four types introduced by Sartori (2005:117). Table10 represents the summary of this classification for the three parties of this analysis.

Table 10: Classification of the Main Russian Opposition Parties

Four Types of Opposition	Parties		
	CPRF	LDPR	Fair Russia
Anti-system Parties	✗		
Bilateral Opposition	✗	✗	✗
Central Positioned Opposition		✗	✗
Irresponsible Opposition			

The anti-system party is defined as the one challenging directly the regime and is situated on the extreme opposite on the ideology axis when compared to the majority party (Sartori 2005). Since the United Russia is defined as a right-wing party, the anti-system party

must be an extreme left-wing party. Within the Russian party system there is no absolute anti-system party because none of the opposition parties has a score -100 on the ideological axis. However, the CPRF is the party situated on the left hand side and with the furthest distance to the United Russia.

Even though the CPRF's score -42 is still far away from the absolute extreme on the axis, it can be argued that this party is the most adversative party relative to the United Russia. Hence, the CPRF can be considered as an intermediate anti-system party. March (2001) also defines the CPRF as an anti-system party but as one that is situated within the system and which is able to win seats in the Duma elections. This fact appears to be paradoxical because it shows that the CPRF is integrated within the regime, something that favours the preservation of the political system and hence contradicts the definition.

Both the LDPR and the Fair Russia are the centre-left opposition. Sartori (2005) asserts that the parties positioned in the centre of the left-right axis are doomed to systematically lose votes to one of the extremes. Chart3 presents a confirmation to this assertion, since on average the LDPR and the Fair Russia are the two parties winning fewer votes in the elections. These parties are thus part of a multipolar opposition destined to never become a majority party.

But since these two parties are positioned on the same side vis-à-vis the majority, they can form an opposing coalition. However, as it was debated earlier, the labels of these two parties are mutually exclusive and it is less likely that they can form an alliance. Thereby, the LDPR and the Fair Russia are part of the bilateral opposition. The CPRF can be included in this category because despite the fact that this party is positioned far away on the left-right axis from these parties, it is still on the left side of the axis as the LDPR and the Fair Russia.

The similarities between the parties' manifestos allow the possibility of cohesiveness between the opposition parties. Considering that parties defend similar policy orientations, it will be easier for them to collaborate and organise around a common set of actions in order to challenge the majority party (Stepan 2001; Lindberg 2009). However, the earlier results show that the opposition parties are weak and that the CPRF is different from the LDPR and the Fair Russia in its ideological strength. Therefore, these parties' ability to create a united bloc and to present an alternative for the elite seems to be limited by the unattainable cohesiveness between the parties. Accordingly H2 is proved due to these facts. H2 was presented as follows:

H2: If there is no cohesiveness between opposition parties, then they have fewer chances to replace the incumbent party.

Blondel (1997) claims that the presence of one party within the opposition that is stronger than the other oppositional parties favours cohesiveness between these parties. In the Russian case, the large similarity among the parties' weaknesses favours their diffusiveness. The electoral results have confirmed this statement. The Opposition's chances to replace the incumbent party are decreasing with each election.

5.3.4. Summary

The main conclusion from this paragraph consists of the point that Russian opposition parties defend political ideas very much alike. Furthermore, their policy orientation is similar to the one of the party in power. Consequently, opposition parties are doomed to have a function of political labels within the system and assume the role of the regime perpetuation.

5.4. Conclusion

The last chapter of this Master's thesis aimed to define the role of political opposition. In the first paragraph, political manifestos were analysed in order to place the parties within a left-right ideological dimension. It occurred that Russian opposition is located on the left hand side of the axis while the party in government can belong to the right hand side. The last paragraph was devoted to a more in-depth analysis of the programs, in order to determine the political function of the Opposition. The next few pages will present a general conclusion of this thesis.

Chapter6

Conclusions

The answer to the research question of this Master's thesis was elaborated within the analysis of three variables. The first variable of the analysis is represented by the changes which have been made in the Russian electoral law since 1993. The second variable is illustrative of the left-right ideological dimension and the parties' location on this axis. The last variable is defined by the proportional distribution of the policy issues in the parties' manifestos.

The position of opposition parties on the left-right ideological dimension has demonstrated that the Russian party system is functioning. The location of opposition parties on the ideological axis shows that these parties are defending different political ideology when compared to the one defended by the United Russia.

However, the analysis of the electoral system as well as of the policy statements in the manifestos evidenced the signs of weak opposition parties and hence of the Russian party system as a whole. Therefore, the scope of the conclusions made in this thesis is double, which will be explained in this last chapter.

6.1. The Central Findings

This Master's thesis investigation was organised around a qualitative testing of several hypotheses. These hypotheses were elaborated from the theoretical framework presented in Chapter3. The summary from the investigation is given in Table11.

Chapter4 and Chapter5 of this thesis contained an examination of factors and institutions. The results of this analysis helped to determine the role of the Opposition in the political system of Russia. Among the aspects of the Russian political system, the following was analysed:

- The transformation of the electoral system since 1993 to nowadays;
- All electoral results from 1993 to 2007 for presidential and parliamentary elections;

- The role of the CEC for the development of opposition parties since 1993;
- The role the media has taken as a platform for political opposition;
- The reforms of the electoral campaign funding rules;
- The strength of the United Russia to manipulate the political system;
- The four parties' political manifestos.

When looking at the changes of the electoral rules since 1993, it becomes clear that the main aim of these changes was to lower the number of political parties within the party system. The changes in the electoral law made it more difficult for small and new parties to survive within the Russian party system. Additionally, changes of the electoral law clearly favoured the incumbent party relatively to other parties. The electoral law is characterised by its lack of clarity, which consequently opens up new vistas for subjective interpretation. As a result, political opponents are confronted with a weak judicial basis for their engagement in the political system; these findings strengthened H5b.

The examination of the role of the CEC for the development of opposition parties has not presented any optimistic results from the perspective of the Opposition. The lack of action and the failure of the CEC to improve the fairness of the electoral process accentuate the marginalisation of opposition parties when compared to the incumbent party. Consequently, this confirmed H5a due to this observation. Furthermore, the media has also failed to favour the development of a democratic party system. Since 1993 the media's bias towards the opposition parties has increased due to their intentional marginalisation to supply a fair coverage for the Opposition.

The analysis of the Russian funding and donation system for political parties has revealed a significant weakness of the current system. This aspect of the Russian party system is fraught with the problems of illicit funding and corruption due to the lack of clarity within the campaign funding rules. Additionally, the United Russia has been contributing with its actions to the increasing insignificance of opposition parties. The governing party tends to dominate and openly interfere in political institutions to secure its place and perpetuation within the political system.

The positioning of the selected four Russian political parties along the left-right ideological dimension has provided some useful insights about these parties' ideological

strengths and goals. It appears that the CPRF is the only opposition party whose ideas are clearly defined and whose political program stands in direct opposition to the one of the party in power. It was demonstrated that the United Russia and the CPRF are the parties with the strongest ideological position. These parties are also the only parties that find an important popular support at the elections. The LDPR and the Fair Russia on the other hand are moderate parties which policy orientations paradoxically approximate one another. Both parties have failed to mobilise a representative share of voters. These findings confirmed H3. However, despite the confirmation of H3 the fact that opposition parties are unable to create governmental opposition must be mentioned.

The cross tabulation of the central points of the parties' manifestos allowed the confirmation of the three hypotheses. The lack of political pluralism within the Russian party system as well as the incapacity of opposition parties to present alternative political programs to the one of the party in power confirmed H1. Nevertheless, this lack of pluralism was not evidenced in the left-right ideological positioning of the political parties. Consequently, parties do debate around the same set issues in their manifestos, which exemplifies the lack of pluralism. But their ideological position differs a lot when looking at their position on the ideological dimension.

Because of the weakness of the Opposition and the impossibility of cohesiveness among opposition parties, H2 was supported as well. Finally, the weakness of opposition parties that follows as a direct consequence of the Kremlin's manipulations of the system corroborated H6. The fifth chapter of this thesis classified Russian opposition parties within the four opposition types defined by Sartori (2005). Moreover, the definition of Dahl's (1969) six patterns of opposition was applied as well. Table 11 summarises these results.

Table 11: Hypotheses Summary

Hypotheses	Confirmed	Rejected
H1: If the Opposition is not able to differentiate itself from the party in government by presenting an alternative political program, then the Opposition will not be able to challenge the party in power.	✗ but only with regard to the policy issues, parties are able to differentiate themselves on the left-right ideological dimension	
H2: If there is no cohesiveness between opposition parties, then they have fewer chances to replace the incumbent party.	✗	
H3: If the ideological position of opposition parties alongside the left-right dimension is different from the ideological standpoint of the party in power, these parties will be able to fulfil the basic opposition's role.	✗ but opposition parties are unable to create a coalition	
H4: If there are no coherent policy proposals coming from the opposition parties, then these parties are likely to serve the role of regime perpetuation within the system.	✗	
H5a: If the actions of the CEC neither aim to promote a democratic electoral system nor favour the free and fair elections, then the opposition parties will be negatively affected by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The registration rules, - The rules to nominate a candidate, 	✗	

- And will have difficulties to win seats		
H5b: If the electoral law has been changed in order to make it harder for new parties to register, or the thresholds for nomination of candidates has been revised, then the role of Opposition will diminish.	X	

Additionally, the comparison made between the results from the manifestos analysis and the public opinion polls allowed me to make further comments on the Russian party system. It occurred that the policy priorities of the parties presented in the manifestos, to a great extent fail to take into account citizens' considerations about the government's policy priorities. It is the positioning of the parties on the left-right ideological dimension that is more representative of the parties' political priorities than the policy-oriented statements in the manifestos. This conclusion confirms that the Russian political system constraints the possibility of the Opposition to establish a political link to the electorate.

The results from the investigation of the changes made in the Russian electoral system and the statements in the manifestos indicate that the development of strong and democratic opposition parties in Russia is unlikely. It seems that opposition parties which manage to win elections only have a figurative function within the political system. Therefore, the main reason for their existence is to ensure the regime perpetuation under a democratic disguise.

However, the analysis of the distribution in the left-wing and right-wing statements made by the parties in their manifestos gives more promising results with regard to the Russian party system. The positioning of the opposition parties along the axis shows that they are able to differentiate their ideological values from those ones defended by the United Russia. Consequently, these findings demonstrate a positive aspect within the Russian political system.

Notwithstanding this last point, the opposition parties are far from resembling the pattern of the Opposition defined by Dahl (1969). Thus, they play a different role in comparison with the Opposition in western democracies. An overwhelming part of the political competition is concentrated between the United Russia and the CPRF. The two other parties are allowed to enter the party system only in order to weaken the CPRF and hence the

presence of these parties jeopardise the possibility for the CPRF to challenge the United Russia.

6.2. Contributions of the Findings for the Party Politics

The main aim of this research is to make a contribution to the field of party politics that are focused on opposition parties in transitional regimes. The investigation on the opposition's role in Russia shows that the political system is not ready for democratically oriented reforms yet.

In Chapter 1 it is supported that a research question must have a double purpose (King et al. 1994). First of all, the investigation must be concerned with the challenges in the real world. Secondly, the answer to the research question must contribute to a specific research field. I presume that my investigation is characterised by these two criteria.

The findings of this Master's thesis offer additional information for the research field on the role of the Opposition in Russia. In that sense, my project contributes to the contemporary debate on political opposition in the field of Comparative politics. The explanations of the reasons for the weak role of opposition parties in Russia demonstrate how one strong political party can use its political opponents in order to preserve its power. It is likely that the dominant parties in the transitional regimes can use these findings as a guideline in order to manipulate the system for their benefit. However, my conclusions can also be useful for those opposition parties whose leaders understand that to achieve better results they need to strengthen their ideological position and better differentiate their political programs.

With regard to the field of party politics my analysis brings several useful classifications of the four main political parties in Russia. First, I positioned these four parties along the left-right ideological dimension. This contributes to a better understanding of the ideological goals and strategies of these parties. Secondly, I cross-tabulated the main issues presented by these parties in the political manifestos. The main advantage of this method is that it allows the assessments concerning the level of political pluralism within the Russian party system. The categorisation of the parties according to Sartori's (2005) and Dahl's (1969) concepts allows the establishment of the opposition types for Russian opposition parties. Furthermore, I demonstrated to which extent their structure and actions fit the western definition of the political opposition.

6.3. Recommendations and Challenges for Further Research

Despite the contributions of this thesis and the large scope of the findings some additional research could be performed. The collection of data can be deepened in order to improve the external reliability of the conclusions. Additionally, the analysis was elaborated within the limits of the Master's thesis and can be broadened if the time and space will allow it.

This case study was limited to the analysis of four main political parties in Russia. Since these parties are the main parties of the party system the generalisation of the findings is possible. However, the affiliation of my conclusion to the whole party system can be debated. This issue is even more controversial if I tried to generalise my findings to other post-communist countries or the countries in democratic transition. Consequently, if the analysis could be attributed to all the parties who have ever won seats in the parliamentary elections since 1993, the results would be more representative. But it is most likely that even though the results could be more representative, this will not change the nature of the Russian political system.

Another weakness of this research due to the limitations of the Master's thesis is present in the program analysis. The program analysis was organised around two different steps. First, I had to classify the statements present in each manifesto as representing either left-wing or right-wing ideological orientation. Secondly, I had to cross tabulate the main issues presented in the programs and, thus, determine whether they were debated or not by the parties. Both proceedings can be influenced by my perception of the concepts. Consequently, if several researchers made the same analysis and compared their results the general findings would be more reliable.

The last point that I would like to discuss in this thesis is the possibility to answer this research question by performing another analysis. My original project was to interview some MPs and then to analyse their answers in order to establish the role of opposition parties. The interview design that I made with the coordination of Professor Stein Larsen could bring about very important conclusions on party politics in Russia. Unfortunately, I was not able to perform these interviews because of the financial and organisational difficulties. However, this interviews analysis could have been complemented by an analysis of the political platforms from the same parties. I am open to share my interview design with anyone able to continue this project until the end.

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Appendix 1a-c: Electoral Results for the Presidential and Parliamentary Elections from 1993 to 2008

Appendix 1a: Electoral Results for the Duma elections 1993-2007

party/year	1993		1995		1999		2003		2007	
	Tot %	nb. seats	Tot%	nb. seats	Tot%	nb. seats	Tot%	nb. seats	Tot %	nb. seats
Liberal Democratic Party	14,3	64	11,3	51	3,8	17	8,2	37	8,9	40
Russia's Choice	15,6	70	2	9	-	-	-	-	-	-
Communist Party	10,7	48	34,9	157	25,1	113	11,6	52	12,7	57
Women of Russia	5,1	23	0,7	3	0	0	-	-	-	-
Agarian Party of Russia	7,3	33	4,4	20	-	-	0,4	2	0	0
Yabloko	5,1	23	10	45	4,4	20	0,9	4	0	0
Russian Unity and Concord	4,2	19	0,2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Democratic Party of Russia	3,3	15	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	0
Movement of Dem.Reforms	0,9	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Civic Union-GSSSP	0,2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Future of	0,2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Russia										
Greens	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-
Dignity and Charity	0,4	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Our Home is Russia	-	-	12,2	55	1,6	7	-	-	-	-
Communists of the USSR	-	-	0,2	1	0	0	0	0	-	-
Congress R.Communities	-	-	1,1	5	0,2	1	-	-	-	-
Workers' Self-Government	-	-	0,2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Great Power	-	-	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Forward Russia!	-	-	0,7	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Power to the People!	-	-	2	9	-	-	-	-	-	-
Union of Labour	-	-	0,2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pamfilova-Gurov-Lysenko	-	-	0,4	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ivan Rybkin Bloc	-	-	0,7	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Stanislav Govorukhin Bloc	-	-	0,2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Unity	-	-	-	-	16,2	73	-	-	-	-
United Russia	-	-	-	-	-	-	49,6	223	70	315

Fatherland-All Russia	-	-	-	-	15,1	68	-	-	-	-
Union of Right Forces	-	-	-	-	6,4	29	0,7	3	0	0
Party of Pensioners	-	-	-	-	0,2	1	0	0	-	-
For Citizens' Dignity	-	-	-	-	0	0	-	-	-	-
Movement for the Army	-	-	-	-	0,4	2	-	-	-	-
Nikolaev-Fedorov Bloc	-	-	-	-	0,2	1	-	-	-	-
Russian People's Union	-	-	-	-	0,4	2	-	-	-	-
Russian Socialist Party	-	-	-	-	0,2	1	-	-	-	-
Spiritual Heritage	-	-	-	-	0,2	1	-	-	-	-
Motherland	-	-	-	-	-	-	8,4	38	-	-
Rebirth of Russia-Life	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,7	3	-	-
People's Party-NPRF	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,8	17	-	-
Conceptual Party Unity	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	-	-
New Course: Automobiles	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,2	1	-	-
Develoment of Entreprise	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,2	1	-	-

Great Russia-Eurasian Union	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,2	1	-	-
Fair Russia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8,4	38
Civic Strenght	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
Others	0	0	1,3	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Independents	32,5	146	17,1	77	25,3	114	15,1	68	-	0
Total		449		450		450		450		450

Source: Rose & Munro (2009)

Appendix 1b: Results for the Presidential Elections in Russia 1993-2008

Candidates/Year	16.06.1996 1st Round	3/07/1996 2nd Round	26.03.00	14.03.04	02.03.08
V.Putin, Independent			52,90%	71,30%	
B.Yeltsin, Independen	35,30%	53,80%			
G.Zyuganov, KPRF	32%	40,30%	29,20%		17,70%
A.Lebed, KRO	14,50%				
G.Yavlinsky, Yabloko	7,30%		5,80%		
S.Fedorov, PST	0,90%				
M.Gorbachev, Independent	0,50%				
M.Shakkum, Independent	0,40%				
Y.Vlasov, Independent	0,20%				
V.Bryntsalov, RSP	0,20%				
A-G.Tuleev, KPRF (*)	0,00%				
A.Tuleev, Independent			3,00%		
A.Zhirinovskiy, LDPR	5,70%		2,70%		9,30%
K.Titov, Independent			1,50%		

E.Pamfilova, ZGD			1,00%		
S.Govorukhin, Independent			0,40%		
Y.Skuratov, Independent			0,40%		
A.Podberezkin, DN			0,10%		
U.Dzhabrailov, Independent			0,10%		
D.Medvedev, United Russia					70,30%
N.Kharitonov, KPRF				13,70%	
S.Glazyev, Independent				4,10%	
I.Khakamada, Independent				3,80%	
O.Malyshkin, LDPR				2,00%	
S.Mironov, Party of Life				0,70%	
A.Bogdanov, Independent					1,30%
Vote against all	1,50%	4,80%	1,90%	3,40%	

Source: Rise & Munro (2009)

(*) Withdrew in favour of Zyuganov. Votes reported were casted early.

Appendix 1c: Sample Selection for the Analytical Framework

Party/Year	1993		1995		1999		2003		2007	
	%	Nb seats	%	Nb seats	%	Nb seats	%	Nb seats	%	Nb seats
LDPR	14,3	64	11,3	51	3,8	17	8,2	37	8,9	40
CPRF	10,7	48	34,9	157	25,1	113	11,6	52	12,7	57
United Russia	-	-	-	-	-	-	49,6	223	70	315
Fair Russia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8,4	38
Russia's Choice	15,6	70	2	9	-	-	-	-	-	-
Women of Russia	5,1	23	0,7	3	0	0	-	-	-	-
Agrarian Party of Russia	7,3	33	4,4	20	-	-	0,4	2	0	0
Yabloko	5,1	23	10	45	4,4	20	0,9	4	0	0
Our Home is Russia	-	-	12,2	55	1,6	7	-	-	-	-
Unity	-	-	-	-	16,2	73	-	-	-	-
Fatherland-All Russia	-	-	-	-	15,1	68	-	-	-	-
Union of Right Forces	-	-	-	-	6,4	29	0,7	3	0	0
Motherland	-	-	-	-	-	-	8,4	38	-	-
Others	0	0	1,3	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Independents	32,5	146	17,1	77	25,3	114	15,1	68	-	0
Total		449		450		450		450		450

Source: Rose & Munro (2009) Parties marked in **boldface** are the one that passed all the selection criterias.

Appendix 2a-d: Translation of the Political Programs

Appendix 2a: Political Program of the Fair Russia

Source: <http://www.spravedlivo.ru/>

1. The Values of the Party

1.	The equality of rights and freedoms.
2.	The intergenerational solidarity.
3.	The patriotism.
4.	The state is responsible for the citizens' welfare while citizens are responsible for the effectiveness of the state.
5.	Democratic participation, which is defined as: support of democratisation, free enterprise, public and professional initiatives.
6.	The improvement of the families' welfare through the strengthening of the family as an institution. This aim must be a coherent and a unifying strategy for the Russian nation.
7.	A high level of social security expressed through a guaranteed access to work and education for citizens. As a consequence, people will be confident in their ability to support their families.

2. Plans and Reforms

1.	<p>Eliminating the poverty and restore social fairness through the medium of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Progressive taxation, - Economic regulation with a special emphasis of the consumers' social standards, - Introducing minimum income standards, - Reduce income gaps between the civil servants, - Favour the creation of the effective civil society in order to protect workers' rights.
2.	<p>Raise the level of retirement pensions to world standards.</p>
3.	<p>Corruption must be considered as a betrayal at the state level.</p>
4.	<p>The law should control immigration issues.</p>
5.	<p>The economy must have consideration for social priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Achieve the competitive advantages of Russia by expanding high-tech industry, - Audit the government's activity based on social criteria (reflecting the level, quality and lifestyle of the population), - Legally oblige the government to issue an annual declaration regarding its intent to use the additional budgetary funding for the support of the poor, demography, medicine, science, education, the environment and public safety, - Promotion of the citizens' economic activity (industrial democracy).
6.	<p>A "Stabilization Fund" must be used as a source for increasing the growth which is achieved through direct funding of the innovative economic development and of the social needs. Social indicators must be a starting point for the federal budget design. Furthermore, the surplus from private companies that takes benefits from mineral resources should be redistributed to the citizens.</p>
7.	<p>An effective agriculture as a guarantee of the country's alimentary security must be secured by intervention of the state.</p>

8.	The Russian cultural wealth must be preserved and transmitted for the next generations.
9.	The constant increase of prices in the communal services must be stopped and decent life conditions must be guaranteed to all. The criminality within the real-estate business must be eradicated.
10.	Universal health care should reach European standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use five percent of GDP for the health system, - Make legal reforms on health guarantees, - Provide all with an access to a high-level medical care services.
11.	Confront the problems of alcoholism and drug addictions.
12.	Create an educational system at the European level and maintain national traditions in this domain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase the teachers' income, - Adapt the educational system to the professional need of the society.
13.	Favour the development of the intellectual elite within the contemporary order through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A full public funding of the basic science, - Creation of the necessary conditions to attract and retain young scientists in Russia.
14.	Reforms against the demographic crisis.
15.	Facilitate the first steps for young citizens in their every day life.
16.	Environment: creation of the "Ecological Fund". Use of the innovative technologies to improve Russian ecology.
17.	Modernisation of the army as well as improvement of the social status of the soldiers'.
18.	Improve the openness and accountability of the government through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A legislatively provided public right to recall the elected officials from regional and local authorities,

- | | |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The achievement of the maximum awareness and information access for the citizens by enabling them to attend meetings of representative bodies,- An increase in the transparency of the regional and local budgets,- Favouring the creation of the NGOs,- Favouring the development of the civil society. |
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Appendix 2b: Political Program of the Communist Party of Russian Federation

Source: <http://kprf.ru/>

1. The Ideas

1.	The capitalist system is based on exploitation of human beings and resources.
2.	The preservation of the capitalism as a dominant system will lead the world to catastrophe.
3.	The inevitable establishment of Socialism is founded on the socialization of production.

2. The Three Steps Toward Socialism

1.	<p>The establishment of democratic power leis in the hands of workers.</p> <p>Therefore there is a need for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Organisation of mass movements;- Fair elections and a representative government;- Nationalisation. <p>These steps will bring the country closer to political and economical stability.</p>
2.	After the establishment of the economic and political stability, CPRF is aiming to increase the workers' participation in the political decision-making process. Markets will be regulated according to the principles of a centrally planed economy
3.	The formation of socialist relationships in the society is based on the supply of collective goods with the intent to strengthen socialism and promote the economy.

3. The Program

1.	Strengthening of the worker's power within the system and of the citizens' patriotic feeling.
2.	Promote reforms facing the demographic crises.
3.	Organise the nationalisation of industries and natural resources in order to use their benefits for the improvement of living standards for all citizens.
4.	Restore federal financial resources from abroad and use them for the economic and social development.
5.	Destroy the system of electoral falsification during elections.
6.	Create an independent legal system.
7.	Coordinate reforms against the poverty: the state must have control over the price level for the goods of first necessity.
8.	Reform the laws, which are currently deteriorating citizens' material conditions and allow the plundering of the country's natural resources.
9.	Reinstate the state's responsibility over the communal services.
10.	Improve the educational system. Renew high standards of free education within the graduate and undergraduate levels.
11.	Guarantee a universal and modernised health care system.
12.	Secure the support for the agricultural sector and the environmental reforms.
13.	Prioritise the problem of the national debt default by focussing on citizens' past investments in the banking system and give back to them all their lost savings.
14.	Introduce progressive taxation and exonerate poor citizens from taxation.
15.	Increase the effectiveness of the political system by decreasing the number of civil servants and increasing the rights of the civil society.
16.	Favour small businesses.
17.	Ensure universal access to cultural assets. The media must represent all political ideas equally

	and not blaspheme Russian history.
18.	Undertake reforms against the corruption and criminality.
19.	Reinforce the country's military power.
20.	Ensure territorial unity. The national policy must be formulated with regard to the respectful relationships between different countries and nations.

Appendix 2c: Political Program of the United Russia

Source: <http://er.ru/index.shtml>

1. Putin's Plan

1.	Further development of Russia as a unique civilization. Protection of the common cultural space, of the Russian language and of the historical traditions.
2.	Increase the economic competitiveness through: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Innovative development,- Support of science,- Development of infrastructures,- Increasing the investment primarily in high technology and in the industry.
3.	Providing a new quality of life for citizens by continuing the implementation of national projects such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Further significant increases in wages as well as in retirement pensions and scholarships,- Assist citizens in solving housing problems.
4.	Support of the civil society. Promotion of social mobility as well as of the communities' initiatives and activities.
5.	Strengthening of the Russian sovereignty and the national defence. Provision of a place for Russia within a multi-polar world.

2. Reforms Made by United Russia

1.	Stable development of Russia and increased level and quality of the citizens' life.
2.	The economic growth was increased to seven percent per year. The external debt is almost paid off. The burden of taxation for the economy is significantly reduced.
3.	The minimum wage was increased by a factor of four; additionally the average wage and the retirement pensions were doubled. The number of people living under the poverty line was decreased by 1.5 points.
4.	Legal changes were accomplished aiming to create an affordable housing market.
5.	The period of free housing privatization was extended. The inheritance tax was removed.
6.	The international convention concerning the resolutions against corruption was ratified. Measures were taken in order to insure transparency in the law making process.
7.	United Russia was the initiator of the law that prohibited the financial support of the extremism from abroad.
8.	Since 2007, the period of military service by conscription was shortened.
9.	In 2007 the soldiers' wages increased by 25 percent. Since 2005, the plan has been realized to build additional homes for soldiers' families.

3. Remaining Problems

1.	Weak economic system: need for modernisation of the market and state institutions.
2.	Financial and budgetary policies do not bring the expected results.
3.	Social tensions due to the highly unequal society.
4.	Demographic crises that undermines the existence of Russia as a sovereign state.
5.	State apparatus is highly bureaucratized and ineffective.

4. Three Priorities

1.	<p>Equal protection of Russian citizens from the demographic crisis, which is a threat for the establishment of Russia as a sovereign state.</p> <p>There is a need to reduce the mortality rate and to increase life expectancy by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Offering equal access for the citizens to modernised health care,- Promoting a healthy way of life,- Increasing the birth rate.
2.	<p>The government has to undertake new steps toward the elimination of the corruption by creating favourable legal and socio-economic conditions for this purpose. The suppression of the corruption will improve citizens' trust in government.</p>
3.	<p>The economical development based on innovation is a strategy to approach an effective policy in the resources management. In order to promote the commercialisation of technologies, the development of the education and sciences should be favoured.</p>

5. Ten Projects for the Next Decade

1.	<p>Effective social policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Radical improvement of the citizens' quality and standard of living,- Overcoming poverty as a social phenomenon.
2.	<p>Undertaking the health system reform in order to improve its quality and to offer a universal access for everyone.</p>
3.	<p>Improving the educational system in order to attain competitive world standards.</p>
4.	<p>Initiate a new youth policy, aiming to create equal opportunities for all young citizens.</p>
5.	<p>The government must be aiming to develop and implement industrial policies. This means favouring public investment in the productive infrastructures and stimulating the construction of innovative industries. Policies regarding the industry will be implemented through the</p>

	state's annual planning strategy.
6.	Eliminating the underdevelopment of the agriculture and of the economy in general.
7.	Strengthening the federation by assisting the development of each region in its strategic field and additionally, eliminating the inequalities between the regions.
8.	Establish the conditions for a more efficient law making and political implementation related to the struggle against criminality and in order to improve the judicial system.
9.	Reforming the state administration by decreasing the number of civil servants and through the strengthening of the party system. Political accountability of the regional governments will increase by the creation of the “parties’ administrations”. Parties that passed through the election will be able to form the regional governments if the parties’ candidate for the governor’s post was accepted.
10.	Valorisation of the protection of constitutional rights and citizens' freedoms.

Appendix 2d: The Political Programme of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia

Source: <http://www.ldpr.ru/>

1. Program to overcome the crisis

1.	The financial crisis is created by the USA.
2.	The purchase of tangible and intangible assets abroad must be made illegal for Russians. Investments must be directed towards the modernisation of the Russian industry and agriculture.
3.	Facilitate the economic development by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Investing in research programs,- Promoting effective industrial policy,- Controlling the exports of goods and services,- Fighting against corruption and evasion of custom duties .
4.	The trade law must be implemented with the aim to control the importation and exportation of goods and under a setting of regulation on the price margins.
5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Cut the prices of electricity, gas, rail services and communal services.- Guarantee the prices, which will provide the profitability above 15 percent to the producers of grain, meat and milk.- Increase the liquidity in the banking system in order to make loans available for the population and the firms.- Limit foreign loans for Russian banks and industry to 50 percent of its original capital.- Fight against the inflation.
6.	Economic growth must be the main aim for the regional administration.
7.	The anti-crisis measures undertaken by the government must be monthly discussed in order to find a better-qualified people for this task.

8.	A written plan must be present in each administrative office about how to act in case of the financial crisis.
9.	Fight against unemployment by constructing additional homes and roads. Without construction, the economy cannot grow. Additionally this policy will help to ease the issues related to the demography.
10.	The policy of major housing constructions will allow the middle class families to acquire real estate property.
11.	The anti-cartel law and improvement of the tax law must define the anti corruption program.
12.	Remove the existent VAT and fight against the evasion of the custom duty for imports of goods.
13.	Domestic oil and gas prices must be lower than in Europe.
14.	The banking system must be organised in order to help the middle class and favour employment.
15.	All financial transactions must be done in national currency.
16.	Change the taxation system regarding the real-estate assets in order to decrease the speculation level.
17.	Favour political competition and coalition by limiting the party's maximum representation to 40 percent in the Duma.
18.	The law related to the financing of civil servants needs to be changed in order to fight against corruption. This reform is going to improve the effectiveness of the civil servants and will decrease the budget's spending.

2. Program for the State

1.	When taking decisions the government has to use the experience of the imperial, Soviet and democratic period of Russia.
2.	The creation of a unitary state with liberal-democratic and a socio-legal state apparatus will be the guarantor of rights and freedoms for citizens.
3.	The division of power between the legislative, executive and legal fields must be recognised. However, the legislative must be organised around a unique chamber: the Duma.
4.	The LDPR is allowing a personalised way of ruling during the transitional period. In that way the citizens can clearly see the responsibility of the president who is going to ensure the continuity of the policies.
5.	A vertical organisation of powers must be favoured, in order to allow the president to be a successful leader. Elections must be held for the Presidential, legislative as well as municipal powers. Other elections must be replaced by the appointment.
6.	Local authorities must have a significant power. The country cannot be divided by the principle of different nationalities living inside but by the principle of administration: "krai". This must be done in order to govern all the citizens in Russia equally.
7.	Favouring the development of patriotism but condemning the anti-Semitism.
8.	LDPR is against the policies that are dividing the territorial and political unity of Russia.
9.	LDPR condemns double standards towards other nationalities.
10.	Russian citizenship must be given to all Russians living abroad. Considering them as migrants is wrong.
11.	The state must help Russians living abroad and encourage their return to Russia.
12.	The empowerment of other countries by taking advantage of Russia won't be allowed.
13.	The migration to Russia must be more controlled.
14.	A general way of thinking about long perspectives, values and principles of life must be

	reconstructed by the state.
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3. Program for the Economy

1.	For effective economic development there is a need to take into account geopolitical as well as climatic particularities of Russia. State have to regulate the economy.
2.	Firms must have equal rights and opportunities. The state and businesses are not rivals but partners in making Russia better off.
3.	The development of the private businesses and of the new initiatives must be supported. Bureaucratic abuses must be condemned.
4.	The economic reforms must be done within a long run perspective through the use of a long lasting formula.
5.	Reforms must be precise, first tested in the regions and then their effectiveness should be analysed before being used on the federal level.
6.	The state's planning of the economy and of the social projects creates the most successful economic development.
7.	The sate regulation of the economy is positive for the struggle against the crisis. State must be in control of energy, military, transports, communications and heavy industry productions.
8.	The state must give its support to private initiative.
9.	Economic reforms must be oriented toward a long run perspective in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Science and education, - Technological innovation of the industry, - Health, - Housing,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Culture, - Roads.
10.	The LDPR is against the commercialisation of the culture and is for the development of the national culture.
11.	<p>State regulation can be used in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve economical balance in the country, - Stimulate the investment, - Decrease the economical criminality, - Improve the productivity.

4. Social Welfare Policy

1.	The main aim of the LDPR is to guarantee for all Russian citizens social welfare security at least at the same level it was during the USSR. All the citizens due to their work must have a guaranteed standards of life even after their retirement. Additionally, the state has to support the ones who are not able to insure their living standards: the elderly people, the disabled persons, the big and young families as well as the single mothers.
2.	Russian cultural traditions of solidarity and mutual help must be strengthened and preserved. Additionally the spirit of social fairness must be defended.
3.	Condition for successful development of Russia is a social partnership between labour and capital, entrepreneurs and employees.
4.	<p>The social policy of the LDPR assigns an important role for the trade unions by considering them as essential tools for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The conservation and enhancement of human capital, - The creation of decent working and living conditions for the people. <p>We stand for the improvement of the quality in the working conditions, primarily for</p>

	women, who need shorter working hours and longer vacations.
5.	Nobody must be living under the poverty soil. High difference in wages is the reason of social instability.
6.	The mandatory social insurance must give a solid protection for the workers in case of the loss of their working ability or their work place.
7.	The savings lost due to the change of the financial system must be given back to the citizens.
8.	The social and economic differences must be fought.
9.	The health system must be entirely under the state control while the private health system can exist only as a supplement to the public one.
10.	Fundamental reforms of the educational system must be done. The education must be free and organised around a continuous and a multi-level program.
11.	Underdeveloped regions of the Northern Russian such as Siberia and East Ural must be subject of the active developmental policies.
12.	The young generation of Russian citizens between 14-25 years must be given stable cultural values. The media are not playing a positive role for the improvement of the intellectual level of the young generation. More habitations must be build only for the young people and young families.
13.	Sport activities must be favoured at work places and near people's homes.
14.	Ecological degradation must be fought and everybody should have the right to live in an ecologically friendly zone. Russia must cooperate with other countries regarding ecological issues.
15.	Russian culture must develop with regards to the old Russian's spiritual traditions. The LDPR is against foreign missionaries coming to Russia with their dogma.

5. Security and Defence

1.	The power of the state is determined by its military strength.
2.	The armed forces should not be diminished.
3.	Russia needs a military reform but not a reform of the Armed Forces.
4.	Russians' holy duty is to serve its countries' Armed Forces before the creation of the contract based organisation of the army.
5.	It is fundamentally important to rise the age of the conscription in order to decrease abuses during the military service and bring the army at the professional level based on the service by contract.
6.	The Armed Forces must be used in priority on the national soil and not to defend other countries.
7.	All intelligence agencies need to be combined in order to improve their efficiency.
8.	It is possible to give more powers to the prosecutor's office for a better oversight of the officials and the civil servants.
9.	The most important task is to reduce the number of public servants, for this purpose first should be reduced the number of the documents submitted at least by ten times. The contacts between officials and the citizens must be eliminated at maximum. The majority of the bureaucrats must be deprived from the right to make decisions, which must be given to the citizens.
10.	It is important to maintain tight control of the illegal migration.
12.	The LDPR is supporting the existence and the development of the Cossacks.
13.	There is an impending danger for Russia from local wars and terrorism. There is a need for drastic methods in order to be finished with it.

Appendix 3a-c: Counting of the Statements Within the Political Manifestos

Appendix 3a: Distribution of the Right-wing Statements from the Parties

Accent on the Right-wing Ideology				
Ideas/Parties	CPRF	LDPR	Fair Russia	United Russia
Military: Positive	1	3	1	2
Freedom, Human Rights		1	1	1
Constitutionalism: Positive				
Political Authority				
Free Entrepriise	1	1	1	
Economic Incentives	1	3	3	2
Protectionism: Negative				
Economic orthodoxy				
Social Service Limitation				
Natonal Way of Life: Positive	1	4	4	4
Traditional Morality: Positive	1	6	3	3
Law and order	3	4	4	5
Social Harmony	1	3	3	2
<i>Total Number of Statements</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>19</i>

Appendix 3b: Distribution of the Left-wing Statements from the Parties.

Accent on the Left-wing Ideology				
Ideas/Parties	CPRF	LDPR	Fair Russia	United Russia
Decolonization, Anti-imperialism				
Military: Negative				
Peace				
Internationalism: Positive	1	2		
Democracy	4	5	4	1
Regulate Capitalism, Market	4	1	2	
Economic Planning	1	1		1
Protectionism: Positive	2	1	1	
Controlled Economy	1	5	1	2
Nationalization	2			
Social Services: Expansion	3	7	5	4
Education: Expansion	1	3	6	3
Labour Groups: Positive	3	2	2	1
<i>Total Number of Statements</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>12</i>

Appendix 3c: Cross Tabulation of the Main Issues Acknowledged Within the Manifestos

Categories/ Parties	CPRF	LDPR	Fair Russia	United Russia
State Policy				
Freedom of Human Rights		1	1	1
Democracy	1	1	1	
Constitution				
Centralization (Territorial Unity)	1	2		1
Decentralization		3		2
Modes of Government	6	12	9	6
Communists, pro	4	1		
Communists, con				
Economic Policy				
Market Economy	1	5	2	2
Planned or Mixed Economy	5	12	5	2
Economic Infrastructure		8	4	7
Environmental Protection	1	1	1	
Agriculture	1	1	1	1
General Economic Orientation	nationalisation	protectionism	interventionism	interventionism
Social Policy				
Traditional Morality, Law and Order	4	12	9	7
Cultural Libertarianism		1		
Welfare State, Limitation				
Welfare State Expansion	8	17	9	11

Social Group Politics	3	2	3	1
Foreign Policy				
Military Strength	1	4	1	2
Peace and Détente				
Nationalism	1	3	3	3
International Cooperation	1	1		2
Special Relationships		4		