

The Evolution of *Siloviki* Elites

FEDERAL “GENERALS” IN RUSSIA’S REGIONS

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Political and administrative elites in Russia’s regions have changed drastically in recent years. Specifically, Moscow’s management of regional (effectively “federal-regional”) positions has expanded. With fifty to seventy branches of different federal bodies now represented across the country, federal employees outnumber regional officials two to one.

This brief analysis focuses on major officials in the regions, namely those with the Federal Security Service (FSB), Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD), Prosecutor General’s Office, SKP (investigative committee), heads of regional courts, and the GFI (chief federal inspectorate). These offices form a core of federal “bosses” in the regions and are officially recognized as such. The Kremlin’s “de-nativization” (“*dekorenizatsia*”) policies have been proceeding at a swift pace, increasing the control and manageability of regional politics by the power center in Moscow.

The Present Situation

The transition to a new system of de-nativization and intensive personnel rotation has been uneven in terms of both political offices and regions. The case of 26 ethnic units as seen in Table 1 serves as a good illustration of this phenomenon (the approach to ethnic republics used to be careful and balanced). Table 1 shows that among seven types of officials considered, judges are the most connected to particular regions – with a “regional connection” grade of 4.1 (5 being the highest) and an average of almost nine years in office. The head of a region has an office term three times as short (3 years), but with a similar grade of connection (3.9). The rest of the officials have similar terms in office – about 3 to 4 years – but their regional connections vary. The data for the SKP is less informative because the institution was introduced in 2007, with career deputies of the regional prosecutor occupying this position (providing for a higher level of connectedness). Among the remaining four, there are two poles of connectedness: the FSB chief who is not really connected to the region (1.3) and the GFI, which has a

moderate connection (3.0). The prosecutor (1.8) and minister of interior (1.9) are in the middle of this range.

Variation across regions is even more pronounced, ranging from 1.2 to 4 by grade of connectedness, and from 2 to more than 10 years in office. Among the leaders in terms of having roots in the regions are: Tatarstan (4.0 and almost 11 years), Dagestan (3.9 but approximately 2 years), Komi and Udmurtia (3.6 and more than 5 years), and Chechnya (3.4 and 3.5 years). The administrative and power elites are less rooted in the Nenets district (1.2 and 3.5 years), Ingushetia (1.9 and a little over two years), Bashkiria (2.1 and less than 3 years), Mari (2.2 and 4 years with something), and Khakassia (2.3 and a little more than 2 years).

Table 1. Major Federal Officials' Connections to Regional Elites (September 2010)

Region ↓	Head of region		Chief federal inspector		Federal Security Service		Interior Ministry		Prosecutor		Investigative Committee		Supreme Court		Average term in office without head of region (months)	Average connection to the region (new/old)	Average term in office (months)
	Term in office (months)	Connection to the region (new/old)	Term in office (months)	Connection to the region (new/old)	Term in office (months)	Connection to the region (new/old)	Term in office (months)	Connection to the region (new/old)	Term in office (months)	Connection to the region (new/old)	Term in office (months)	Connection to the region (new/old)	Term in office (months)	Connection to the region (new/old)			
Noth-West: total	10	3,0	51	3,7	22	1,0	40	2,3	31	1,0	35	3,7	157	3,7	56	2,6	50
Karelia	2	2	27	5	47	1	16	3	12	1	36	5	268	5	68	3,1	58
Komi	8	5	79	5	18	1	36	3	23	1	34	5	190	5	63	3,6	55
Nenets AO	19	2	46	1	2	1	69	1	59	1	36	1	14	1	38	1,1	35
South: total	38	4,0	36	2,6	28	1,3	27	2,0	24	2,1	32	4,4	118	4,3	41	2,9	40
Adygea	46	5	33	5	18	1	22	1	36	1	36	5	139	5	47	3,3	47
Kalmykia	0/209	5(2)	39	1	39	1	23	1	9	5	36	5	177	5	54	3,0	54
Dagestan	7	5	75	5	36	1	14	5	13	1	36	5	*	*	35	3,7	30
Kabardino-Balkaria	60	5(3)	12	1	42	3	55	1	40	5	36	5	141	5	54	3,3	55
Karachay-Cherkessia	25	2	32	1	47	1	4	1	20	1	36	5	30	1	28	1,7	28
North Ossetia	63	5	31	4	6	1	22	1	10	1	19	1	128	5	36	2,6	40
Ingushetia	23	2	40	1	12	1	6	1	43	2	36	5	*	*	27	2,0	27
Chechnya	42	5	29	-	25	1	69	5	23	1	21	-	90	5	43	3,4	43
Urals: total	7	2,5	27	4,5	90	3,0	33	1,0	36	1,0	36	4,5	31	4,0	42	3,0	37
Khanty-Mansi AO	7	1	26	4	115	3	58	1	44	1	36	5	24	3	51	2,6	44
Yamalo-Nenets AO	6	4	27	5	64	-	7	1	27	1	36	4	38	5	33	3,3	29
Volga: total	65	5,0	45	2,3	42	1,5	74	2,3	72	2,2	36	4,6	136	4,0	67	2,9	67
Bashkortostan	2	5	34	1	37	1	22	1	57	1	36	5	34	1	37	2,1	32
Mari	70	5(4)	11	1	18	1	31	1	107	1	36	5	124	-	55	1,8	57
Mordovia	182	5	40	5	12	1	61	1	56	1	36	3	147	-	59	2,7	76
Tatarstan	8	5	118	2	77	1	136	5	111	5	36	5	303	5	130	4,0	113
Udmurtia	124	5	12	1	64	4	49	1	30	4	36	5	146	5	56	3,6	66
Chuvashia	2	5	53	4	41	1	145	5	70	1	36	-	59	5	67	3,5	58

Siberia: total	40	3,5	30	2,0	22	1,0	33	1,0	41	2,0	34	5,0	50	3,8	35	2,8	36
Altai	58	5	57	5	58	-	95	1	12	1	35	5	17	1	46	3,0	47
Buryatia	39	1	13	1	5	-	3	1	47	5	36	5	34	5	23	3,0	25
Tuva	41	5	25	1	10	-	3	1	40	1	36	5	132	5	41	3,0	41
Khakassia	22	3	26	1	15	1	30	1	66	1	27	5	17	4	30	2,3	29
Far East: total	13	4,3	8	4,7	23	1,0	42	2,3	53	1,7	36	4,0	82	5,0	38	3,1	34
Sakha (Yakutia)	6	5	10	5	37	1	51	1	47	1	36	3	135	5	53	3,0	46
Jewish AO	7	5	3	4	10	1	58	1	39	1	36	5	28	-	29	2,8	26
Chukotka AO	27	3	11	5	21	1	16	5	74	3	36	-	-	-	32	3,4	31
Total	36	3,9	35	3,0	34	1,3	42	1,9	43	1,8	34	4,4	105	4,1	47	2,9	46

The ranking and associated description below (1 through 5) describes the “Connection to Region” quotient in Table 1 (highlighted columns).

1. **Total Outsider (“Varangian”)**: Those without connections to the region prior to appointment.
2. **Half Outsider**: Those connected to the region by birth or ethnicity (republics).
3. **Outsider**: Those rooted in the region; worked there for a while before being appointed.
4. **Insider**: Those coming from the region but worked in a different region prior to appointment; did not belong to core of political elite.
5. **Insider+**: Those from the core of a regional establishment.

Recent Dynamics

Since the onset of the financial crisis in 2008, the number of personnel replacements has increased in all 83 regions.

Table 2. Replacements of Key Federal Representatives in the Regions, Jan 2009- October 2010

	Governors	Prosecutors	SKP	MVD	FSB	Judges	GFI	United Russia	Total
2009	15 (4)*	13	7	6	23	9	25	13	111
Connection to region	3.2	1.6	2.1	3.1	1.1	3.0	2.8	4.2	2.5
2010 (Jan-Oct)	29(13)	4	4	17	10	0 (Jan-Jul)	9	3 (Jan-Jul)	76
Connection to region	4.6	1.8	1	1.4	1	NA	3.1	5.0	2.9

* The figures in parentheses refer to reappointed incumbents.

If six major federal representatives are examined (FSB, MVD, prosecutor, SKP, chairman of the regional court, and GFI), it appears that the intensity of “replacements” has risen by about a fifth: from 70 in 2008 to 83 in 2009. Keeping in mind that there are some 80 regions, a full cycle of these six federal replacements would have taken about seven years at the 2008 pace (an average replacement of 0.9 representatives per region). In 2009, however, the process was even faster: approximately one representative per region on average, with a full replacement cycle taking under six years.

What is the Regional Dimension?

Table 3. Replacements of Six Major Federal Officials in the Regions, 2008-2009

Number of replacements per region, 2008	Number of replacements per region, 2009				
	0	1	2	3	4
0	6	3	4	6	
1	8	5	12	2	1
2	4	13	4	3	
3	3	6	1	1	
5			1		

There were no replacements at all in six regions (Leningrad, Kaluga, Kostroma, Lipetsk, Tatarstan, and Chuvashia), one replacement a year in five regions, two replacements a year in four regions, and three replacements in the Penza region. The two regions with the highest levels of replacements were Khakassia with five replacements in 2008 and two in 2009, and Khabarovsk with one replacement in 2008 and four in 2009.

If one looks at the types of federal officials, the GFI and United Russia functionaries stand out: 19 in 2008 and 25 in 2009 for GFI, and 31 in 2008 and 12 in 2009 for party bosses. FSB chiefs recently joined the movement, with an intensive rotation of 12 in 2008 and 24 in 2009.

Federal District Level

Looking at the federal district level, there are interregional contrasts as well.

- The highest number of replacements is seen in those districts that attract the federal government's greatest attention: the Southern and Far Eastern districts (3.7 replacements per region in course of two years), with the Northwestern district being far behind (2.1).
- There are three districts where replacements were more numerous in 2008 than in 2009: Northwestern (13/11), Southern (27/20), and Siberian (19/16).
- In the Volga district (20/21) and Urals district (8/7) there was almost absolute balance.
- In the Central (17/22) and, especially, Far Eastern districts (10/23) there was an increase of replacements in the course of the financial crisis.

Along with natural personnel movement due to age or duration of term in office, there are two general approaches to explain the high turnover. The first is a vertical approach consisting of intensive rotation in regions due to replacements of ministry and

agency heads in Moscow or, in the case of GFI, of plenipotentiary envoys. The second approach is horizontal, when regional heads are either replaced or reappointed.

Changing Roles

There are two large-scale comparative studies of the most influential people in Russian regions, which was undertaken by the Institute of Situational Analysis and New Technologies (ISANT) in 2003 and 2007. Their results are summarized (by position) as follows:

Table 4a: 2003 Ranking of Major Positions Among Regional Political Elites (ISANT)

Position	Sum of scores	Average score (1-5)	Average rank	Range of rankings	Number of regions
Head of region	135	4.5	1.43	1–5	30
Deputy head of region	118	3.8	4.29	2–10	30
Speaker of regional legislative assembly	104	3.7	5.4	1–10	28
State Duma deputy	86	3.6	5.25	1–10	24
Mayor of regional Centre	84	3.8	4.77	1–9	22
Deputy of regional assembly	70	3.5	6.8	3–10	20
Mayor, head of district	63	3.5	6.6	3–9	18
Chief federal inspector	53	3.5	6.87	3–10	15
Member of Federation Council	46	3.5	6.8	2–10	13
Head of regional militia	39	3.5	7.5	4–10	11
Head of regional FSB	32	3.5	6	2–10	9
Prosecutor	29	3.6	8	1–10	8
Deputy of municipal council	23	3.3	8.29	6–10	7
Head of regional election commission	19	3.7	6	4–9	5
Chair of regional court	7	3.6	5	4–6	2

Table 4b: 2007 Ranking of Major Positions Among Regional Political Elites (ISANT)

Position	Sum of scores	Average score (1-10)	Average rank	Range of rankings	Number of regions
Head of region	303	8.9	1.1	1–3	3.4
Deputy head of region	264	5.5	6.5	2–10	48
Speaker of regional legislative assembly	195	6.3	3.9	2–9	31
First deputy governor	189	5.9	4.6	2–10	32
Mayor of regional centre	168	6	5	2–10	28
State Duma deputy	74	5.3	6.6	3–10	14
Chief federal inspector	53	5.3	6.5	2–9	10
Deputy of regional legislative assembly	53	4.8	7.7	4–10	11
Chief of governor's staff	52	6.5	4.4	2–8	8
Head of regional militia	41	4.6	8	5–10	9
Speaker of city council	31	5.2	6.7	5–10	6
Deputy speaker of regional legislative assembly	28	4.6	8.7	7–10	6
Mayor, head of district	28	5.5	8.2	5–10	5
Presidential envoy to federal district	24	6	3.7	2–5	4
Member of Federation Council	20	5.1	6.3	3–10	4
Head of regional FSB	20	5	6.8	5–10	4
Prosecutor	20	4.9	7.3	4–9	4
Chair of regional court	14	4.7	8.3	7–10	3
Head of regional election commission	9	4.6	6.5	5–8	2

Hierarchy of Regional Positions

According to ISANT-2007 the hierarchy of positions in the regions as ranked by specifically *political* influence (the chart above refers to general influence) is as follows:

- 1) Head of region – 8.5
- 2) Speaker of regional legislative assembly – 6.2
- 3) Mayor of regional capital – 6.1
- 4) Russian Orthodox Church bishop – 5.2
- 5) FSB director – 4.9**
- 6) Chief federal inspector – 4.9**
- 7) Speaker of the council of a region's capital city – 4.6
- 8) Prosecutor – 4.6**
- 9) Regional militia chief – 4.4**
- 10) Chair of regional court – 4.2**
- 11) Member of Federation Council – 4.0
- 12) Representative of big business – 4.0
- 13) State Duma deputy – 3.9
- 14) Mayor of municipality – 3.8
- 15) Representative of academia – 3.8

This list shows a large gap between governors and everybody else. There are a large number of law enforcement officials who occupy the middle of the list in rank order: FSB, chief federal inspector, prosecutor, internal affairs directorate, and chairmen of the regional courts.

2007-2010 Dynamics

The last ISANT survey was completed long ago and many changes have taken place since that time. The governors' appointments became very different starting from 2008 when a turn toward a "Varangian" model occurred. This shift toward the Varangian model diminished the role of governors. The Investigative Committee became an autonomous player, which added one more uniformed official and weakened the local prosecutor's office.

The role of the GFI continued to decrease for a number of reasons including functional doubling with appointed governors and weakening of the president and of his envoys. The center of gravity started to move in the direction of the party vertical led by the United Russia leader. What was achieved, in general, is the atomization of regional *siloviki* as a result of both their rotation and de-nativization.

Without large-scale comparative studies, it is possible to use different sources of evidence to illustrate this point. The list of influential politicians from the Nizhegorodskaya region fits this picture well.

The top ten influential politicians in 2010 of Nizhegorodskaya look similar to the ISANT-2007 political hierarchy to a certain extent, although it differs by a much bigger

share for federal representatives. There are only three local institutions among the top ten: the governor (3), mayor of regional capital (4), and bishop (5). All others are federal: plenipotentiary envoy (1), two United Russia deputies (2 and 6), prosecutor (7), FSB chief (8), tax service chief (9), and regional militia chief (10).

Conclusions

When considering regional political elites, major attention focuses on the fate of heads of regions, but this represents only the tip of the iceberg. The entire upper echelon of regional elites has undergone radical changes, which has both positive and negative effects. On the positive side, there is a formation of a unified elite space instead of eighty-plus separate cells, which has the effect of creative mixing and “cross-pollination.” On the negative side, there is the threat of the center losing control of situations due to weak institutions and increasing depersonalization of offices. There is also the real danger of alienation between citizens and their elites, who look more and more like occupying authorities. A governor who transforms into a federal official and part of a vertical hierarchy along with other officials not only loses the role of a connection between federal and regional elites, but also as a coordinator of regional elites. This is a reflection of the corporate governance model whereby regions are treated as territorial departments of the “corporation” called Russia.

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