

# Dynamics of Regime Personalisation and Patron-Client Networks in Russia, 1999–2014

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## Abstract

Many comparative scholars classify personalist regimes as a distinct category of non-democratic rule. To measure the process of regime personalisation, and to distinguish such a process from overall authoritarian reversal, is difficult in comparative context. Using the Russian political regime in 1999–2014 as a case study, we examine the dynamics of regime personalisation over time. Relying on original data on patron-client networks and expert surveys assessing policy influence of the key members of the ruling coalition, we argue that having more clients, or clients who are more powerful, increases the power of patrons — and that where the patron is the ruler, the resulting measure is an indication of the level of personalisation of the regime. We trace regime personalisation from the changes in political influence of the president's associates in his patron-client network versus that of other elite patron-client networks. We find that as early as 2004, the Russian regime can be regarded as personalist, and is strongly so from 2006 onwards.

**Key Words:** personalism, patronage, leadership, authoritarian reversal, Russian politics.

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Following the 2014 Russian annexation of Crimea and the escalation of conflict in Eastern Ukraine, a number of Western countries imposed sanctions on Russian officials, entities and designated “members of the Russian leadership’s inner circle.”<sup>1</sup> One of the goals behind sanctions was presumably to change the calculus of the key members of the elite, who in turn would be able to influence the Russian president. Informed observers of Russian politics dismissed such calculations, however, arguing that “nobody will speak out because of the implicit threat of retribution.”<sup>2</sup> Likewise, one of the sanctioned billionaires, Gennady Timchenko, categorically ruled out the notion that sanctioned businessmen would even think of influencing the president.<sup>3</sup>

The logic behind sanctions is seemingly based on the assumption that in 2014, Russia resembles the type of political regime commonly referred to as personalist (Geddes, 1999). Indeed, personalist regimes can be sensitive to loss of revenue due to the need to fund patronage (Escribano-Folch and Wright, 2010). Both officials and observers of Russian politics point out that Vladimir Putin appears to be able to make most important decisions, such as accession of Crimea, by himself.<sup>4</sup> The lack of autonomous institutions that can constrain or replace the ruler, and the fact that

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<sup>1</sup>See U.S. Department of the Treasury, 20 March 2014, “Treasury Sanctions Russian Officials, Members Of The Russian Leadership’s Inner Circle” at <http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/jl23331.aspx>.

<sup>2</sup>Bloomberg, 21 July 2014, “Russian Billionaires in ‘Horror’ as Putin Risks Isolation”, available at <http://www.bloomberg.com/archive/news/2014-07-21/>.

<sup>3</sup>ITAR-TASS, 4 August 2014, “Timchenko: Everything Has to Be Paid for, and Acquaintance with Top Officials as Well.”<http://itar-tass.com/opinions/top-officials/1353227>.

<sup>4</sup>See *The Times*, 2 May 2014, “Nostalgia Trip — Putin Taps Soviet Mood to Tighten Rule” (Ben Hoyle and Lettice Crawley), <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/world/europe/article4078880.ece>.

the president plays the role of the ultimate arbiter and moderator for competing elite groups and factions (Hale, 2011), testify that Russia resembles the personalist regime category. Indeed, the characteristics that many personalist regimes share, i.e., an absence of autonomous institutions or of elite coalitions autonomous from the ruler (Geddes, 1999; Jackson and Rosberg, 1982) and the ruler's permanent — *de facto* permanent following the 2008 constitutional amendment — tenure (Baturu, 2014; Brooker, 2000; Svoboda, 2012) are clearly present in contemporary Russia. It is not entirely clear, however, at what stage in the 1999–2014 period the regime became personalist, if it did. Indeed, the existing scholarship acknowledges that it is difficult to observe the process of regime personalisation, or personal power acquisition (e.g., Brooker, 2000; Svoboda, 2012).

Building on the literature on personalism and patronage, we propose a novel indicator to assess the degree of personalism using Russia as a case study. We begin by discussing the difficulties of operationalising regime personalisation — the process under which the ruler acquires more power over institutions and dominates other political actors. Admittedly, such a process is opaque and can be conflated with that of authoritarian reversal. Specifically, we propose to measure personalisation by gauging the degree of President Putin's perceived policy influence as well as all the key members of his ruling coalition, over time, using two empirical indicators: expert surveys of individual political influence and patronage data. We estimate changes in policy influence that can be attributed to Putin's associates in his patron-client network versus other political elite networks. We also provide robustness studies based on three alternative sources of patronage data. Our findings suggest that the degree of personalism varies over time and that the analysis of political appointments in the ruler's patron-client network provides a tool to gauge personalisation and the onset of personalism.

Based on patronage and individual policy influence data, we find that the Russian regime can

be defined as personalist as early as 2004, and becomes strongly personalist over the 2004–8 period. Regardless of pinpointing exact transition times, we demonstrate how the usage of data on patronage relationships and levels of influence of individual members of the winning coalition provides insights into the dynamics of regime personalisation over time. The paper contributes to the existing studies of personalist regimes (e.g., Escriba-Folch and Wright, 2010; Frantz and Kendall-Taylor, 2014; Svobik, 2012), of patronage networks in Russian politics (Ledeneva, 2013; Petrov, 2012; Sakwa, 2011) and provides observable indicators for the development of the “patronal” presidency in Russia (e.g., Hale, 2005, 2011).

### **Personalism, Authoritarian Reversal, and Regime Personalisation in Russia**

Existing comparative politics research offers various typologies of non-democratic regimes that distinguish personalist regimes from other regime types such as military and party regimes (e.g., Escriba-Folch and Wright, forthcoming; Frantz and Kendall-Taylor, 2014; Geddes, 1999; Wright, 2008). Typically, scholars use personalist regimes as a baseline category to compare the effects of institutions and institutionalisation across different regime types. As rightly pointed out by Hadenius and Teorell (2007), however, a degree of personalism can be present in different regime types, including military and party regimes. Furthermore, Svobik (2012) argues that existing typologies ignore the multidimensionality of authoritarian politics: the degree of personal authority of the ruler can vary significantly across regime types and over time, varying from contested non-democracy, based on power-sharing, to established autocracy where the ruler rules supreme.

Not only do we lack empirical indicators for the onset of personalism and its dynamics over time, in cases where the executive takeover occurs in a partly or fully democratic regime, one must

also distinguish personalisation from overall authoritarian reversal. Indeed, a path to personal dictatorship can occur not only in non-democracy but also via an *autogolpe* launched by an elected democratic president “to misappropriate the public office and powers he acquired by democratic, constitutional means” (Brooker, 2000, 129).

The case of Russia from 1999–2014 illustrates the difficulties of measuring and separating authoritarian reversal and regime personalisation. Consider the question of authoritarian reversal first. The majority of democracy and governance indices regard Russia in 1999 as partly democratic. There exists a disagreement, however, regarding its regime type following 1999. Thus, *Polity* (Marshall and Jaggers, 2011) upgrades Russia from partly democratic at +3 in 1999 to democracy at +6 in 2000, mainly due to its very arguable improvement in executive constraints; in 2007 it downgrades Russia to +4. Another index offered by Freedom House treats Russia as partly democratic until 2004, when it becomes unfree.<sup>5</sup> Cheibub, Gandhi and Vreeland (2010) treat Russia as a dictatorship throughout the period 1991–2008, and — since Russia is not defined as democratic — include neither 1993 paraconstitutional changes nor a more recent 2008 manipulation of term limits as instances of “consolidation of incumbency advantage.” However, Gandhi (2008), who closely follows this categorisation, does not classify Putin’s regime as a dictatorship. Geddes, Wright and Frantz (2014) treat Russia’s regime as personal autocracy ever since Yeltsin’s takeover of 1993, while Svoboda (2012) defines it as authoritarian from 2005, even though arguably the ruling coalition that formed in the 1990s continued into the 2000s (e.g., Shevtsova, 2007, 36–40).

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<sup>5</sup>In contrast, *Polity* as late as 2010, argued that “there is no reason to think that Putin will seek to eliminate Russia’s fragile democratic institutions in the near future.” See the Russia report at <http://www.systemicpeace.org/p4creports.html>.

Clearly, the available measurement tools reflect an increased executive control and curtailment of political freedoms and civil liberties over time (see Trofimov, 2012). The establishment of executive control over the judiciary, legislature, and regions is well documented (Gel'man, Ryzhenkov and Brie, 2003; Goode, 2007; Sakwa, 2011). Even though there had never been anything as drastic as a constitutional referendum, a dismissal of parliament, or enabling laws, there had been a gradual acquisition of more and more executive authority from early in 2000 — admittedly, partly by more consistently leveraging the presidential powers enshrined in the 1993 constitution that were not fully utilised by Yeltsin (Levitsky and Way, 2010, 82) — so that sometime in 2004 the president has indisputable authority over the executive, legislative, judiciary, and enforcement branches at federal and regional levels.

These assessments of an authoritarian reversal in Russia, while important, cannot fully illuminate the regime's journey toward personalism. If we rely on indicators that treat Russia as a non-democracy throughout 1999–2014, we simply ignore various developments that led the country from a relatively competitive regime in 1999 (Levitsky and Way, 2010) to a more authoritarian one in 2014. More importantly, regime indicators tell very little about personalism and regime personalisation over time. Measures of democracy simply reflect a reversal in democratic freedoms, not necessarily the strengthening of personal control over the regime by the incumbent leader: an authoritarian reversal can be driven by a collective endeavour of elite groups that might be aiming at establishing a hegemonic party regime rather than a personalist regime. Indeed, the actions of the federal executive in Russia to acquire control over the legislature and party system (Remington and Reuter, 2009; Hale, 2006; Trofimov, 2012) could have benefited not only the ruler and his inner circle but also a broader segment of political elite which, unhindered by the opposition, could have enjoyed longer tenures in office with its associated rent-seeking opportunities. In 2004–11

the regime also exhibited certain features of a hegemonic party regime type (e.g., Remington and Reuter, 2009), albeit the role of the ruling party seemingly diminished after Putin's return to the presidency in 2012.

What are the observable indicators of regime personalisation and when did Vladimir Putin make his regime personalist, if he did so? The comparative literature on personalism acknowledges that the process of personalisation is opaque and difficult to observe (Svolik, 2012, 61). Still, there exist important characteristics of personalist regimes that scholars often employ in their typologies: the absence of autonomous institutions and the ruler's permanent tenure.

If the lack of autonomous institutions or elite coalitions whose agreement is required for major policy-making is a characteristic of personalist regimes (Jackson and Rosberg, 1982), Russia resembles personal rulership. Consider the extent of executive control over the legislature in the spring of 2014 when the Russian upper chamber swiftly and unanimously approved the president's request to deploy troops in Ukraine. None of the legislators present even thought of debating the bill. It took them less than an hour to vote unanimously on a bill that could potentially have led the country into war.<sup>6</sup> The control over the legislative branch and other branches of government, as well as the president's decision to annex Crimea without any visible disagreement among his

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<sup>6</sup>The daily transcript indicates that the registration began at 18:32 and the vote on the resolution occurred at 19:22. The senators had no questions, neither to the deputy foreign minister who spoke on the president's behalf, nor to the deputy defence minister. Instead, fifteen senators all in turn spoke in favour of the resolution until one of them, Anatolii Lyskov, decided that they were "wasting [the] President's time" and that "they understood it all." See 1 March 2014 transcript at <http://council.gov.ru/activity/meetings/>, accessed 1 August 2014.

coalition members or, seemingly, even their prior knowledge of such plans,<sup>7</sup> therefore testify to the increasingly personalised nature of Russia's political regime. Przeworski et al. (2000, 21) refers to the consolidation of incumbency advantage as the moment when "the incumbents unconstitutionally closed the legislature and rewrote the electoral rules to their advantage," often including instances of transitions to dictatorship by incumbents, *autogolpes*. Throughout 1999–2014, the Russian legislature was never closed, however, and while in 2014 the legislature clearly lacks autonomy and no significant elite coalitions are able to challenge the ruler, in the absence of a metric for regime personalisation one cannot assign a particular date for the onset of personalism.

The second proposed indicator for personalisation is the moment when the ruler's power becomes permanent — an important stage in the genesis of a personalist regime (Brooker, 2000, 131). Indeed, while acquiring control over institutions can be driven by the combined interests of the ruling elite, meddling with term limits primarily is driven by the ruler's personal desire for political immortality. Indeed, Cheibub, Gandhi and Vreeland (2010) who operationalise consolidation of incumbency advantage similar to Przeworski et al. (2000, 21), include not only the moment the incumbent shuts down the legislature but also when, "for whatever reasons, incumbent's term was extended." Presidential tenure prolongation can signify that regime institutions are less important than the seemingly indispensable person at the helm whose succession threatens to unravel the political regime (Baturu 2014, 12; Svoboda 2012, 198). In Russia, barred from a third consecutive term in 2008, Putin engineered an election to the presidency of his loyal lieutenant, Dmitry Medvedev, and remained the *de facto* leader of the country, albeit as prime-minister. In the *UR* congress on 24 September, 2011 however, Putin announced his return for a new, now six-year term, also re-

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<sup>7</sup>*The Times*, 2 May 2014, "Nostalgia Trip," op. cit.

newable, that rendered his power in effect permanent. Therefore, the observable manifestation of personalism in Russia is the meddling with presidential term limits in 2008, as well as President Putin's ability to exercise power from a nominally subordinate position from 2008–12.

The comparative literature therefore underlines that the lack of autonomous institutions and rival elite coalitions, as well as the ruler's acquisition of permanent power, are important yardsticks against which to measure personalism. Yet another possibility — related to that proposed below — is to examine the accumulation of formal powers over hiring and firing — as the ruler gains the authority to appoint more and more officials, his personal power base grows.<sup>8</sup>

### **Patronage Networks and the “Patronal” Presidency in Russia**

It is extremely difficult, though not impossible, to measure the ruler's degree of influence over relevant institutions in political regimes, or to determine the moment of regime takeover by the incumbent leader. The indicators discussed above provide information about key turning points in the personalisation of the regime, but do little to capture the more gradual changes in the degree thereof between those moments. We propose, however, that one can measure the degree of personalisation — whether the ruler established personal authority — more generally, and more directly,

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<sup>8</sup>In 2000, the president acquired powers to dismiss regional governors if they have violated federal law; they also lose their membership of the Federation Council. In 2004, the president abolished direct elections of governors so that even though candidates proposed by the president were to be formally approved by regional legislatures, the president could *de facto* appoint them. In 2001, the president acquired authority over the firing and hiring of regional heads of police, while from 2006 even more police officials were to be subject to presidential appointment. These changes testify to the increased ability to appoint loyal candidates to the key posts and, therefore, a stronger power base.

by investigating his patron-client network and its influence on national policy.

Scholars agree that personalist regimes are mainly built on extensive patronage networks (e.g., Bratton and van de Walle, 1997; Escriba-Folch and Wright, 2010). Indeed, personalisation of power seems to occur as a gradual replacement of key posts by loyal clients, whether this is Stalin's Russia or Hussein's Iraq (Svolik, 2012, 60). Likewise, the acquisition of control by Chile's Pinochet over military appointments and retirements was crucial in cementing his personal position (Brooker, 2000, 145). As Linz (2000, 152) argues, in such regimes many officials are "members of his family, cronies, business associates, and men directly involved in the use of violence to sustain the regime." Therefore, having a sufficient number of loyal clients in key political offices is an important indicator of a ruler's personal power base and, therefore, regime personalisation.

In the comparative context, rulers vary in terms of the amount of time required to establish their own, dominant, patron-client network. President Akaev (1990–2005) of Kyrgyzstan came to nominate northerners, especially those from his clan, to key political and administrative posts only in 1995, so that with time his network became dominant (Collins, 2006, 244, 248). In contrast, Karimov of Uzbekistan, appointed in 1989 after the purge of almost all top-ranking local officials by Moscow, while obliged to share posts between several clan factions, installed his supporters to key posts quickly and was able to rely on his own network from the start (Collins, 2006, 128).

Russia's political regime is grounded in patron-client networks — a system called "patronal presidentialism" (Hale, 2011, 2005) in which the president plays the role of arbiter and moderator for competing groups and factions. Because the Russian constitution envisages a very strong presidential office, it tends "to generate expectations of future political power that encourage clientelistic networks to coordinate their activities around a single dominant political machine led by the directly elected president" (Hale, 2011, 582). Still, the federal constitution with strong presi-

dential powers has been in place since 1994, yet from 1996–99 its executive was extremely weak and contested by other federal and regional political players (Hale, 2006, 211–216). Clearly, unlike his successor, Yeltsin did not utilise his considerable presidential powers to build a sufficiently strong patron-client network to personalise the regime, whether because of personal preference (Levitsky and Way, 2010, 82), or lack of financial resources (Treisman, 2011). The state of uncertainty before Yeltsin’s departure even caused an elite split between the pro-Kremlin *Unity* party and an equally powerful faction around the *Fatherland* party headed by regional bosses Luzhkov, Shaymiev and former prime-minister Primakov (Golosov, 2011, 626).

The political regime of Vladimir Putin has not acquired its personalist features overnight. Since August 1999, Vladimir Putin slowly “set about building his ‘pyramid of power,’ emphasizing subordination, strengthening the role of the bureaucracy, bringing the members of the security services into the government, centralizing control, and eradicating opposition” (Shevtsova, 2007, 40). The influence of his patron-client network developed gradually over time as he placed many of his associates in key positions during his time in office as prime-minister and president. The authoritative Russian weekly argued that in the middle of 2000, almost a year since his selection as prime-minister, the newly elected president controlled only about 15 percent of about 150 of the key political and administrative officials. Instead, the old Yeltsin network — with the president’s chief of staff, Voloshin as its *de facto* coordinator — was still significantly larger (Drankina et al., 2000). Even though the president was able to appoint his supporters to key posts in enforcement agencies early on, as late as the beginning of 2003 he was still unable to replace officials in the cabinet who represented other interests. In the words of the same weekly that employed the analogy of shares to explain personal influence, “the president does not have the controlling stake of “Russia” corporation. There are many stakeholders [. . .]. The president is no longer a minority stakeholder

as he was in the beginning, he builds up his stake methodically and meticulously, acquiring assets that he regards as key” (Arkhangel’skaya, 2001).

In the Russian political economy the extraction and redistribution of rents from natural resources plays a core role. Indeed, Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2003) argue that the redistribution of private rents, often derived from energy exports, is the key tool at the leader’s disposal. Access to rents through control of economic resources induces a strong norm of loyalty to the incumbent leader because such rents can be used as private rewards for coalition members (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003, 65–68, 182). In personalist regimes, the ruler’s “collaborators, with his consent, take appropriate public funds freely, establish profit-oriented monopolies . . . the enterprises of the ruler contract with the state” and the division between public and private becomes blurred (Linz, 2000, 151–55). This is an essential component for the sustainability of personalist rule, which relies heavily on rents.

In Russia, the placement of Putin’s associates into positions of influence in the energy sector has therefore been crucial for strengthening his regime. Given the increase in oil and gas prices early in his tenure (see Treisman, 2011), President Putin’s acquisition of control over *Gazprom* — the largest natural gas company in the world — meant that by May 2001 he and the state had access to a very large source of revenue independent from so-called oligarchs.<sup>9</sup> Following the demise of *Yukos* in 2003, Putin was able to control the energy sector through his deputy, Sechin, and other close associates (Kolesnikov, 2008; Rahr, 2008). Likewise, many businessmen associated with the

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<sup>9</sup>Yevgeny Yasin aptly called *Gazprom* “the purse of the government and the president.” *Kommersant*, 19 March 2003, “*Gazprom* is the government and president’s purse,” at <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/371826>. In June 2000 Medvedev became its board chairman while in May 2001 Putin’s close associate, Miller, becomes *Gazprom*’s CEO.

president's past in St Petersburg built their own personal fortunes.<sup>10</sup>

Observers of Russian politics point out that at the end of 2003, the influence of the president's patron-client network begins to rival that of Yeltsin's — with Voloshin's departure in late 2003, the presidential administration resembles the office of the old mayor of St Petersburg, stacked with Putin's close associates from those days (e.g., Arkhangel'skaya, 2003). Likewise, in 2004 the president is able to bring more loyalists into the cabinet. In general, the expert assessments apparently suggest that the president's patron-client network becomes strongest only in late 2003 or early 2004, and that its influence continued to increase thereafter.

The exact organisation of various networks and their relative influence is extremely opaque (e.g., Kryshantovskaya and White, 2003; Ledeneva, 2013; Petrov, 2012; Sakwa, 2011). In Russia, in contrast to regimes in Central Asia and the Caucasus, where informal networks are largely based on ethnic or family ties (Collins, 2006), these networks are largely organised by a shared professional or educational background. In part, we know that the position in the informal elite network around the “patronal” president determines one's personal influence (Baturu and Elkind, 2014). Such informal networks can potentially be organised formally, so that the degree of affinity with the ruler can determine what formal political posts the individuals obtain. At the same time, in personalist regimes, the ruler's friends can be more powerful than officials in important posts.

In order to measure regime personalisation, we intend to assess the perceived political influence of Putin's patron-client network versus other networks over time. In the section below, we explain

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<sup>10</sup>In 2010, the Forbes Top 100 Businessmen list features Gennady Timchenko ranked at 36, Yuri Kovalchuk at 67 and Arkady and Boris Rotenberg at 99/100 — all close associates of Vladimir Putin from St Petersburg. See <http://www.forbes.ru/rating/100-bogateishih-biznesmenov-rossii/2010>.

the data we rely on for assessments of political influence. Here we briefly explain the data on patronage. We employ and extend the data on patron-client networks in Russia from 1999–2014 sourced from various bibliographic data as explained in Baturo and Elkind (2014). We improve on and extend that data with additional data for the 2011–14 period. For each individual included in the expert assessment of the Russian ruling coalition (see below), we attempt to identify one or two patrons — those believed to have elevated the client to positions in politics or the highest echelons of the civil service, or under whose chain of command clients worked earlier for significant periods of time.<sup>11</sup> We assigned patronage data to 70 percent of individuals included. For seven percent we could not estimate whether such individuals had patrons, while for the remaining 23 percent we find no significant patrons, and so these have careers largely of their own making. The latter is particularly common among businessmen, e.g., Mikhail Khodorkovsky. Altogether, there are 360 individuals that comprise the ruling coalition in 1999–2014 as regarded by the expert survey, and 91 different patrons, with Putin and Yeltsin ranked as the strongest and second strongest patron overall.<sup>12</sup> Later in the paper we additionally conduct several sensitivity tests based on alternative

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<sup>11</sup>For example, the former interior minister and *Duma* speaker, Boris Gryzlov, is believed to have as his patron the former FSB director, Nikolay Patrushev. These two individuals are high school classmates from Leningrad and it was Patrushev who elevated Gryzlov to positions of power in Moscow. In turn, Patrushev is the close associate of his own patron, Vladimir Putin. In the case of Yeltsin’s patron-client network, individuals reportedly appointed with the assistance of Yeltsin’s daughter and son-in-law, Dyachenko and Yumashev, are categorised as Yeltsin’s clients also.

<sup>12</sup>While the data on patron-client relationships was cross-checked against several sources whenever possible, it remains a subjective assessment of informal networks. It is also time-invariant, based on data at the time of the clients entry into the higher echelons of the political regime. See however Ledeneva (2013, 94–5, 112–4) on the rigidity of such networks and difficulties of exit.

data for patronage networks.

**[Figure 1 ABOUT HERE]**

Figure 1 displays monthly snapshots of the patron-client network data, which can be represented as a directed network graph with arrows from client to patron. The size of each vertex represents the influence score as measured through the expert survey, explained below. In each subplot, we label five patrons with the largest number of clients that month. As can be seen from Figure 1, from 1999–2000 Putin’s patron-client network is only one among several and is not the strongest. In line with the discussion above, throughout 2001–2003 its influence grows while that of Yeltsin diminishes. Only after December 2003 does Putin’s network appear stronger than the remnants of Yeltsin’s network.

In the December 2007 subplot that displays the patronage structure of the top political elite at the time when Putin decides to assume the prime-ministerial office and promotes Medvedev for presidency, Putin is clearly visible as the most centrally located patron in the network — the individual with the highest in-degree. Arguably, it is precisely this informal power as the head of the most powerful patron-client network in the country that gave him the ability to depart from the presidency in 2008 yet retain his personalised control over the regime. Alongside his control of the cabinet and ruling party, Vladimir Putin’s preeminence was also built on the firm foundation of having clients among the top officials in the cabinet, administration, state companies and regions, including President Medvedev himself (Sakwa, 2011). Throughout 2009–10 Medvedev was rather assertive and his *Russia Forward!* policy paper and annual state-of-the-union addresses emphasised his differences with Putin, influencing political discourse in the country (Baturu and Mikhaylov, 2014, 983). Yet, Putin’s informal power base overshadowed that of his successor by an order of magnitude, as can be seen in the subplot for September 2011. The last snapshot for 2014

displays a further weakening of Medvedev's nascent network and the emergence of new networks, such as that of Volodin, the new deputy head of administration.

Because personalist regimes rest on extensive patronage networks, we can assume that having more clients, or clients who are more powerful, increases the patrons power — and that where such patron is the ruler, the resulting indicator is a measurement of the level of personalisation of the regime. The section below turns to such measurement analysis, visualising the gradual personalisation of the Russian regime.

### **Political Influence of Patron-Client Networks and Regime Personalisation**

In difficult measurement tasks, scholars often turn to expert surveys to quantify variables (Benoit and Laver, 2006; Meyer and Booker, 2001). The selection of the most important members of the Russian ruling coalition and the assessments of their individual political influence are based on exactly such expert survey, namely the *100 Most Influential (Leading) Politicians of Russia*, conducted by the survey company *Vox Populi* together with the *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* daily, which assigns scores of influence over domestic and foreign politics and policy for the most important political actors in Russia. The indicator of the *perceived* individual influence is on the same scale for all individuals in the panel, includes a large number of individuals over time; the expert survey has been used in studies of political elite composition and regime deinstitutionalisation in Russia (Baturu and Elkink, 2014; Kudayarova, 1995; Kinsbursky, 2003; Kryshtanovskaya, 2002).

We employ surveys from August 1999 to July 2014, the time period covering fifteen years in office for Vladimir Putin.<sup>13</sup> The data represent the uninterrupted monthly series of the Top

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<sup>13</sup>The monthly survey of political influence, *100 Most Influential (Leading) Politicians of Russia*

100 panel of political actors in this period. Altogether, there are 360 unique individuals, 18,063 observations in total. As explained in the robustness section, the Top 100 can be regarded as a reasonable representation of the ruling coalition in Russia.

We combine the patronage network data as explained above with the key variable at the level of the network nodes, the individual members of the political elite, namely their perceived level of influence on Russian policy-making. The combination of patronage linkage data with measures of personal influence allows us to approximate the power derived from patronage — the more powerful the client, the more this patronage link contributes to the patron’s power. For all analyses, both immediate clients and their own clients are included as the group of clients of a patron, excluding those further down the patronage ladder.

**[Figure 2 ABOUT HERE]**

Figure 2 provides a visualisation of the level of personalisation in Putin’s Russia. It is important to read the combination of these three plots. Firstly, the top subplot depicts that while early on there is a significant increase in the *average* influence score of Putin and his clients compared to 

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 (Vox Populi, 1993) is available for November 1994 to March 2011. As of February 2007, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* started its own, parallel expert survey that assesses “on a scale between 1 and 10, the influence of the following Russian politicians in the Presidential Administration, government, Federal legislature”. It has a very similar design, and is conducted by the Agency of Political and Economic Communications. Monthly scores and methodology are available from [www.ng.ru](http://www.ng.ru). In the analyses we use Vox Populi (1993) data for July 1999–April 2007 and *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* for May 2007–June 2014. For all analyses, we standardize the scores by subtracting the monthly mean and dividing by the monthly standard deviation. Furthermore, since we are interested in both average levels of influence for specific subgroups and their total sum influence, we add the absolute minimum value of this standardised score across all months, such that the lowest score is zero.

all others, over time it decreases. The observed decrease is directly related to the increase in the proportion of the elite that belongs to Putin's network: while key members of the network occupy influential posts, there are also more and more clients of Putin among the lower ranks. Indeed, secondly, in the bottom subplot, we clearly see that Putin's clients rapidly join the top echelons and occupy a gradually increasing *proportion* of the ruling coalition overall. Thirdly, the middle plot displays the *sum* influence score of Putin and his clients: the number of clients in the coalition increases to a *de facto* majority, thus significantly increasing the overall level of influence of the ruler and his clients together, as displayed in the middle plot.

In summary, these patterns jointly — the initial increase and subsequent decrease in the average level of influence among the ruler's clients and the gradual increase in the number of such clients in the political top echelons, but above all the towering influence of the leader's patron-client network compared to other members of the winning coalition — describe the overall regime personalisation over time.

A breakpoint is visible around 2004 when the proportion of the winning coalition belonging to Putin's clients reaches the 50 percent mark and their joint influence of domestic and foreign policy outweighs that of all other members of the winning coalition together. This is the time around which two important officials left over from the Yeltsin period — Voloshin, chief of staff of the president, and Kasyanov, Prime Minister — leave the coalition ranks. Arguably, most observers of Russian politics would agree that this is a time when Putin's consolidation of power takes place (e.g., Sakwa, 2011, 9–10). While 2004 is an important moment in the process of regime takeover by the incumbent, which is confirmed by our numerical measurements of influence through the patron-client network, the more important implication is the very gradual nature of regime personalisation. While a significant point is reached at that time — the 50 percent mark in terms of control of the

Top 100, and the trumping in influence of Putin's network over all other members of that Top 100 — there is no large jump in any of these measurements but rather a very gradual trend both before and after 2004. Nevertheless, the fact that our measurement of influence and patronage ties suggests a breakpoint at the same time that observers of Russian politics would claim was a key moment in Putin's rise to power, gives confidence in the validity of our indicator.

**[Figure 3 ABOUT HERE]**

The fact that the network of Putin's clients spans the majority of the ruling coalition does not imply that there are no other strong patrons or that Putin is the only strong one. As described above, clients as measured in the data can have none, one or two patrons which implies that they can have split loyalties. We have no method in our data to measure the degree of affinity and at any point in time to which patron — whenever there are two such patrons — a particular client is most loyal. The result is that a large proportion of the clients of Putins clients are also clients of Yeltins clients . For example, while Yuri Chayka owed his justice ministry portfolio in 1999 to Vladimir Putin, it was a former Prosecutor-General, Skuratov, who made him his first deputy in 1996, rendering Yuri Chayka a client of Skuratov and therefore of Yeltsin's head of bodyguards' Korzhakov, and in turn, of Yeltsin (Zapodinskaya and Gul'ko, 2006).

We therefore need to compare Putin's patron-client network not just to those individuals outside that network, but also to the existing alternative patron-client networks which will partly overlap with his network. Figure 3 is based on exactly such analysis, whereby the patron-client network of Putin is compared with that of Yeltsin, as well as with other significant patrons among the Russian elite, such as Voloshin and Luzhkov. This plot uses the *sum* influence of the patron and his clients, in line with the middle plot in Figure 2. For the purposes of the current analysis, the patrons included in the plot are assumed to be strong enough to be patrons of their own networks.

If we sever a patron-client tie between Yeltsin and Putin despite Putin being a designated successor and client of Yeltsin and only include these two networks, we obtain the results displayed in the left plot, Figure 3. Yeltsin, as the outgoing leader, is the most important patron to surpass with a number of officials whose careers began in the 1990s and who are still in office in 2000s. The process by which this happened was described above and it aligns with the proposed, more numerical depiction of events. We see the influence of Putin's patron-client network taking shape in the early years, alongside a persistent and considerable influence of Yeltsin's network. Only in 2004 does Putin's network really take over and are Yeltsin's former loyalists largely out of the picture.

While the left-hand side plot in Figure 3 clearly visualises the capture of the regime by one patron from another patron, it does not properly depict the personalisation of the regime which is not just related to the top position but to the relative dominance of the top leader and his patronage network over the others. In the right-hand side plot of Figure 3, therefore, a larger number of patrons are included which we identify as the most important patrons who themselves have significant influence and lead strong patronage networks. For the purposes of this analysis, the included patrons are not counted as clients of their original patrons, e.g., Medvedev is not counted as Putin's client and his influence — nor that of his immediate clients — is not included in the calculation of Putin's patronage-based influence unless such clients are linked to Putin's network through a different route in the network. While at the start of his first year in office, Putin and his clients had an overall influence similar to that of, for example, Luzhkov and his clients, in 2010 their influence is magnitudes larger than that of the second-ranked patron, Medvedev, who himself appears to be a loyal client of Putin. Even though Medvedev occupies the most powerful post in the country from 2008–12, the small size of his patronage network renders him unable to threaten Putin's power

base.<sup>14</sup>

**[Figure 4 ABOUT HERE]**

The analysis of the influence of the patronage network should not be limited to gauging the overall level of influence of the ruler's clients and measuring the proportion of the top political elite formed by this network. We can also assess the extent to which this network has captured different elite segments and institutions of government. In the exercise of his "authority building" (Breslauer, 1982), the ruler needs to install supporters and acquire control of major branches of government, of enforcement agencies, and resources. Figure 4 that illustrates the gradual penetration of Putin's patron-client network into the political regime, clearly shows three episodes since 1999. The establishment of Putin's power takes place in part through influential clients installed in the administration and cabinet, but most importantly through the members of the security apparatus, the so-called *siloviki*.<sup>15</sup> Vladimir Putin appears to have acquired control over enforcement agencies early on, stuffing all important positions in police, security services, and related agencies with his personal loyalists. After the 2004 presidential election, Putin is able to acquire even more control by securing the cabinet for his supporters. His personal power then relies primarily on

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<sup>14</sup>First deputy chief of administration, Vladislav Surkov, who arguably came to be regarded as too loyal to Medvedev during the latter's presidency, was subsequently fired in "an attack on Medvedev's circle" — after Medvedev lost his bid for a second term. See *The Washington Post*, 8 May 2013, "Russian Deputy Prime Minister Vladislav Surkov Resigns Following Putin Reprimand." <http://wapo.st/18u1AhR>.

<sup>15</sup>Note that the definition of *siloviki* we use here requires that the individual is still part of the security apparatus — former *siloviki* are not categorised as *siloviki*. Some of the described dynamic might therefore be due not to a declining power of the *siloviki*, but rather the appointment of former *siloviki* to cabinet and administration posts.

being the patron of the majority in the cabinet, administration, and among security officials.

Around 2008, Vladimir Putin, now prime minister, retains control over the regime by keeping his own clients in nearly all significant cabinet and administrative posts. He also significantly increases his control over the state companies and business sector, with more clients appearing among the CEOs of the most influential state companies. Figure 4 also displays that the last segment of the political elite to be dominated by the ruler's own patron-client network is regional governors, from around 2010. The observed acquisition of control over regional elites only in 2010 is, however, the result of very few governors remaining in the Top 100 since late 2004. Likewise, even though Putin acquired the powers to have governors dismissed or appointed as early as 2004, powerful Shaimiev of Tatarstan, Ilyumzhinov of Kalmykia, Rakhimov of Bashkortostan, or Luzhkov of Moscow departed only during Medvedev's presidency (Baturo and Mikhaylov, 2014).

## **Regime Personalisation in Russia: Discussion**

Table 1 summarises the findings. Personalisation being a feature of any political regime, at different levels, means that a clear turning point of personalisation is difficult to identify. The power grab by the ruler is a gradual process with the occasional shock or larger step. Even though the president acquires control over the *siloviki* early in April 2000, according to our assessment it takes more than two years for Putin's personal network to rival in influence that of Yeltsin's, and only in October 2003 does it clearly surpass it. Then, in March 2004 when Putin acquires complete control over the cabinet, his personal network also surpasses in total influence all other networks within the ruling coalition. Clearly, this constitutes an important yardstick in regime personalisation, such that from this moment the Russian political regime, even though not fully authoritarian, can be regarded as

personalised. Since March 2004, the power of the ruler’s network has only increased. According to our estimations, after August 2006 Vladimir Putin becomes preeminent, with his clients, and clients of clients, clearly dominating the ranks of the ruling coalition.

**[Table 1 ABOUT HERE]**

In Russia from 1999–2014 we see both the very gradual personalisation of the regime through to an increase in the proportion of the elite belonging to Putin’s patronage network and the impact of major events, such as the alternation in office of the president. Putin’s grasp over the more informal sectors significantly increases during the presidency of Medvedev from 2008–12, albeit combined with a slight reduction in the power of the *siloviki* that brought him to power. It is around this time when some observers argued that, similarly to the Principate of Caesar Augustus, Putin established the “Principate of Putin,” i.e., that he became dominant political figure irrespective of the political office he occupied.<sup>16</sup>

Also, as can be seen in all three subplots in Figure 2, around 2012, when Putin returns to the presidency and the regime becomes more repressive, regime personalisation, as measured by our data, slightly declines. One possible interpretation is that by this time, the ruler’s power becomes sufficiently entrenched so that reliance on the patron-client network becomes less important, especially since the formal and nominal powers align again with Putin taking on the presidency. Many informed observers equally detect that the process underway somehow resulted in a significant, perhaps qualitative, change: “They [members of the ruling coalition] remember that everything was somewhat different earlier, because every member had a wider scope [for decision-making],

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<sup>16</sup>*Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 25 January, 2011. “Itogi Pervogo Desiatiletiya. 1. Principat Putina,” p. 10.

not every member, but responsible members [had]. Now Putin sort of lifted off over everybody else and in some sense he took off.” Likewise, regime insiders come to publicly acknowledge the ruler’s paramount role — in the words of deputy chief of staff, Volodin, “If there’s Putin — there’s Russia, if there’s no Putin — there’s no Russia.”<sup>17</sup>

## **Further Discussion and Sensitivity Analyses**

The preceding analyses rely on several assumptions, such as the inclusion of particular individuals into the Top 100 of the expert survey being a valid approximation of the Russian ruling coalition, that the proposed measurement of patron-client relationships is valid, and that measuring the ruler’s personal power through the dominance of his patron-client network is a valid proxy for regime personalisation. The alignment between the quantitative findings herein and the interpretations of informed observers of Russian politics provides significant face value validity to our proxy of regime personalisation. Below we briefly consider the first two assumptions in turn.

The expert survey of political influence has been used extensively by Russian sociologists that analysed the composition of the political and economic elite (e.g., Kudeyarova, 1995; Kinsbursky, 2003; Kryshtanovskaya, 2002), and its validity has been extensively examined in Baturu and Elkind (2014). The restriction to one hundred individuals is somewhat arbitrary, however, this number is arguably a reasonable approximation of the subset of the key policy-makers in Russian politics that form the ruling, or winning, coalition: a subset of elite of sufficient size that its support “endows the leadership with political power” over the regime (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003, 51). In the

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<sup>17</sup>First quote is from Gleb Pavlovski, *Ekho Moskvy*, 18 June 2014, <http://echo.msk.ru/programs/personalno/1380746-echo>. Volodin is quoted in <http://itar-tass.com/politika/1525655>. Accessed 1 December, 2014.

historical context, the size of such a coalition in Russia varied between a dozen and two dozen — if one includes only the *Politburo* — or from under one hundred to just over two hundred — if one also accounts for the Central Committee of the CPSU, individuals (See Khlevniuk, 1996). Earlier, we also referred to the authoritative Russian weekly that estimated the number of key political and administrative officials to be around 150 individuals in the early 2000s (Drankina et al., 2000). In general, the survey we rely on is a unique source of data on the political influence of key officeholders and we believe it is reasonable to regard it as a valid representation of the ruling coalition in Russia; it does include the most important members of the presidential administration, cabinet and civil service, as well as the key CEOs of state companies and private businessmen.

How valid is the measurement of patron-client networks? Even though we examined the data validity using several sources whenever possible, it is certainly a subjective assessment. There exist numerous alternative studies and reports about informal power structures in the Kremlin (e.g., Kryshtanovskaya and White, 2003; Ledeneva, 2013; Petrov, 2012; Sakwa, 2011) — they equally constitute subjective, however informed, assessments of rather opaque relationships. Indeed, how the informal institutions and networks are maintained, how they can be identified and their effects studied remains an important research challenge to comparative politics (Helmke and Levitsky, 2006, 25–28). Consider, for instance, Petrov (2012, 497–500) who reviewed three key expert reconstructions of political networks, that of “Kremlin towers,” “Politburo” and “Planetary” models (see also Ledeneva, 2013, 56–60). The first, the “towers” model, emphasises inter-clan rivalry around 2007 and distinguishes between four major and five minor “towers” — elite clan groups, all under Putin’s patronage. The “Politburo” model distinguishes between members of the inner

circle, i.e., “members”, and other clients, i.e., “candidates,”<sup>18</sup> while the “planetary” model assumes a dynamic relationship between the “patronal president” at the centre and three circles of planets-clients that can move closer to and further from the president.

**[Figure 5 ABOUT HERE]**

As a robustness test, we turn to the data based on “Kremlin towers” and “Politburo” models using the list of patron-client networks in Ledeneva (2013, 56–60), supplemented using the original assessments,<sup>19</sup> and add this data to that on political influence in the same manner as earlier. As a third robustness check, we use the list of officials with a confirmed shared background with the president, published by the Russian newspaper *New Times* (Al’bats and Ermolin, 2011).

Figure 5 replicates the analyses reported earlier in Figure 2 using three alternative expert assessments of the ruler’s network. The “Towers” and “Politburo” assessments are largely in line with the earlier results based on our data: Putin’s network overtakes other networks from 2004–6 (two subplots in the middle), however it surpasses half of the ruling coalition (two subplots at the bottom) in 2007 (“Towers”) and 2012 — albeit it gets close to the fifty percent mark in 2008 (“Politburo” subplot). The difference with results obtained from our data is due to a smaller number of clients included in the alternative assessments. Furthermore, the latter data ignores the

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<sup>18</sup>Also see an expert survey reconstruction of such a network, Minchenko Consulting, *Big Government of Vladimir Putin and “Politburo 2.0” Report*, [http://minchenko.ru/analitika/analitika\\_27.html](http://minchenko.ru/analitika/analitika_27.html), accessed 2 August, 2013.

<sup>19</sup>The list of major patrons and their clients for the so-called “Towers” models is available at <http://archive.today/ml6Tp>, the list of “Politburo” members and candidate members for August 2012 is from [http://minchenko.ru/analitika/analitika\\_27.html](http://minchenko.ru/analitika/analitika_27.html), accessed 2 August, 2013. We were unable to ascertain the network composition based on the “planetary” model.

additional dimensionality of networks, i.e., clients of clients, and that some clients can be shared between several patrons. Finally, while the network's influence based on *New Times* data is equally ascendant, it is very different from our own results as well as those based on two alternative estimations. However, while this data has the lowest level of subjective assessment and relies only on the observable professional, family, and educational background shared with the president, it only categorises eight percent of all individuals in the data and ignores other networks and more tacit patron-client relationships. In other words, the relatively low influence of the ruler's network is expected due to the existence of very few observations.

The relationship between patrons and clients can be much more complicated than this analysis suggests. It is entirely plausible that while the president relies on his patron-client network to acquire more control over the political regime, his own clients equally use their patron for leverage and to advance their goals. Indeed, Collins (2006, 273) who analysed patronage in Central Asia, argued that the president can be "dependent on clan support, and invested clan elites are highly dependent on his patronage" so that rival elite groups simply trust the ruler more than they do each other and therefore prefer to keep the latter at the centre of elite politics as long as the ruler delivers. While we address the possible issue of such symbiotic relationships between patron and clients by assessing their total influence, and accounting for clients shared between several patrons in some analyses, all of the potential difficulties of measuring personal influence cannot be eliminated in the empirical framework since both informal arrangements and the extent of political influence are difficult to observe and measure. We believe, however, that in general the available expert assessments of authoritarian reversal in Russia, as well as alternative measurements of patron-client relationships employed above, vindicate the validity of our methods and findings.

## Conclusions

When does a political regime become a personal rulership? As Huntington (1991, 126) argues, albeit in relation to the opposite process, the “gradual, slow, sure” process of liberalisation in Brazil that started in 1973 and culminated in a direct presidential election in 1989 makes it “virtually impossible to say at what point Brazil stopped being a dictatorship and became a democracy.” Similarly, at what stage from 1999–2014 did the Russian political regime cease being partly democratic to become non-democratic or, more specifically, a personal autocracy? We agree with Juan Linz that authoritarianism is a government that is “forever” (Linz, 1998, 20–21): when the ruler’s horizon acquires this status, it signals the onset of personal autocracy where the identity of the ruler is more important than institutions. By this logic, Russia transitioned to personalism following the *United Russia* congress on 24 September 2011 when Vladimir Putin declared that he would stand for the presidential elections. However, while this event was an important yardstick in political development, regime personalisation has occurred over a longer period of time, as evidenced by the analysis of the influence of the president’s own patron-client network, with the crucial transition in early 2004 when Putin’s clients overtook Yeltsin’s old network in influence.

While the quantitative data we employ are only a proxy for personalisation, we demonstrate how using an indicator for individual policy influence among the members of the political elite, combined with the data on patron-client networks, can provide significant insights into the dynamics of personalisation. The paper highlights the gradual extension of the ruler’s powers, the slow decline of the old networks, how the leader’s clients gradually capture the political elite segment by segment, and the way in which competing patronage networks are subdued over time. Our statistical measure aligns with how informed observers of Russian politics would be likely to describe

the development of Putin's regime — and adds new detail on the underlying speed and dynamics of the personalisation of the regime. While the main conclusion would have to be that the process is gradual and depends on the capture of different sectors in the regime, a turning point is perhaps identifiable in 2004 when we see Putin's patronage network capturing the numerical majority of the winning coalition and when it outweighs any other patron's network in terms of influence by an order of magnitude.

The findings of this paper will be of interest to scholars of comparative politics and personalist regimes (Chehabi and Linz, 1998; Escriba-Folch and Wright, 2010; Linz, 2000; Svoboda, 2012; Escriba-Folch and Wright, 2010; Frantz and Kendall-Taylor, 2014). We confirm with our data that the onset of personalism is difficult to identify, yet the accumulation of a ruler's power can be estimated if we assess the influence of ruler's patron-clients' network versus other networks. Equally, scholars of post-Soviet and Russian politics (e.g., Hale, 2005, 2011; Ledeneva, 2013; Petrov, 2012; Sakwa, 2011) will find an additional validation for the importance of elite informal politics and patronage in the maintenance of “patronal presidency” and regime governance.

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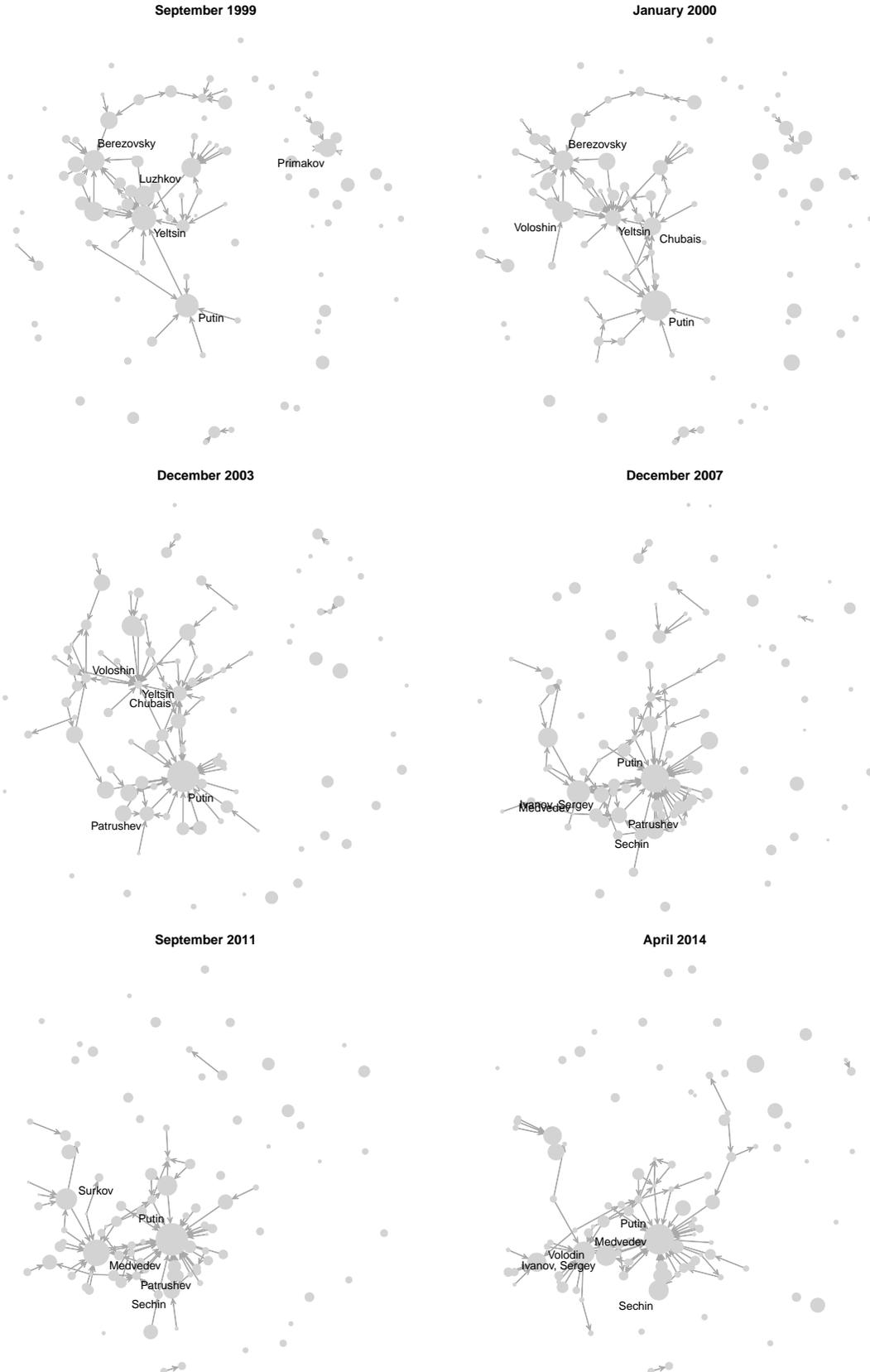


Figure 1: *Network Plot of Patronage Relationships Over Time*

*Note:* Plots for selected time periods. Arrows point from client to patron. The size of each vertex represents the influence score as measured through the expert survey, explained in text. Five patrons with the most clients each month are labelled.

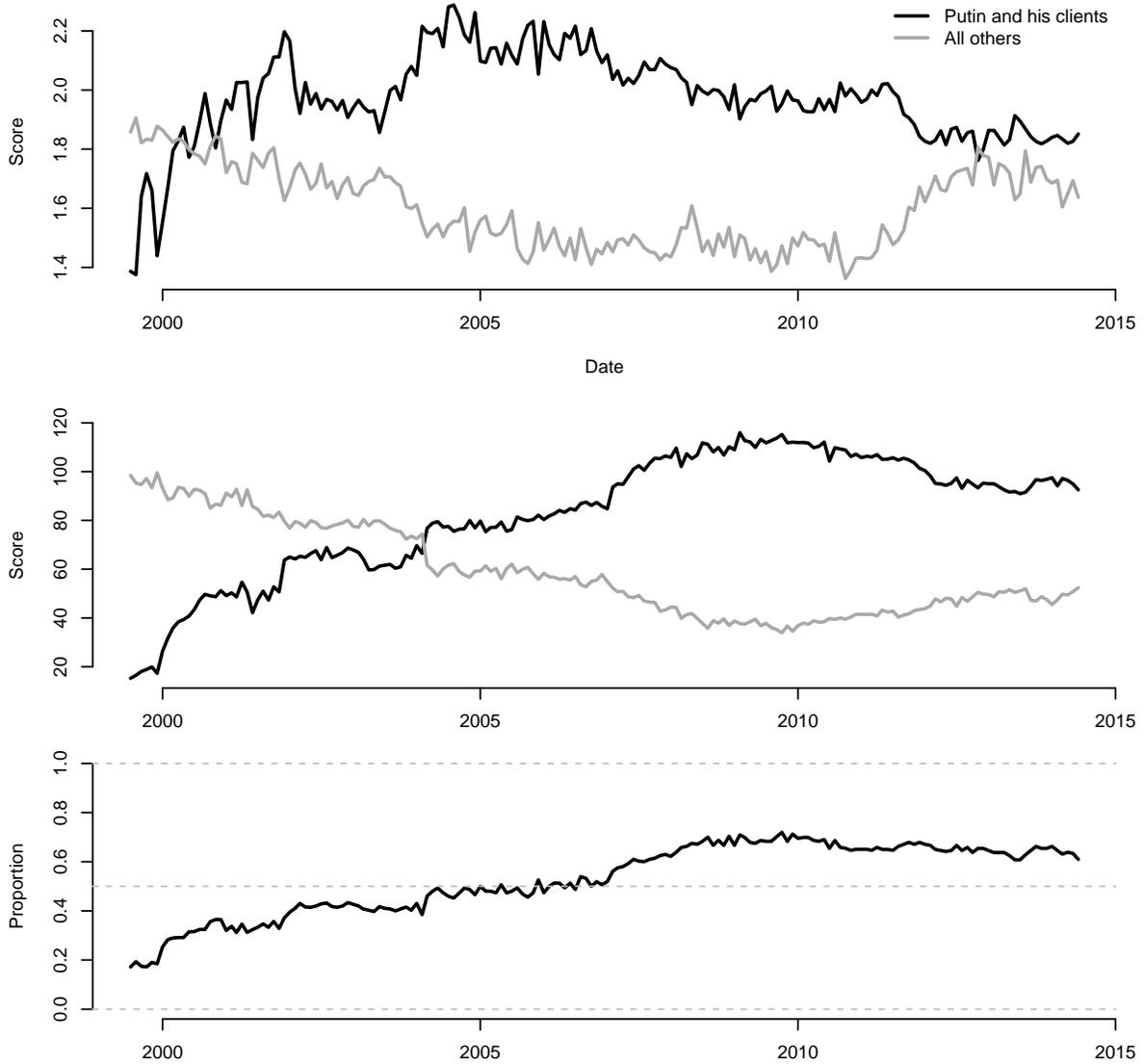


Figure 2: *Influence of Putin's Patron-Client Network over Time*

Note: The top plot represents the average score for Putin and his clients, as well as his clients' clients (in black), and for all those not belonging to this group (in grey). The middle plot represents the total score for Putin and his clients, as well as his clients' clients (in black), and for all those not belonging to this group (in grey). The bottom plot represents the proportion of individuals in the data — members of the Top 100 — who are included in this client network of Putin.

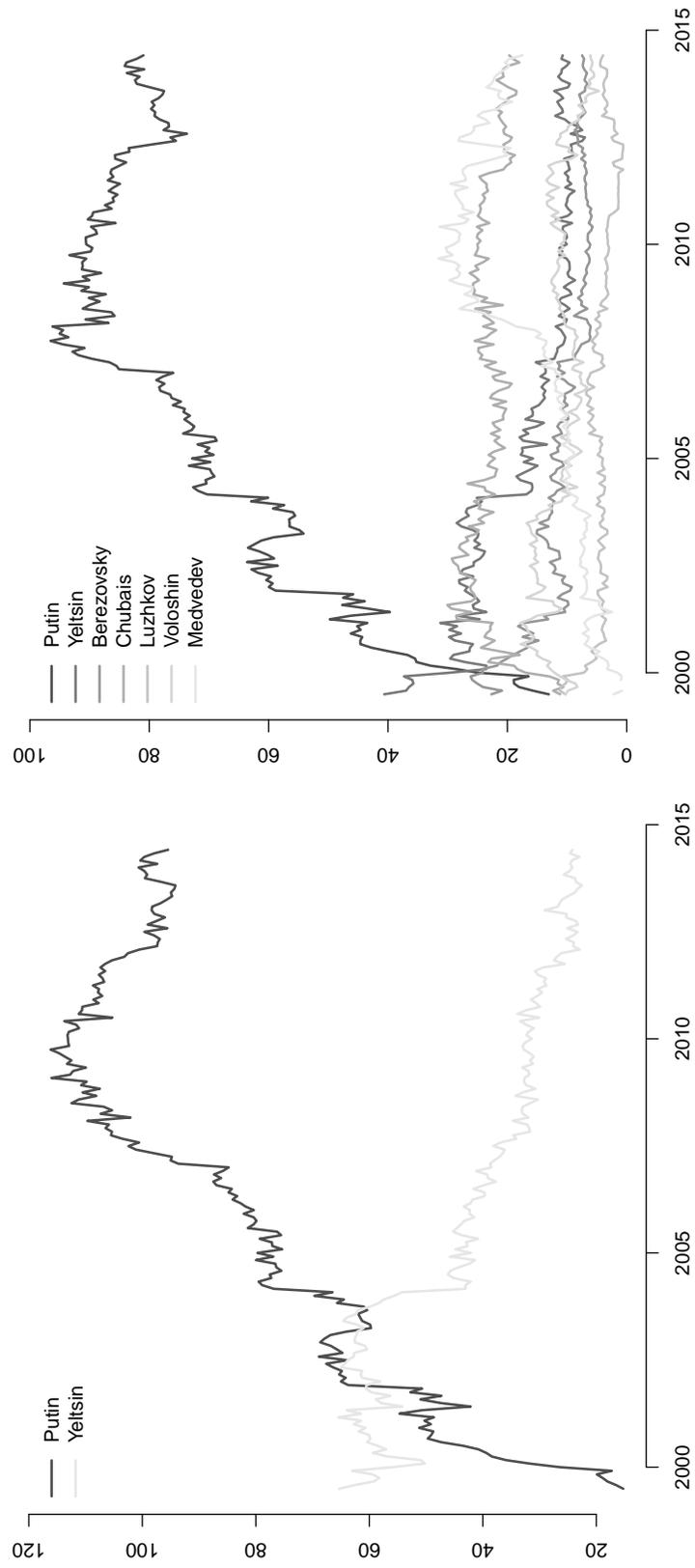


Figure 3: *Influence of Different Patron-Client Networks*

Note: The plot represents the sum of standardised influence scores for a patron's clients and clients' clients, including the influence score of the patron himself. In the right plot none of the selected patrons are counted themselves as clients of any patron, e.g. for Voloshin the client-patron tie with Yeltsin is ignored, for Medvedev the tie with Putin is equally ignored etcetera. In the left plot the analysis is based on the assumption that Putin himself is not a client of Yeltsin.

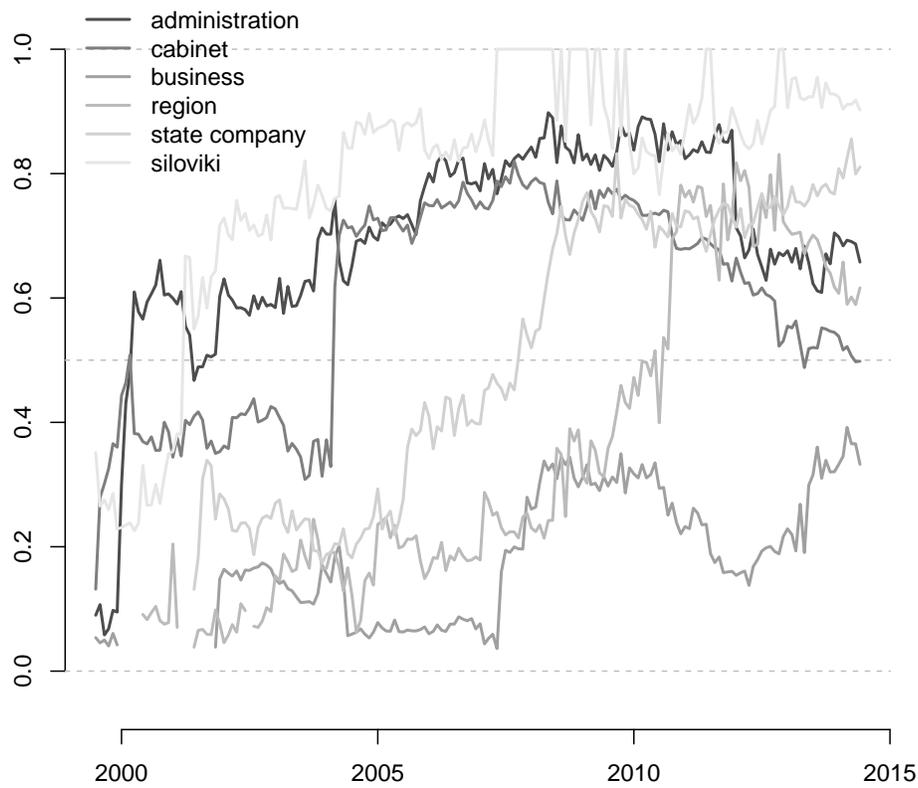
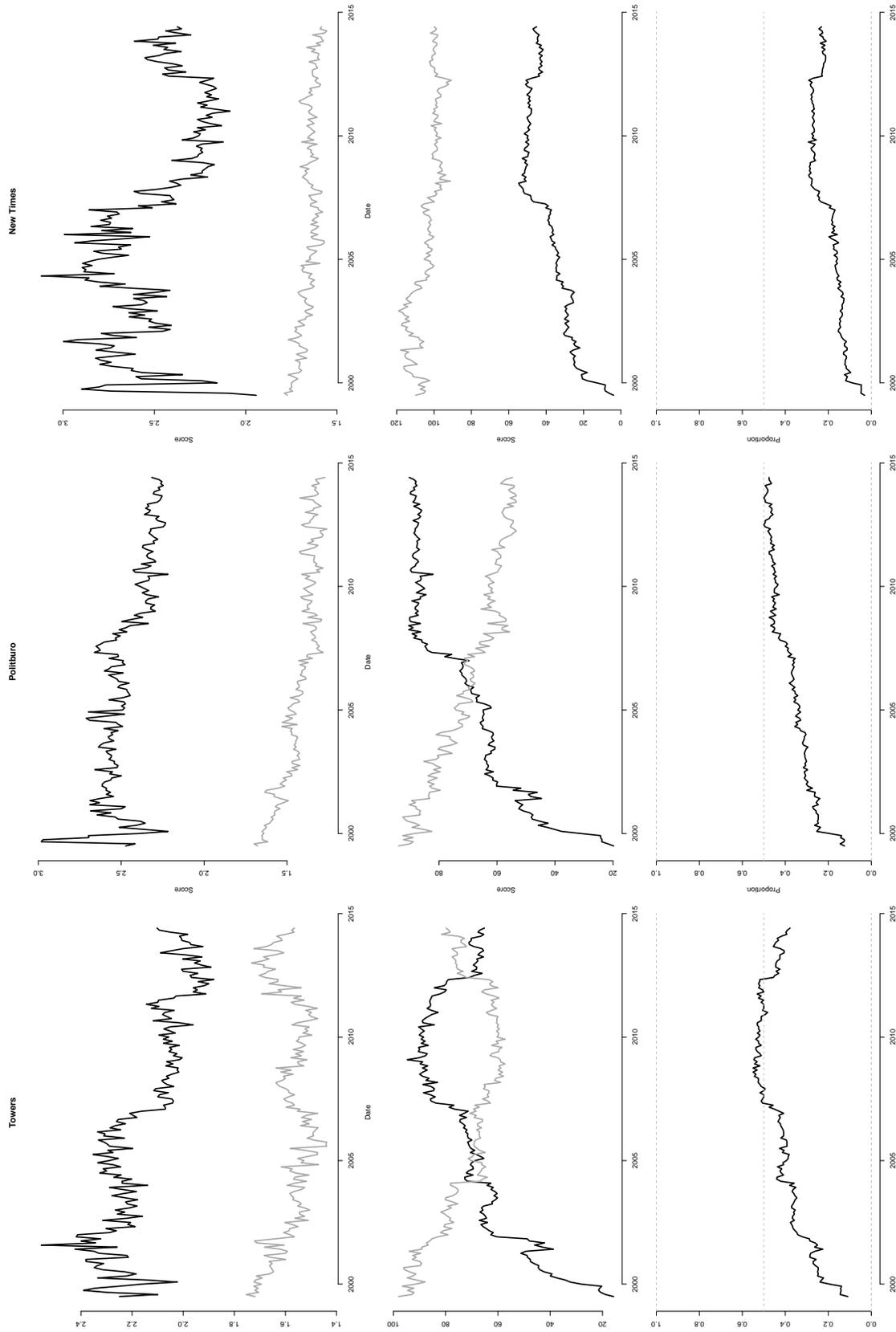


Figure 4: *Influence of Ruler's Patron-Client Network in Institutions*

*Note:* The plot represents the sum of standardised influence scores for Putin's clients and his clients' clients, including the influence score of Putin himself, by different elite segments and institutions, as a proportion of the sum of standardised influence scores in the segment or institution.

Regime Personalisation	Date	Detail
Over 50% of <i>siloviki</i> in Top 100	April 2000	Figure 4
Over 50% of administration in Top 100	September 2001	Figure 4
Equals Yeltsin's network in influence	December 2001	Figure 3 (left)
Surpasses Yeltsin's network in influence	October 2003	Figure 3 (left)
Over 50% of cabinet in Top 100	March 2004	Figure 4
Surpasses all other networks in influence	March 2004	Figure 2 (middle)
Over 50% of all in Top 100	August 2006	Figure 2 (bottom)
Over 50% of state companies in Top 100	October 2007	Figure 4
Over 70% of all in Top 100	December 2007	Figure 2 (bottom)
Over 50% of regional elites in Top 100	August 2010	Figure 4

Table 1: *The Timeline of Regime Personalisation in Russia*



**Figure 5: Influence of Putin's Patron-Client Network: Robustness Tests**

Note: The figure plots the influence of president's patron-client network using three alternative sources for patronage data: "Towers" (left), "Politburo" (middle), "New Times" (right). Three subplots in each plot are constructed in the same manner as in Figure 2: the top plot is the average score for Putin and his clients, as well as his clients' clients (in black), and for all those not belonging to this group (in grey). The middle plot — the total score for Putin and his clients, as well as his clients' clients (in black), and for all those not belonging to this group (in grey). The bottom plot — the proportion of individuals in the data — members of the Top 100 — who are included in this client network of Putin.