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**ON INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF RUSSIAN PARTIES IN THE**  
**POLITICAL SYSTEM OF THE 1990S**

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### Abstract

The article analyzes the political institutionalization of federal and regional parties, which represent an interaction of organizational, functional, and ideological components. It is shown that federal trends in party building also had a considerable effect on regional party genesis. In the late 80s-early 90s, national public and political organizations and regional parties played a key role in the development of political pluralism in the KBR. They were not created purposefully, but formed spontaneously, as a result of the activities of a socially active element, representing various social, professional, and national groups. Since 1992, the institutionalization of regional parties in its development has passed the same stages as the federal parties, only with a slight delay and some specifics. It is concluded that the institutionalization of political parties in Kabardino-Balkaria at the end of the twentieth century was at the stage of formation, their activities were in line with the work of federal parties and took place in the conditions of destructive changes and contradictions in the sphere of social relations and the formation of new mechanisms of government. They were not able to have a real impact on the political landscape in the Republic, as they had a very weak social basis and relied on the authority of federal, rather than regional leaders, and focused their activities on organizational construction, internal party work and preparation for election to state authorities, both at the federal and regional levels.

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*Keywords:* Institutionalization, federal political parties, regional party genesis, legitimization



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## **1. Introduction**

The social and political situation in Russia at the present stage is one of the most dynamic periods in history. Radical changes in political and state organization have created a range of civil problems, the solution of which lies in the opportunities and abilities to find the most appropriate options to meet the challenges of society, taking into account national specifics. The most effective mechanism that can construct a model of contemporary political realities is political parties. In this regard, the feature of the party system in Kabardino-Balkaria was that it was formed as a result of the interaction of several political actors: Communist organizations, democratic, national, and civil movements. In other words, the following variability in the system of political pluralism was identified: conservatives, liberals, radicals, and ethnonational pluralization.

## **2. Problem Statement**

In Kabardino-Balkaria, the process of establishing political pluralism was ambiguous. At the initial stage of its formation in 1985–1990, national public organizations of ethnocultural orientation and political parties outside and within the CPSU began to form spontaneously. And only after the August 1991 putsch one could speak about the transition to a multiparty system and the polarization of political forces. It was determined by the existence of general democratic principles on which Russia's statehood was built. It set out the direction for the political development, aimed at establishing a democratic, legal, social state and searching for ways and conditions for the formation of civil society institutions. In these conditions, the political forces of Kabardino-Balkaria, in addition to defending individual rights, were aimed at inter-ethnic consensus and alliance with the democratic movement: the Kabardino-Balkarian branch of the party of "Rossijskoe edinstvo i soglasie" ("Russian Unity and accord"), the Kabardino-Balkarian branch of the all-Russian public movement "Chest' i Rodina" ("Honor and Motherland"), the socio-political movement "Vpered Rossiya!" ("Forward Russia!"), the movement for preserving the unity of the KBR and the Kabardino-Balkarian organization of the Republican Party of the Russian Federation.

## **3. Research Questions**

The subject of the research is the regional branches of federal parties in the modern political system of Kabardino-Balkaria.

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this article is to analyze the institutionalization of federal political parties and their regional branches during the transformation of the social and political sphere in the 90s. Of the XX century.

## 5. Research Methods

The methodological basis of the research is the principles of socio-political analysis of social phenomena based on general ideas, patterns and features of formation, and functioning in the new socio-political reality. The following research methods have been applied: structural and functional, institutional, historical, and comparative. Also, the theoretical basis for the study of the phenomenon of political parties and the nature of multiparty is the work of domestic and foreign political scientists, historians, and philosophers, such as, Korgunyuk (2004), Pshizova (2003), Gelman (1997), Isaev (2008), Golosov (2001), Schmitter and Karl (2004), Caldeir and Gibson (1997), Gogova (2010), Babich (2005), Thagapsoev (2009) et al.

## 6. Findings

The process of political institutionalization of federal parties in the 90s. The twentieth century is a combination of organizational, functional, and ideological components that make it possible to identify qualitative characteristics in their activities, namely, their legal recognition, determination of ideological positions, and understanding of their place and role in the state mechanism and political system.

The construction of Russian statehood at the present stage, based on democratic principles, has led to the search for conducive conditions to form civil society institutions, legal and social state. Political parties are an efficient mechanism that can create an effective interaction between the state and society. The formation of the Russian multiparty system began with the January Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU (1987) when the declared course of democratization of society caused a crisis of one-party system. During this period, the new political elite that won the country quickly developed the rules of the game that made it possible to cooperate with the former Communist party elite and use its authority and experience for its own purposes. The society itself, although it had mechanisms of pressure on this elite, did not use them, naively hoping for a significant role of the state.

Despite the fact, that the formation of the Russian political movement was initially carried out within the framework of the transformations implemented by the Russian ruling elite, it is not possible to say that the state was a "monopoly subject of party construction" (Gaman-Golutvina, 2004) since the activities of the first proto-party structures were mostly spontaneous and represented an unorganized protest to the authoritarian system. The main actors at that time were alternative (including national) anti-Communist movements that were not integrated into the monolithic system of state and public organizations (Zaslavsky, 2003). Nevertheless, the fragmented party system in Russia in the late 80s-early 90s under the conditions of political bipolarity was of great importance for the future party-ideological individualization and institutionalization of political parties that tried to assume the role of self-sufficient political institutions.

In 1991, with the disappearance of the CPSU, an era of the political crisis began, which resulted in the fragmentation of the "old" and the formation of new political organizations. Boris Yeltsin's victory over the Supreme Soviet allowed him to develop and implement mechanisms to change the institutional forms of post-Communist Russia, namely, to abolish the Soviets, and to form a model of presidential form of government that gave him full power. The numerous "parties" that emerged during this period

were mostly clubs of interest that had no regional divisions, and therefore, no social support. None of the parties formed had any influence on the political process. The underdevelopment of the communication subsystem and civil society "caused the inability of elites to make their own consolidation the basis for the consolidation of the entire society" (Pantin et al., 1996, p. 71).

The political crisis was relatively overcome only in 1993. The institutionalization of political parties was due to "shock" economic reforms, a sharp social stratification of society, the first Chechen campaign, and the introduction of a mixed electoral system tested during the 1993 State Duma elections. The authorities tried to eliminate the differentiation of both the Russian and regional political elites by accepting the Agreement on public consent. These steps led nowhere since the ruling power was already losing public confidence. Even more split in the elite, but with the help of a legal mechanism, made the elections to the first State Duma. In other words, there was a transition from the crisis of political parties to constructing the party-political system. Although it took place in the absence of a law on political parties, new political parties with certain organizational structures and resources were formed (the Communist party, the LDPR, Yabloko). The phenomenon of the "party of power", "Choice of Russia", first appeared.

Changes in the party landscape associated with the elections to the II State Duma in 1995 and the upcoming Presidential elections in 1996 were a catalyst for the formation of new political parties. Thus, the specific feature of the 1995 election campaign was that it showed a clear political and legal stability of parties and social and political movements. They managed to reorganize and adjust their work, obtain the support of the media and financial structures. However, only a few of the 43 electoral blocs and parties overcome the 5 % barrier: the Communist party – 22 %, the LDPR – 10.9 %, "Our home is Russia" – 10 %, "Yabloko " – 7 %. (Timoshenko & Zaslavsky, 1996). The party "Our home is Russia" was among the top three, and therefore the Government of the Russian Federation received a strong "party of power".

Since 1996, during the period of preparation for the Presidential elections of the Russian Federation, it became obvious that multiple political organizations, created under the conjuncture, did not have a chance of political survival after the presidential elections. Therefore, it became necessary to unite them in blocks and unions for greater political influence. It was the "party of power" that accumulated all shades of Russian centrism and a significant part of the liberal flank around the current President Boris Yeltsin. "Other political actors had only to choose between these main forces" (Korgunyuk, 2007, p. 64).

Since 1997, the final structuring of political institutions has taken place. An important step in this direction was taken by Boris Yeltsin, who attempted to change the institutional political mechanisms by introducing elections of heads of administrations of the Russian Federation subjects, which significantly increased the political significance of the Federation Council. This was done for one purpose, to create a political counterweight to the opposition State Duma.

The further split of political elites, despite the movement "Our home-Russia", which preemptorily was the "party of power" for several years and made every effort to unite, was obvious. The reasons were the increased struggle for resources, both power and economic resources, due to the catastrophic decline in energy prices, the global financial crisis and the understanding that the power of the President is coming to an end, losing the trust of the population.

In 1998, the resignation of V.S. Chernomyrdin was the beginning of the collapse of the movement "Our home-Russia". After that, a number of blocks and associations were created: "New power", "Young Russia", "Fatherland", "All Russia", "Voice of Russia". But all of them were quasi-party entities, which were later replaced by real political actors-parties.

Since 2000, steps have been taken to develop a fundamentally new regulatory framework for the functioning of political parties. Distinctions were clearly defined in the program settings that distinguished parties from socio-political movements; in the principles of organizational structure with the recognition of equal rights in the electoral process. All these steps were taken to reduce the number of political organizations eligible to participate in elections. Against this background, a new "party of power", "Edinstvo" ("Unity"), was formed, which created a new arrangement of the party and political forces.

The regional party genesis was determined by the same general trends as the federal one, only with a slight delay and some specifics.

The key role in the political process at the initial stage of political pluralism formation was played by national movements and regional social and political organizations, which were not created purposefully, but formed spontaneously, as a result of the activity of a socially active element consisting of representatives of various social, professional and national groups (Farukshin & Yurtaev, 1991). So, in the late 80s-early 90s in the CBD have been creating an informal national movement as "Adyghe Khase", the Congress of the Kabardian people, the Balkar public organization "Tere", the National Council of the Balkar people, Adyghe people's party, the social-political movement "Kabarda", "Russian Congress", "Slavs", "Russians", etc. were created, as well as many regional parties, such as the Democratic Party of the CBR, the Republican Party of Kabardino-Balkarian Republic, the Communist labor party of the KBR.

Placing more emphasis on populism, some openly expressed their radical attitude to the CPSU, while others took a pro-Communist position. This duality of positions was not effective in the political space of the region. The social and political movements of the Republic were not able to organize the political struggle properly due to the lack of resources, legislative status, structural design, and the fundamental rejection of clearly ideological orientation. These circumstances accounted for the fact that all of them left the political arena over time (Babich, 2005).

The main trend of further formation of the multiparty system in Kabardino-Balkaria was that the first parties created in the Republic in the early 90s considered the model and ideology of the CPSU as their base. Thus, since 1992, the Republic with its traditional political culture of the population, the agricultural and industrial sector of the economy, and the tense social and economic situation in the country and the region has been dominated by the left-wing party (KPRF). However, the presence of liberal-democratic parties that were formed as a result of the formation of a new regional political elite was also obvious: the Kabardino-Balkar branch of the party of Russian unity and accord, the Movement for preserving the unity of the KBR and the Kabardino-Balkar organization of the Republican Party of the Russian Federation.

Supporting regional political movements, the local authorities tried their best to construct a party mechanism that would help to mobilize the electorate and legitimize the established political forces and their regime. Against this background, following the election V. M. Kokov as President of the KBR in

1992, a monocentric model began to form. The executive power filled all the gaps in the political space of the Republic and exercised control over all political actors, although on the principles of relative non-interference in the affairs of regional parties and movements.

The 1994–1999 period is characterized by the formation in Kabardino-Balkaria regional branches of Russian political parties and political movements, which became an alternative to political parties, with a centralized system of control: regional branch of all-Russian political party "Agrarian party of Russia", LDPR, the Kabardino-Balkarian branch of the all-Russian public movement "Honor and Motherland, all-Union social-political movement "Our home is Russia" became the "party of power" in the region, and contributed to the further development of regional party genesis. We can say that all these party organizations in the KBR during this period were formed as election headquarters and took the form of "committees", usually of a clientelist type (Shashkova, 2011). This is confirmed by the fact that they rarely held public actions, and if there were any, they were held within the framework of federal events.

It was a clear slow pace of multiparty formation in the KBR in the 90s. of the twentieth century which is explained by the fact that the regional branches of Federal parties that emerged did not have an incentive to large-scale party building, did not have significant political resources, did not develop clear mechanisms for interaction with authorities, had a weak social base, and their program documents were more declarative and duplicated by different parties. They saw their support in the authority of federal leaders rather than regional ones. These are the reasons that the regional branches of federal political parties were not subjects of politics, but rather its instruments, through which the authorities, both Federal and regional, tried to realize their goals and objectives.

## 7. Conclusion

Thus, it can be argued that the institutionalization of political parties in Kabardino-Balkaria at the end of the twentieth century was at the stage of formation, their activities were in line with the work of Russian parties and took place in the context of destructive changes and contradictions in the sphere of social relations and the formation of new mechanisms of state management. Being a de jure powerful political force, the de facto regional branches of the Federal parties were not able to have a real impact on the political landscape in the Republic. No regional party was in favor of changing the political regime in the KBR, although they took a fairly reactionary position towards the Federal government.

All the regional branches of federal political parties formed in the 90s (1992 KPRF, 1994-APR, 1995 – "Our house-Russia", 1998-LDPR, etc.) directed their activities to organizational construction, internal party work and preparation for the next election campaign to state authorities at both the federal and regional levels. The federal parties saw in their regional branches a real mechanism to support their programs and candidates.

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