



Social and electoral bases of United Russia Party

Jay Chandra Akela

Ph.D scholar, SIS, JNU, New Delhi, India

Abstract

In a political and electoral system, a political party has to outperform their rivals to capture the power through a democratic mobilisation wooing her supporter and adherents across the line. To meet this objective a political party embark upon certain socio-economic segments of the society to ensure their electoral victory. This article extensively deals with the different layers of the social and electoral bases of United Russia party which has strengthened the invincibility of the Putin-led political party in post-Russia to become one of most popular party in the country.

Keywords: political, electoral, United Russia Party

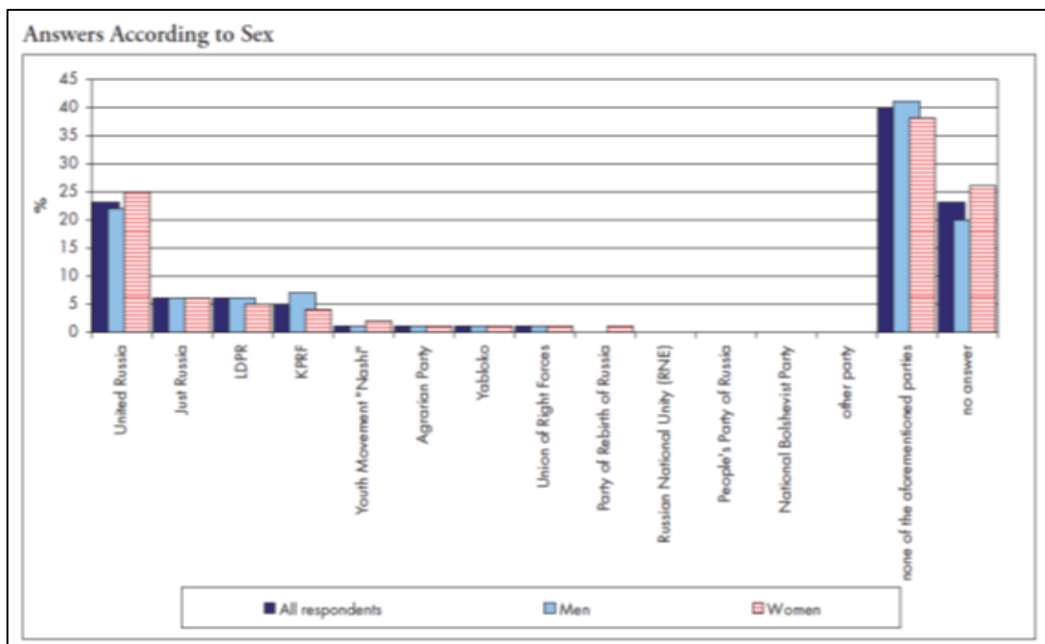
Introduction

Measurement of the strength of a party needs a standard of measurement. Generally, three different yardsticks namely party-membership, voters base and strength in legislative bodies-are being used for the above mentioned purpose. However, to use all the three criterion all together would not gives us true picture but collectively can give us proper insight about the strength of a political party (Sartori 1976). A political party constantly works among the electorates to convert their social and electoral bases into votes to get a consolidated position in legislative bodies. According to Shastri (2003) ^[5] support bases of political parties in a democratic political system chiefly consist scores of socio-cultural and economic indicators namely Gender voting behaviour, urban support base, rural support base, educational levels of voters, occupational group, religion, economic class

and so on. The Russian society too is distributed along those cleavages. The opinion of different socio-economic groups matters the most while analysing the social and electoral base of any political party. Hence, United Russia cannot be the exception of this fact.

Social Base of United Russia Party

Experts argue that Russian women’s top choice is United Russia when it comes to express a liking for any political party. In a 2007 survey, questions were asked among different respondents from both the gender about which Russian political party they like most. The following table shows the gender-wise composition of the respondents. They were told to choose among the political parties existing in Russia including United Russia party.

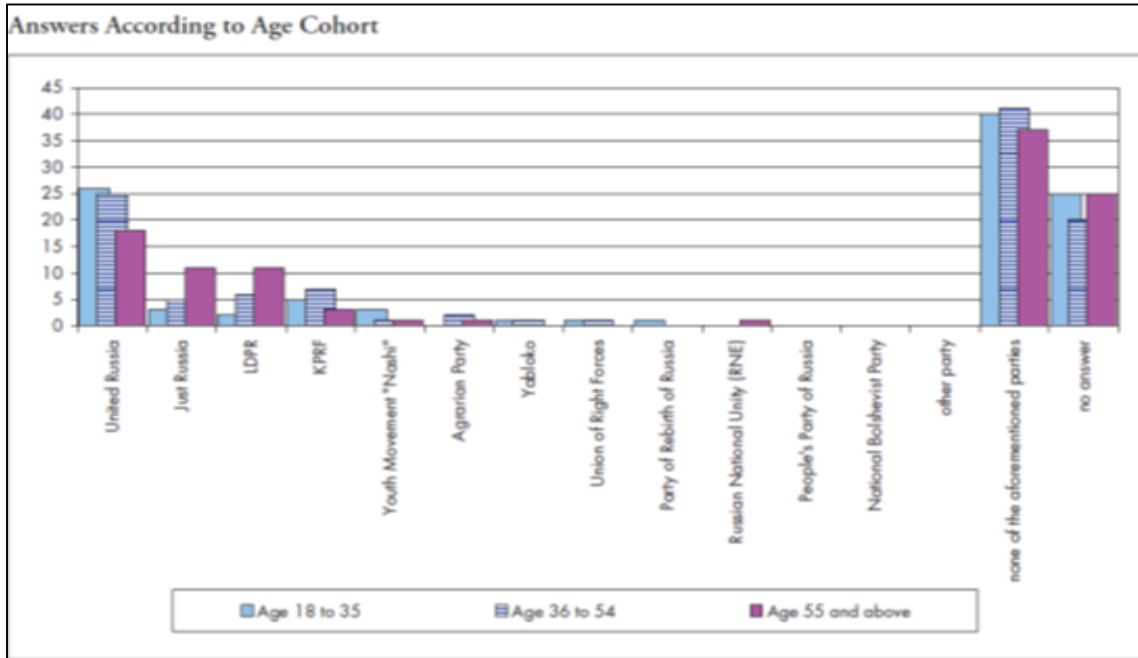


Source: Opinion poll by the public opinion foundation (FOM) on 12th april 2007
http://bd.fom.ru/report/map/projects/dominant/dom0725/domt0715_1/d071501

Fig 1

The aforementioned data suggests that 30 percent of the respondent liked United Russia party as a party which makes positive impression on the voters. In another set of responses, the respondents were told to express their favourite political

parties. The answers were weighed on the basis of the age composition of the respondents. It clearly shows the preferences of youths in favour of United Russia party.



Source: Opinion poll by the public opinion foundation (FOM) on 12th April 2007
http://bd.fom.ru/report/map/projects/dominant/dom0725/domt0715_1/d071501

Fig 2

The aforementioned table demonstrates the age-wise political preference of Russian population. After examining this, one can argue that around 18 percent respondent in 55 years and above age group express their support for United Russia party while 24 percent respondent supports this party in 36-54 years age group. The youths aged of 18-35 are the biggest supporter of party as the highest 25 percent respondent from this

category turned up the party supporter. In another set of survey, people from different income groups were surveyed on what is their one of the most favourite political parties. People from different regions in Russian federation too were ask to express their preference in favour of their most favoured political party.

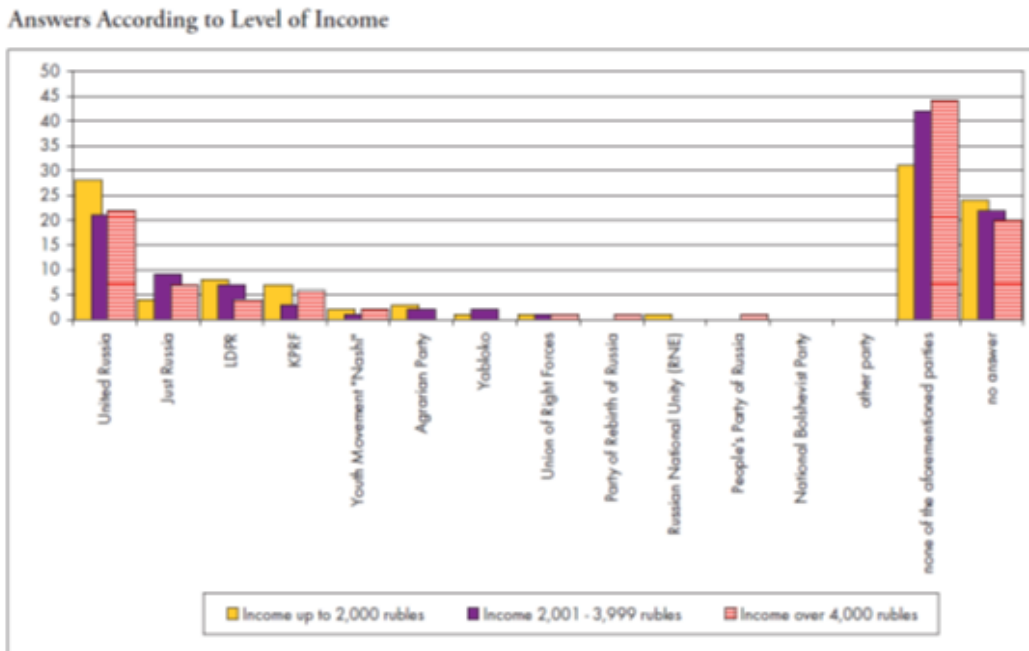
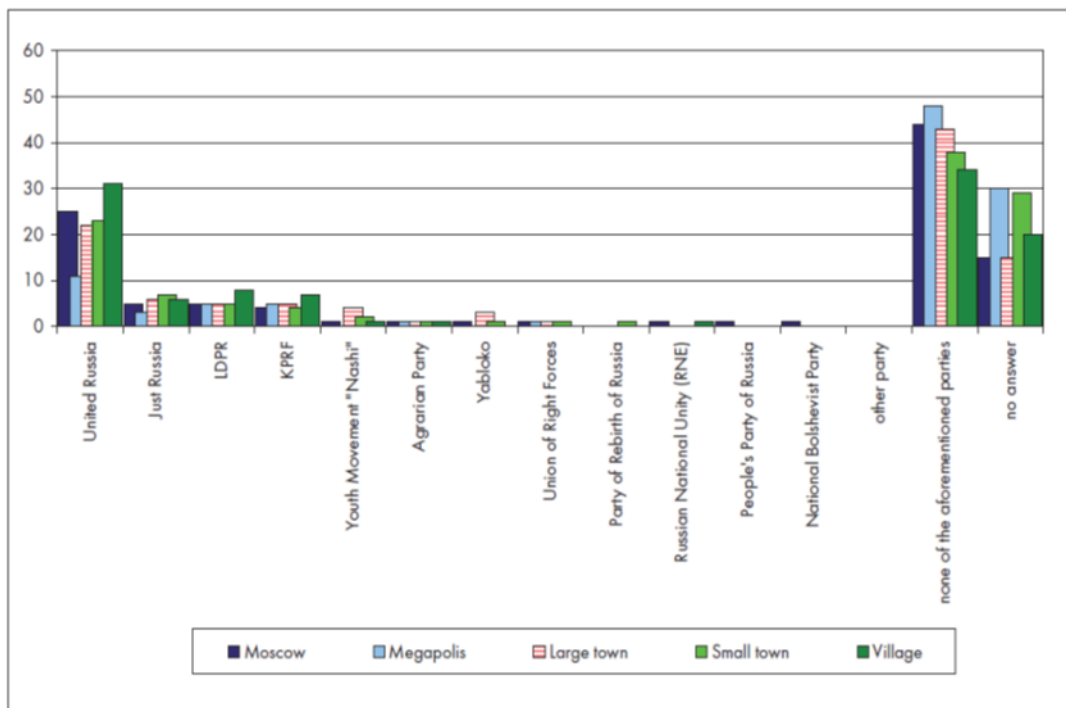


Fig 4

Answers According to Type of Place of Residence



Source: Opinion poll by the public opinion foundation (FOM) on 12th april 2007 http://bd.fom.ru/report/map/projects/dominant/dom0725/domt0715_1/d071501

Fig 5

Electoral Base of United Russia Party

For many of the Russians, United Russia is the primary mechanism for elite circulation and career advancement within the political system. It has been evident that 65 out of total 83 regional executives ran on the party ticket in the 2007 Duma elections (Roberts 2012) [3]. Hence, it implies that United Russia has successfully widened its base among the regional elites. Therefore, United Russia emerged as their most favourable choice. United Russia and the elites, both were the beneficiaries of this holy alignment. It is worth mentioning that the party not only broadened its social and electoral base penetrating to the regions of Russia but also its leadership, especially Putin, used it as a better source of legitimacy among the electorates. Besides, elites were not only obtained their desired place in power hierarchy successfully but also prepared the ground for their further career advancement (Roberts 2012) [4].

Conclusion

There are certain reasons for this phenomenal success of United Russia party. Leadership of Vladimir Putin has been the primary reason for its success since 2001. Putin has not only demonstrated his statesmanship but also shown leadership ability during his presidential regime. Variety of opinion polls shows the high level of individual popularity of Putin. Besides, he is very popular among women and youth due to his achievements. He is also most popular among the middle class. Besides, Middle class in Russia and people from different regions of Russian Federation like Putin as a leader. Thus, the success of Putin and United Russia party is the judicious blend of multiple factors as discussed above.

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