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Verticals and Horizontals: Networks of Power under Consolidating Authoritarianism

This paper examines patterns of personal connections in Putin-era Russia's political elites. Using a comprehensive, original biographical database, I build a series of quantitative social networks of connections between 1086 members of Russian government structures from 2000-2012. In particular, this paper uses this information on career trajectories and coalitions among mid- and high-level officials, along with new data on personal income, to illuminate prominent groups and individuals within the Putin regime. I then use this data to show how coalitions have changed over time, to study patterns of authority within and between these groups through the use of measures of network characteristics, and to show features of the network that are important for attaining status within the regime. This paper draws conclusions with general implications for our understanding of loyalty and competence, regime durability, and authoritarian consolidation of authority.