

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910985880603321
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Titolo	Jedna Rosja w systemie politycznym Federacji Rosyjskiej / Micha Sowikowski
Pubbl/distr/stampa	ód [Poland], : Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu ódzkiego, 2018
ISBN	83-8142-262-0
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (1 p. 550)
Soggetti	Politics / Political Sciences Government/Political systems
Lingua di pubblicazione	Polacco
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Sommario/riassunto	<p>The starting point in this discussion on the place and role of United Russia in the political system of the Russian Federation in the years 2001–2016 is the premise that it is a specific party type within the family of authoritarian parties. Its basic characteristics are direct ties with the ruling faction – the real decision-making centre within a particular political system – and a stabilizing influence over an authoritarian regime. This type of authoritarian parties is internally heterogeneous because parties differ in their actual contribution to the stabilization of an authoritarian system and in the degree of their internal and external institutionalisation, mainly with respect to decision-making autonomy and systemic structure. Consequently, two party types can be distinguished: the dominant type and the ruling type. United Russia has not acquired any typical features of a perfect dominant party in the 15 years of its existence. It has definitively come closer in that period to an ideal type of a ruling party, even though it differed from the ruling parties of the Russian political system in the 1990s. Considering the degree of its institutionalisation and the range of its actual powers, it can be argued that United Russia should be best described as a dominant ruling party.</p>