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Abstract

Although generally less visible politically since Vladimir Putin became president in the beginning of 2000, Russia's oligarchs continue to exert an extensive influence over Russia's political and economic life. These powerful businessmen now control a greater share of the Russian economy than they did during the Yeltsin era. Rather than simply focusing on grabbing assets from the state and making enormous profits from Russia's export-oriented industries, however, they are starting to play a major role in center-periphery relations and the development of regional politics. In fact, big business has done much more to change the way that the governors operate than any of Putin's institutional reforms.