Voter alignments in a dominant party system: The cleavage structures of the Russian Federation.

Master's Thesis

Department of Comparative Politics

November 2015

Ivanna Petrova

Abstract

This thesis investigates whether there is a social cleavage structure across the Russian regions and whether this structure is mirrored in the electoral vote shares for Putin and his party United Russia on one hand, versus the Communist Party of the Russian Federation and its leader Gennady Zyuganov on the other. In addition to mapping different economic, demographic and cultural factors affecting regional vote shares, this thesis attempts to determine whether there is a party system based on social cleavages in Russia. In addition, as the Russian context is heavily influenced by the president, this thesis investigates whether the same cleavages can explain the distribution of vote shares during the presidential elections.

Unemployment, pensioners, printed newspapers and ethnicity create opposing effects during parliamentary elections, while distance to Moscow, income, pensioners, life expectancy, printed newspapers and ethnicity created opposing effects during the presidential elections. The first finding of this thesis is not only that the Russian party system is rooted in social cleavages, but that it appears to be based on the traditional "left-right" cleavage that characterizes all Western industrialized countries. In addition, despite the fact that Putin pulls voters from all segments of the society, the pattern found for the party system persists during presidential elections. The concluding finding shows that the main political cleavage in today's Russia is between the left represented by the communists and the right represented by the incumbents.

The data used to answer the research question is comprised of regional electoral results and statistics. The methodological approach accounts for the unique nature of the data, with a random effects model specified to control for endogeneity bias as well as to let the effect of each variable vary both within and between regions.

The findings significantly contribute to future studies of Russia in general, but also to research fields studying party systems and political cleavages, elections under authoritarian rule, electoral systems and the relationship between parties and presidents in a semi-presidential system.

Acknowledgements

First, I would like to extend my gratitude to my professor and supervisor Michael Alvarez, who has guided me throughout the duration of my degree and throughout the production of this thesis. Specifically, I want to thank you for your support and enthusiasm during the challenging times of data collection and your extensive knowledge of the methodological approaches in the social sciences. The sophistication of the method applied in this thesis would not be same without your patience and guidance.

Second, I want to thank my mentor, Pål Bakka, whose extensive knowledge about the world in general and Russia in particular, gave me indispensable insights about major patterns of my own research. Your genuine desire to help students to not only succeed, but expand their knowledge, has greatly enriched the theoretical and analytical parts of this thesis.

Last but not least, I want to thank my supporting family and loving friends, whose belief that I could complete this, pushed me beyond my own limits and led to the creation of this thesis.

Bergen, November 20th, 2015.

Ivanna Petrova.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables:

i.   Introduction

In democratic political systems, political parties are indispensable in that they convert citizens' demands and interests into policy options and work as a link between the government and society. Although other political institutions also aggregate interests, among them the mass media, parliaments, and large interest groups, it is the parties that are the quintessential agency for performing this task. Parties give voters a choice over competing policy directions for governance and a chance to hold public officials responsible for their performance (Remington 2012:171). In Russia, political parties have historically been weak, until the emergence of Putin's United Russia party, which joined the biggest party CPRF in their competition for voters. The other two parties that have occupied seats in the Duma since 2003 are according to multiple scholars "fake opposition" (Turovsky 2014:76, Gelman 2008:920, White 2006:188-190). The only democratic party in the country, Yabloko, has failed to gain representation in the Duma since 2003, and the non-system democratic opposition similarly failed to organize into a political party after the anti-Putin demonstrations of 2011-2012, raising questions about the lack of democratic orientations in the society.

This thesis investigates whether there is a social cleavage structure across the Russian regions and whether this structure is mirrored in the electoral vote shares for Putin and his party United Russia (UR) on one hand, versus the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF) and its leader Gennady Zyuganov on the other. The goal of this thesis is to try and understand not only the relationship between socio-economic and demographic factors and support for opposing parties and candidates, but this relationship in the Russian context, where the "party of power" UR has no direct power, and the president under the Constitution practically has the powers of an elected tsar (Gelman 2008:922,927, Roberts 2012b:226, Reuter & Turovsky 2014:666). The president is however not the cause, but a product of the dominant-power politics employed by the Russian government. Kremlin and the presidential administration is the apogee of power in the Russian political system, and makes UR just an agent of the federal executive branch (Levitsky & Way 2010:183,233, Roberts 2012a:98).

Parliamentary elections are held four months before the presidential elections, and as the presidential campaign-period starts almost immediately after the results have been announced, parliamentary elections have been called "presidential primaries" (White 2009:171, 2006:88).

The electoral success of United Russia indicates the electoral success of Vladimir Putin and CPRF does the same for Zyuganov. In addition to these two groups creating the biggest political blocs on the political scene, it is also interesting to see whether there are differences between parliamentary and presidential elections themselves.

Figure 1: National electoral vote shares for each party and candidate between 2003 and 2012.
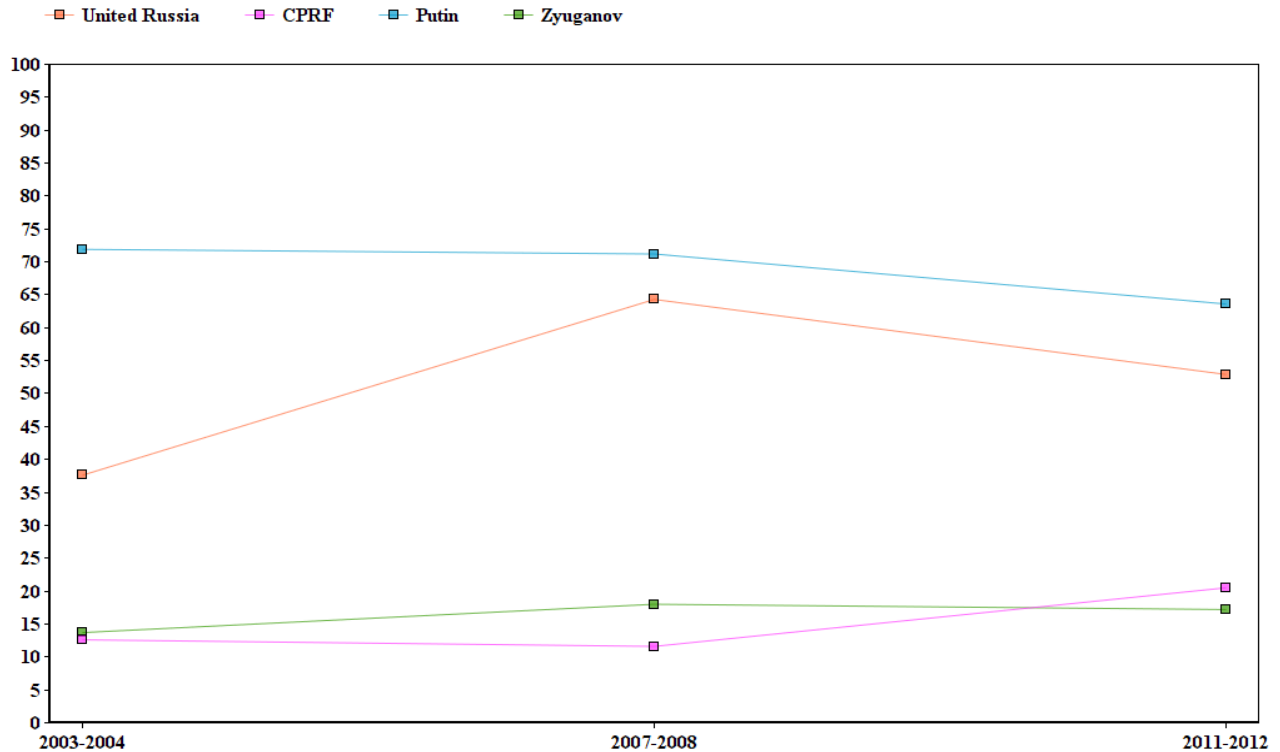
Even though Putin's first victory was in 2000, Russia has seen pro-government majorities with the victory of United Russia in 2003, marking the starting point of true presidential dominance by Vladimir Putin and the start of this analysis (Roberts 2012a:100). Support is measured by the electoral vote shares received by United Russia and CPRF during the 2003, 2007 and 2011 parliamentary elections; and by Putin and Zyuganov during the 2004, 2008 and 2012 presidential elections. It is however important to keep in mind that support and electoral vote shares are different in that voting is a physical act that requires prior decision, it limits the choice to only one person and doesn't even need to measure support at all, as the individual might vote for other reasons than political (Colton & Hale 2009:474).

There has not been any alternation of power in Russia since 2000 and the dominance will last to at least until the December 2016 parliamentary election and March 2018 presidential election. The regime is widely regarded as undemocratic, with their manipulation of elections, high corruption levels, harassment and violence against journalists and intensifying crackdowns on civil society, media, and the Internet. In addition, a number of laws, including the "foreign agent law" from 2012 and the "anti LGBT propaganda law" from 2013 further deteriorate the human rights situation in Russia (Human Rights Watch 2015). The ongoing crisis in eastern Ukraine, which started with Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014, caused a tremendous deterioration of Russia's relationship with the West. Russia was criticized by all international organizations, including EU, UN, NATO and the Council of Europe, got suspended from G8 and the number of sanctions imposed by the different organizations and countries occurred within the context of an already deteriorating economy, sinking oil prices, and a devaluated ruble.

Inside the country however, Putin's ratings jumped to 80 percent immediately after the annexation of Crimea, increasing to 86 percent in June and reaching its record high of 88 percent in October (Volkov 2014). Considering the fact that there is an international consensus that Russia has not been democratic for at least ten years (Freedom House 2005-2015), Putin's rating has never been below 60 percent, and makes his popularity a phenomenon very worthy of exploration in itself.

Throughout the 2003-2012 elections, Putin and United Russia's main challengers were the communists (White 2009:173, Hale 2011, Roberts 2012a:96). Even though it traditionally was assumed that CPRF with time would lose its electorate due to demographic and economic changes, the party gained 19.2 percent of the vote in the 2011 parliamentary election (a 7.6 percent increase from 2007), maintaining its position as the most obvious alternative to an otherwise entirely dominant United Russia (Ryabov 2015, McAllister & White 2008a:946). The communist leader Zyuganov however, has not had the same success as his party, actually losing 0.5 percent in 2012 (gaining 17.2 percent of the vote), but still occupying the position as the main challenger to Putin.

The theoretical approach chosen in this analysis builds on the social cleavage model proposed by Lipset and Rokkan (1967). This model argues that the party system of Western democracies in the 1950s reflected deep social fault lines of a structural nature rather than just ideological differences. They identified four salient cleavages: two cultural cleavages of ethnicity

and religion and two economic ones, the urban-rural cleavage between consumers and producers and the labor-capital cleavage between industrial workers and owners. The validity of this theoretically embedded paradigm may be challenging in any other unique historical context, including the one we find in Russia. I will therefore also investigate how other economic, demographic and cultural factors affect the vote shares for "the incumbents" and "the communists". The research questions of this thesis are:

1. Which demographic and socio-economic variables affect the regional vote shares for the incumbents and the communists in Russian national elections between 2003 and 2012?

2. Is there a party system based on social cleavages in Russia? Can the same cleavages explain the distribution of vote shares during the presidential elections?

The units of analysis are the 83 Russian regions observed over the years 2003, 2007 and 2011. The dataset used to answer the research questions is created by the author and comprises regional electoral results and aggregate statistics. The method employed accounts for the unique nature of the data, with a Random effects (RE) model specified to control for endogeneity bias often associated with panel data, as well as to let the effect of each variable vary both within regions (change over time), and between regions (averages).

The thesis employs a combination of deductive and inductive approaches to answer the research questions. A deductive approach is concerned with developing a hypothesis (or hypotheses) based on existing theory, and then designing a research strategy to test the hypothesis (Wilson 2010:7). The deductive part of the analysis explores Lipset and Rokkan's theory and tests if that theory is valid in the Russian context. The inductive approach is reverse and involves a search for patterns from observations thought to capture elements of a concept (this part of the process is deductive) (Gerring 2012:173). The inductive part of the thesis involves the search and testing of different variables thought to affect electoral vote shares (although derived from economic, demographic and cultural theories).

<u>The structure of the thesis</u>

The thesis is comprised of 11 chapters with each chapter following a certain logic I want to outline here. Because of the unique Russian context in which elections take place, five full chapters are devoted to a detailed discussion of Russia's institutional environment. Chapter 1 is concerned with identifying Russia as a case, with an emphasis on the type of the regime that has developed under Putin, the role of United Russia and the disappearance of the democratic opposition. Chapter 2 identifies Lipset and Rokkan's theoretical framework employed in this analysis and its limitations when applied to the Russian case. Chapter 3 addresses the specific institutional context of Russia, with an emphasis on the electoral system and the role of the presidency. This chapter also presents the presidential candidates and the evaluation of their electoral success, establishing two of the dependent variables in the analysis. Chapter 4 is concerned with the Russian party system and the Russian parties, where I argument for why United Russia and CPRF were chosen as dependent variables and why the other parties were excluded. Chapter 5 is concerned with the identification of a potential cleavage structure in Russia, as derived both from Lipset and Rokkan's theories and their cleavages, but also through other economic, demographic and cultural factors expected to have an effect on electoral vote shares.

Chapters 6 to 9 are devoted to the methodological approach of the study. Chapter 6 is concerned with the dataset, mapping the step-by-step identification of valid and reliable independent variables. Chapter 7 creates hypotheses for all of the independent variables that the previous chapter identified as appropriate to investigate. Chapter 8 is the methodological chapter where the results from the standard Random Effect model are compared to the superior Random Effects model with a "within-between" formulation. Chapter 9 addresses the regression assumptions that the models rely on to produce valid estimates, after which the final model is presented in the beginning of chapter 10. The last two chapters are concerned with answering the research questions of the analysis, with Chapter 10 mainly focusing on the first research question, and the concluding chapter on the second.

Chapter 1: Russia as a case

1.1 Russia's modern developments – From Yeltsin to Putin

The 1990s Russia was a new country, with a new political system, a new economic orientation and the first presidential and multiparty elections in history. Post-Soviet Russia was a "regime of transition", with researchers all over the world holding their breaths to see in which direction Russia would develop. Under Boris Yeltsin, Russia had unpredictable elections, competitive political parties, a parliament capable of opposing the president and a somewhat independent media that provided a platform for the opposition (Moser 1998:66, Hanson 1998:100, Levitsky & Way 2010:191). However, Russia was never a full-fledged democracy. Yeltsin had been accused of using crude administrative pressure, informational terror, manipulation of electoral legislation and ballot counting. Yet without a party, Yeltsin lacked the means to manage elite fragmentation or maintain legislative control, making governance across the country more difficult (Sakwa 1998:134, Levitsky & Way 2010:191-194).

Putin became acting president when Yeltsin stood down from office on New Year's Eve, six months before the end of his second term. As he himself admitted, his premature exit meant that Russia wouldn't see one democratically elected president transfer power to another in accordance with the constitution. The maneuver gave Putin the advantage of double incumbency as both the acting president and prime minister in the following presidential election. Additionally, because the presidential election had to be moved from June to March, opponents were deprived of precious mobilization and campaigning time. (Colton & Hale 2009:478-479, Sakwa 2008b:177).

Yeltsin had declared Putin as someone "who could consolidate society, based on the widest possible political spectrum, and ensure the continuation of reforms in Russia" (as cited in Sakwa 2008a:18-19). The success of United Russia's predecessor Unity in the parliamentary election of 1999 (where they came in second with 23.3 percent of the vote) laid the solid ground for the successful election of Putin. Unity was by itself only a part of a larger political plan, but the success of the party reflected Putin's growing popularity among the citizens. His support rose astronomically, from two percent in August 1999 to 62 percent by January 2000 (McAllister & White 2008b:612, Roberts 2012a:65,69). At that time, more than two-thirds were prepared to support demonstrations calling for the removal of Yeltsin and if there had been an election "next

Sunday", only 0.2 percent said they would have voted for him (McAllister & White 2008b:612, Roberts 2012a:100).

With Putin and United Russia, the legislative defections and conflicts that plagued Yeltsin disappeared. A more institutionalized ruling party and increased state and party capacity under Vladimir Putin eliminated the parliament as a site for oppositional challenges. United Russia became the dominant force in the Duma, rationalizing the executive-legislative relations in the country, but making the legislative branch entirely dependent on the executive. The period 2000-2010 is characterized by the advent of dominant-power politics[1], in which one group monopolizes power, despite the presence of opposition and elections (Levitsky & Way 2010:197, Roberts 2012a:37). Still, elections matter and pre-electoral polls show that electoral manipulation, even though present, doesn't significantly affect the outcomes of the electoral results (see section 1.5).

1.2 Russia as a regime type: Electoral Authoritarianism

Many adjectives have been used to qualify the type of regime that has emerged under Putin. Most convey something between authoritarianism and a diminished democracy. Conceptualizations include *delegative democracy* (O'Donnel 1994:55) *illiberal democracy* (Zakaria 1997:22), *managed democracy* (Colton & McFaul 2003), *defective democracy* (Croissant & Merkel 2000) or *quasi-democracy* (Villalón 1994). Because many hybrid regimes violate the minimal democratic norms so severely, Andreas Schedler (2002:36) argued that it made no sense to classify them as democratic at all, however qualified (Rose et al. 2011:64). Linz (2000:34) proposed adding adjectives to "authoritarianism" rather than to "democracy".

Andreas Schedler (2006) introduced the term *electoral authoritarian* as a label for regimes in which formal democratic institutions exist and where an opposition can participate in elections. Nevertheless, such regimes are not democratic because they violate liberal-democratic minimum standards of elections, using electoral manipulation, unfair media access, abuse of state resources and varying degrees of harassment and blackmail to skew the playing field in their favor (Schedler 2013:1). Recognizing that *electoral* regimes can be *authoritarian* was the first step towards the conceptualization of electoral authoritarianism. Scholars also recognized that

---

[1] "Dominant-power politics" relates to states, where despite the presence of democratic institutions, one political group dominates power, undermining any sense of power contestation and alternation (Carothers 2002:9-14).

there were substantial differences between elections in authoritarian states and that they could range from relatively free and fair to those in which citizens' choices are more constricted. An election is *free* if many parties compete and there is a possibility that the opposition can win (Przeworski, Alvarez, Cheibub & Limongi 1996:50-51). It is *fair* if electoral procedures provide a level playing field to competing parties (Levitsky & Way 2010:3). Free *and* fair elections are the first condition of a democratic regime. In Russia however, even though the competition is free, it is not fair (Sakwa 2008a:24, Rose et al. 2011:1).

As the incumbents have stayed in power for three presidential and parliamentary elections, Russia can be regarded as a stable competitive authoritarian regime (Levitsky & Way 2010:21-22). The regime in Russia is focused on the presidency, but is broader than the post of president itself. It can include the president, the presidential administration, the government and the informal links with powerful *oligarchs*[2], regional bosses and other insiders (Sakwa 2008a:137). The case of Russia illustrates how multiparty elections are by themselves not a sufficient condition to the emergence of democracy, and how successful state- or party- building can contribute to the consolidation of non-democratic rule.

1.3 The "Putin Effect"

«The leader's popularity in Russia is an effect and not a cause of his perceived grip on power» (Krastev & Holmes 2012:34).

This section will address how Putin managed to create a strong connection with the Russian electorate, with the majority agreeing with him on the most important issues (Colton & Hale 2009:493). Putin succeeded in projecting leadership qualities the electorate has valued for 15 years, and identifying those qualities can significantly contribute to our understanding of the unique Russian context in which elections take place.

Putin's *Millennium Manifest* (Putin 1999)*,* which was published online just hours before Yeltsin stepped down from office, can be considered as something resembling his first political program. The article contained general principles about the need to improve the economy and people's living conditions, but was vague on specific policies (Sakwa 2008a:31). Putin outlined a

---

[2] Oligarchs were people with financial and industrial capital that had direct access to the government (Sakwa 2008a:136).

three-point strategy for the renewal of Russia: a strong state, an effective economy, and "a Russian idea" (Sakwa 2008a:55). This idea was not supposed to represent a new ideology, as Putin was against an official and state-supported ideology, but an idea of aims and values supported by most Russians. He made a distinction between *universal* values, like freedom of expression, the right to leave the country and other political rights and liberties; and Russian *traditional* values that have stood the test of time. These values were according to Putin "patriotism"[3], "great-powerness" (*derzhavnost*), "state-centeredness" (*gosudarstvennichestvo*) and "social solidarity" (Sakwa 2008a:216). To the Russian, he claimed, "a strong state is a source and guarantor of order. […] Russian society does not equate a strong and effective state with a totalitarian state" (Putin 1999).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia was left without generally recognizable, unifying national symbols. In order to survive in the long run, modern states must have a population that possesses some sense of unity, or that they at least regard themselves as members of the same nation. This is often referred to as "nation-building", conceptualized by Stein Rokkan as the *first* stage of state formation (Flora, Kuhnle and Urwin 1999:163-166). Nation-building is defined in a variety of ways, but is understood as an active process pursued by the state leaders, intellectuals and others to create a sense of being one common nation-state (Kolstø 2004:8). The Russian society was according to Kolstø (2004:3) ready for a new unifying ideology with Putin's emergence.

Putin represented the widespread yearning for stability in a society traumatized by disintegration and decline after the turbulent years following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Given political fragmentation and weak party development in the country, Putin's "anti-political" approach to the election, in which he waged a "non-campaign", made sense (Sakwa 2008a:35). Even though this anti-political approach easily could slip into populism, especially under the 1993 constitution that gives the president all the real power, an acceptance of a strong state is more common in Russia than in most other countries. "Order in society", should according to the Russian public be the government's first priority (Shlapentokh 2004:226). Hale (2000:1) similarly wrote: "Russians clearly want a strong leader, capable of bringing order to their tragically unpredictable lives". The people's perception of Putin as someone able to restore law

---

[3] With *patriotism*, Putin meant a "feeling of pride in one's country, its history and accoplishments [and] the striving to make one's country better, richer, stronger and happier (Sakwa 2008b:359).

and order (both with the Chechen war, the oligarchs and the stabilization of the economy), led the majority of the Russian electorate to unequivocally support him (Colton & Hale 2009:493).

Putin's popularity has also in part been sustained by the absence of anyone else who came even close to him in trust ratings. According to Sakwa (2008a:88), Putin won elections not because of deliberate suppression of alternatives, but because of their genuine lack. According to surveys, it was the perception of Putin as "energetic, decisive and strong-willed" that attracted ordinary Russians to him. About 50 percent of the electorate had nothing negative to say about him as all (McAllister & White 2008b:615). Indeed, personal influence on the vote is according to Colton and Hale (2009:499) a very strong factor, but reflects more than Putin's perceived job performance. In terms of Max Weber's (1947:115,328) legal-rational, traditional and charismatic forms of governmental legitimacy, the latter has particular relevance to Putin. The charismatic leadership describes a leader displaying a quality or character that citizens admire, able to replace the existing regime (ibid:64). Putin's charisma is that of the mass type, as he generates broad popular sentiment across the entire population. Putin has attracted personal popularity by presenting himself as a leader with pride in Russia and its multiple traditions, cultures, and its victory in World War II (Rose et al. 2011:18). White and McAllister (2008b:620) similarly find something they call "leadership cult"[4] that has risen around Putin, clearly indicating that Kremlin has been mindful in sustaining and developing Putin's personal image in voter's minds (Roberts 2012a:162).

1.4 The role of the "party of power" - United Russia

Party dominance in a non-democratic regime is generally characterized by either a single party, where only one party exists and is allowed to exists, or by a hegemonic party, which "tolerates and discretionally allocates a fraction of its power to subordinate political groups" (Sartori 1976:205,197). In 2011 United Russia gained victory for the third consecutive time, thereby meeting Sartori's criterion for dominant or hegemonic party rule (ibid:1976:175). One could compare UR to hegemonic parties like PRI in Mexico (Partido Revolucionarion Institucional), where presidentialism coincides with a party-based authoritarian regime (Roberts 2012a:4). Or, one could mention Barbara Geddes' (2003:82) ruling party regimes, which according to her are

---

[4] "Leadership cult" should not be confused with "cult of personality", because the public still perceives Putin as an elected and replaceable figure (Roberts 2012a:162).

10

more resilient than both personalist and military regimes. However, both Sartori's and Geddes' party dominance is irrelevant in the Russian case. United Russia was an elite creation, desirable to provide the authorities with greater control over Russia's political arenas, but having no real power on its own. The parliamentary majority does not form the government and the source of authority lays completely outside of the party, making United Russia's state supervisory role smaller than that of the PRI (Gelman 2008:922,927, Roberts 2012b:226, Sakwa 2008a:106, March 2009:510, Turovsky 2014:73). In fact, some legislation passed by UR undermines the very idea of a ruling party governing in its own interest (Roberts 2012a:125).

Several authors refer to it as a "party of power" (March 2009:504, Roberts 2012a:7). The term "party of power" was originally a political term dating back to 1990s Russian media circles. Several authors have since adopted it as an analytical term distinguishing pro-regime from anti-regime parties. The term "party of power" may however be misleading, first of all because the "power" component doesn't apply to UR, and second because the term "party" is problematic. UR is party-like only at the bottom, with the top often colluding with the state (Roberts 2012a:184). A party of power is by Gelman (2008:915,921) and Roberts (2012a:39-42) believed to have three distinguishing characteristics: (1) they were established and are controlled by the executive branch in order to get a majority in the federal and regional legislatures, (2) they lack any definite ideology, and (3) they shamelessly use state resources for campaigning. The party performs several roles that together help the government generate dominant-power politics. They manage elections, govern the polity in the interests of the rulers, and integrate the elites and society to stabilize the regime (Roberts 2012a:22). Moreover, UR deflects negative opinions away from Putin and the Kremlin. Even when laws are initiated by the federal executive branch, public opinion polls show that UR gets disproportionally blamed for unpopular policies (Roberts 2012a:125).

In addition to rationalizing executive-legislative relations, the party rationalizes center-periphery relations. Out of the 15 Soviet Republics that emerged as independent states after the collapse of the Soviet Union, only Russia emerged as a federation, with the remaining 14 emerging as unitary states. As the loose federalism gave more autonomy to regional administrations, a link between Moscow and the regions through an all-national party of power became both possible and desirable. United Russia could be viewed as a creation not to govern, but to integrate elites across all the regions into a structure easily controlled by the federal

11

executive branch, acceptable to the elite, as joining the party became a secure path to a successful career (Roberts 2012a:142-146,165). Elections in Russia are then not merely uncompetitive elections benefitting preselected candidates, but are also exercises in "competitive clientelism" (Gandhi & Lust-Okar 2009:407, Rose et al. 2011:61).

Roberts (2012a:179) makes a good point mentioning the exceptionalism of the Russian case, because unlike in other dominant-party regimes, history and context have combined to reverse the arrows of causality, making the party of power an outcome of dominant-power politics rather than its cause. Moreover, the Kremlin attempts to manipulate the whole party system and all the parties, not just one (Hale 2006:89). So even though United Russia has been the most successful party in Russia for more than a decade, its success simply reflects the strength of the power holders in and around the federal executive branch (Laverty 2015:84).

1.5 The importance of electoral manipulation

Domestic and international observers have for a while regarded elections in Russia as unfair. The blatant abuse of state resources by Putin and United Russia, the one-sided media coverage, administrative pressure and intimidation of voters and opposition has been widely documented (Gelman 2008:915, McAllister & White 2008a:943-944, March 2009:506). The OSCE's report on the 2003 Duma election was critical, complaining that it had "failed to meet a number of OSCE commitments for democratic elections", including a clear separation between United Russia and the state itself (Clark 2005:512, McAllister & White 2008a:932). In the OSCE's view, the Russian election process was flawed not by instances of vote fraud or ballot stuffing, but by a more subtle bias in favor of United Russia. By 2007, the criticism increased as the media was said to have been heavily biased in favor of Putin and United Russia; the new election law made it extremely difficult for parties to compete; and there had been "widespread reports of harassment of opposition parties" (PACE 2007).

Putin's centralizing policies and the undermining of the separation of powers created a wholly dependent institutional structure, enhanced the role of the bureaucracy and naturally led to increased levels of corruption and the use of the so-called "administrative resource". There are many examples where the use of the "administrative resource" caused problems for the federal executive branch. As Roberts (2012a:170) puts it, regional branches of the party often "over-fulfill the plan", undermining the electoral process itself. A survey from 2007 showed that 6

percent of the respondents were personally aware of electoral violations, including bribing and threatening voters, campaigning inside polling stations as voting was taking place, casting votes for people not present or even dead and miscounting votes (Roberts 2012a:172).

However, in a poll conducted by Levada Centre in 2011, 78 percent of the respondents said they didn't experience any pressure whatsoever. Only 15 percent said they noticed some sort of pressure to vote for a particular party, usually coming from bosses or coworkers (Rose et al. 2011:135). This could partially be explained by a drop in administrative pressures on voters by 2012 (Korgunyuk 2015:10). However, previous experiences significantly affect the evaluation of situations. For example, the delegation from post-Soviet states, CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) Executive Committee, reported that the 2008 presidential election was free, the nomination of candidates "competitive" and media coverage "positive in tone" (Rose et al. 2011:141). The difference in the judgments made by the Western and Eastern European evaluators implies that the idea of a fair election does not mean the same thing everywhere. People who have experienced the Soviet system are more prone to evaluating elections in terms of their outcome rather than by the procedures by which they were conducted. A ballot that offers a choice of multiple parties is regarded as a democratic leap compared to the one-party elections of the Soviet years.

Elections in Russia differ from elections in established democracies: they are less a mechanism of transferring power, and more a provider of legitimacy for power-holders. They can be viewed as a signal of silent agreement by the electorate of the way things are, or as Lipset and Rokkan (1967:4) call them, "rituals of confirmation". This silent agreement gives the regime democratic legitimacy, something the regime needs both for maintenance of public support and its relations with the West (Whitmore 2013, March 2009:507).

Even though elections in Russia are far from fair, they are still free: major opposition candidates are rarely excluded, opposition parties are able to campaign publicly and there is no massive fraud. Electoral manipulation does probably alter the electoral outcomes to a certain degree, but not so much as to make the act of voting meaningless (Levitsky & Way 2010:8). The *outcomes* of the elections are substantively fair, because the party and incumbent favored by most Russians wins the elections (Rose et al. 2011:135). The outcome of the 2007 Duma election was in line with the Levada Center's pre-electoral poll that estimated a United Russia victory with 67 percent of the vote. Similarly, the polls before the 2012 election predicted a Putin victory with at

least 60 percent of the vote (Keesing's World News Archives 2012). As the electoral results were very close to the forecasts made by several survey agencies and opinion polls, direct falsification must have been minimal (White 2009:173, McAllister & White 2008a:942-944, Colton & Hale 2009:474).

If we assume that manipulation of the elections is redundant, why is it so prevalent? According to Krastev and Holmes (2012:39), Kremlin manipulates elections to create the illusion of an authoritarian and an all-encompassing power, able to reach into all corners of the Russian society. "Managed democracy" is then valued by Kremlin not because it simulates democracy, but because it simulates management (Krastev & Holmes 2012:40). According to Molinar (1991), not only is manipulation unnecessary to achieve the ruling elites' victories, it is often employed in areas where opposition already is weak or where there is no opposition at all. Simpser (2013:276-283) also explains how ruling elites may manipulate the electoral scene to get supermajorities, with the sole purpose of signaling to the opposition that a contest is hopeless. At the regional level, electoral manipulation is employed not to win elections, but to test governor's loyalties. As practically all the regional governors are on United Russia's party list, gathering votes for Putin and United Russia may be their safest road to a successful career (Sakwa 2011:175, Whitmore 2013). Governor's survival index shows that in regions where UR does well, governors get promoted, but where the party achieves less success, governors resign or get fired (Keesing's World News Archives 2011, Krastev & Holmes 2012:36-37).

The control over the electoral process by the Kremlin is strong, but by no means total. United Russia and Putin must secure election victories, but in a way that preserves the integrity of the electoral process as a whole and when blatant fraud doesn't undermine the results. For elections to be meaningful, there must exist a competing opposition (Roberts 2012a:23-24).

Even though fraud and voter pressure explain a big portion of the party of power's success, scholars seem to agree that they are far from the whole story of why Putin is popular (Rose et al. 2011:132, Colton & Hale 2009:502). Sakwa (2008a:83,135) wrote that Putin's popularity cannot be reduced to electoral manipulation, because without political charisma, a determined personality and a vision for Russia's future, no amount of manipulation would have ensured victory.

1.6 Where is the democratic opposition? – A hidden middle class

The only systemic democratic opposition in Russia is the party Yabloko, which since 2003 has failed to clear the electoral threshold and gain seats in the Duma (Gelman 2007:13). The most prominent line of argument for why Russia lacks a democratic party is that liberalism simply has too little support to define a major social cleavage in Russia. Another interpretation is that the Soviet-era destroyed the 'middle class' that would otherwise have become a natural supporter of a liberal party (Huntington 1991:67, Hale 2004:994). However, Yabloko appears to have an identifiable social base of support, appealing to the better educated, more urban and those who have an above average social status. Yabloko indeed appears to represent a middle class, even though very small. The largest vote shares for Yabloko are found in the most urban cities of Moscow (8.5 percent in 2011) and St. Petersburg (11.6 percent in 2011) (Golosov 2015:414, Hale 2006:104, White 2006:76,117).

The same social strata characterized the non-systemic democratic opposition that flooded the streets in the end of 2011 and 2012. Up to 100,000 protesters went to the streets against corruption, electoral fraud, and demanded Putin's resignation with the slogans "Russia without Putin" (de Vogel:2013, Roberts 2012a:88). The triggers for the demonstrations were allegations of electoral fraud in the 2011 parliamentary election, and a political maneuver that resulted in both national and international criticism. September 24th 2011, the acting president Dmitry Medvedev announced that he wouldn't stand for reelection, that the presidential candidacy would be returned back to Putin, and that the two men had planned this power-exchange already back in 2007 (Shevtsova 2012:23). In addition, Medvedev had engineered a constitutional amendment that raised the presidential term by two years and would allow Putin to serve for two new terms of six years each (White 2012). The Medvedev-Putin power exchange alienated those Russians who favored political modernization and democracy. The interesting observation is that the street opposition of 2011 and 2012 also largely belonged to the middle class, with 80 percent of the protestors having higher education and 70 percent categorizing themselves as relatively wealthy (Chaisty & Whitefield 2012:191, White 2012, Remington 2012:132). The protests also occurred in the cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg, where Yabloko had its greatest electoral success[5] (White 2006:76,117, Golosov 2015:414). A number of authors find that Moscow residents have

---

[5] Additionally, the pro-market and pro-American presidential candidate Mikhail Prokhorov, who ran as an independent in the 2012 presidential election, received his best results in Moscow (20.5 percent) and St. Petersburg (15.5) (gaining 7.94 percent nationwide) (Clark 2013:376).

more respect for democracy, are more individualistic and are more inclined to support liberal values. These are regions where citizens are more mobilized, and where the Kremlin only has marginal room for electoral fraud and manipulation (Kuchinsky 2014:263, Tyldum & Kolstø 2004:45, Shlapentokh 2004:223-225).

There are numerous ways to define a middle class, with the most traditional way being based on a scale that measures higher social status, through indicators like income, education or occupation. However, the middle class expected to promote democracy is a metaphorical conceptualization and represents an embodiment of particular behavioral and attitudinal syndromes. This middle class is traditionally expected to promote democratic values because their standard of living gets better, but also due to the bearing of values of civic and social self-worth, like feelings of solidarity or self-realization (Huntington 1991:67, Remington 2011:104,108). When asked to choose between two alternatives, a society of social equality or a society of individual freedom, 60 percent of the urban middle class in Russia preferred the former, and only 36 percent preferred the latter (Remington 2011:110). Particularly, out of those who assessed their material standing as 'above average', 100 percent said they preferred a democratic political system (Shlapentokh 2004:227).

Even though the non-systemic opposition was identifiable, it was not strong enough to pose any real challenge to the current regime. The protestors failed to include the majority of the population, didn't articulate political stands on important issues and failed to organize into a political party (Russia Votes 2015, Kuchinsky 2014:262,271, Shevtsova 2012:24). A poll conducted in November 2012 showed that 57 percent of the surveyed did not think the demonstrations led to anything positive, disagreeing with the demonstrators (Levada Center 2012a). By the end of 2012, only 20 percent of the surveyed believed that opposition actually had a political program, while 57 percent though they only criticized the government without offering any alternatives. Only 15 percent were interested in participating in a demonstration, against 75 percent that were not (Levada Center 2012b, BBC News 2012).

A potential reason for the failure of the non-systemic opposition could be explained by the unique nature of the middle class in Russia compared to that one finds in Europe. More than half of the Russian middle-class individuals depend on the state for their livelihoods (Remington 2011:106). A poll conducted by Levada Center in 2010 showed that 77 percent of the respondents believed that most people would not be able to survive without governmental

insurances. The reliance on state support could partially explain why protesting wasn't a viable option for the majority of Russians or the middle class (Volkov 2012:57, Levada Centre 2010c). In addition, fear of political instability and overturning of the government, which Russians historically perceive as something negative, could contribute to the explanation to why the opposition lost the majority of their followers (Volkov 2012:60).

1.7 Public opinion and perceptions of democracy

Scholars expressed worries about the lack of support for key democratic values in Russia, especially during the 1990s, when favorable attitudes towards democracy plummeted (Tyldum & Kolstø 2004:41-42). The electoral failure of Yabloko also created concerns about the population's lack of democratic orientations.

Indeed, there appear to be several peculiarities in opinion polls on issues related to democracy. Freedom of speech is supported by 47 percent, but 32 percent are against it, 21 percent support the multiparty system, but 50 percent are against it, and 49 percent are in favor of letting the president go unchecked by the parliament, however with 46 percent against it (Shlapentokh 2004:222). These splits may be caused by wrong conclusions about what democracy is. Even though I will not devote space conceptualizing democracy, it could be argued that the experiences the Russians have with it are quite different than most people in Western countries. With the fall of the Soviet Union, Russia was introduced to democratic freedoms, but together with a number of harsh economic reforms. Democracy as a concept may therefore lack a clear meaning and be associated with loss of social security, increased unemployment and increased poverty (Tyldum & Kolstø 2004:43). There was a Soviet joke: What is the difference between capitalism and socialism? Answer: Under capitalism, man exploits man; under socialism, it is the other way around. Indeed, only 10 percent of the respondents were satisfied with their life in the 1990s, with 50 percent regarding it as only "tolerable" and more than one-third as "not tolerable". A survey from 1998 found that 48 percent of Russians rejected capitalism as a good system for Russia, with only 30 percent in favor of it (Shlapentokh 2004:221).

Despite the authoritarian turn of the 2000s, those respondents who supported the idea of democracy and market economy were the ones most likely to evaluate the current state of democracy in Russia positively (Chaisty & Whitefield 2012:200). Polls indicated that there was significant public support for key liberal values and that around 80 percent were positive about

democracy as a form of government. However, only 23 percent wanted the type of democracy found in Europe and America with a majority of Russians (56 percent) wanting a democracy in accordance with national traditions (Hale 2004:1016, Rose et al. 2011:75). The shift in favor of a more democratic system is according to McAllister and White (2008a:953) associated with the rise of United Russia, with causality probably operating in both directions.

When asked to define democracy, 35 percent rightly said that "freedom of speech, press and religion" was the most important attribute of democracy. However, 27 percent of the respondents said the most important attribute was "the economic prosperity of the country". A very big share of the population equates democracy with economic growth. Another 29 percent said the "order and stability" was the most important attribute of democracy, ranking it above "rule of law", "political pluralism" and "elections of the executive". In 2008 and 2009 both "the economic prosperity of the country" and "order and stability" were actually above "freedom of speech, press and religion" (Levada Center 2010i, Sakwa 2011:76-77). It appears as though the Russian electorate is increasingly willing to sacrifice democratic freedoms and individual rights for the sake of prosperity and order. However, Russian voters do not vote for Putin based on an abstract preference for autocracy, the majority just doesn't perceive him as undemocratic: he seems to represent the values people associate with democracy (Colton & Hale 2009:114,498, Rose et al. 2011:107, Whitefield 2005:157, Sakwa 2008a:87). If this is indeed the case, the gradual disappearance of a democratic opposition in Russia is not surprising.

Even though Russians have very low levels of trust in political institutions, with the Duma and the political parties being the least trusted, Putin has enjoyed very positive approval ratings over the years. The average approval rating of Putin has been 76 percent, while that of the government has averaged 42 percent (Rose et al. 2011:95,125, Roberts 2012a:99, Kolstø 2004:11). A possible explanation for this trend is that the president is not held responsible for the political system currently in place in Russia. Indeed, 49 percent of the surveyed by Colton and Hale (2005:30) believe that Russia would benefit from a strong leader who 'does not have to bother with parliament or elections'. A poll conducted by Levada Center in 2010 shows a similar trend, with 44 percent of the respondents saying Russia "always needs a 'strong hand'", and 33 percent believing that "there are situations (like now), where the power needs to be concentrated in the hands of one person." (Levada Centre 2010b). Putin may be therefore be seen as a leader

who can solve the problems of the country or as someone who can "shake things up" (Kolstø 2004:11, McAllister & White 2008b:618).

The preference for Putin seems to triumph traditional democratic demands. Colton and McFaul (2002:8) actually study the popular view that Russians prefer order above democracy. There does however exist a theoretical assumption that order in changing societies sometimes requires a strong hand that by itself is not subordinate to democratic politics. In this line of thought, authoritarian rule is the only way that a country can achieve economic growth after a turbulent political transition, with democracy only possible once the institutions of market capitalism are firmly installed (Remington 2012:8). Prior to the 2008 presidential election, almost half of the surveyed actually wanted the constitution changed in some way to allow Putin to either stand again or appoint his successor. In addition, fourth-fifths thought that Putin remaining in office for a third consecutive term would have a positive impact on them and their family (Rose et al. 2011:127). He was simultaneously supported by those who felt like the country was moving towards democracy, and by those who desired to see the president gaining more power than the parliament.

Chapter 2: Cleavages and the Russian case

2.1 Cleavage theory

The commonly used term "cleavage" has been conceptualized in a variety of ways, often leading to conceptual confusion, in addition to the amount of adjectives often employed without clarification, like "social", "manifest", "latent", "politicized" or "particized" cleavages. When studying political behavior, 'social cleavage' has generally been employed to mean large-scale sociological divisions between individuals (Stoll 2004:15). Robert Dahl (1966) defined cleavages as long-standing conflicts around issues that characterized the political system. Newer scholars though, have recognized that some of the divisions that arise may be short-term and still consequential for the structure of the political system (Cantillon 2001:20).

The definitional clarification concerns where "social" cleavages start as latent differences in a society to become full-fledged "political" cleavages. Political cleavages are divisions institutionalized in the party system, or criteria that divide the electorate into self-aware and organized groups to express their interests. Social, or latent cleavages on the other hand, do not generate a set of common values institutionalized in an organizational form (Stoll 2004:18,26).

Social cleavage theory posits that parties emerge to represent the political demands of groups that form around major social divisions (class, ethnicity, religion, rural or urban place of residence) (Greene 2007:18, Korgunyuk 2014:401). This process is mediated trough electoral institutions, where the deliberate choices of politicians, institutional rules and strategic configurations strongly influence how such cleavages translate into representation in the party system (Kitschelt 1995:448, Østerud, Goldmann & Pedersen 1997).

Lipset and Rokkan's (1967) seminal work on societal cleavages in Europe articulated the way social structures translate into political parties. As newer research has identified social and political cleavages not anticipated by the researchers, we may need to apply their model in a different way, but analysis of any cleavage structure should be based on Rokkan and Lipset's models. How scholars understand and operationalize their concepts depends on what they are planning on doing with them (Collier & Adcock 1999:539). This thesis will conceptualize cleavages in a less restrictive way: as any potential division that could divide the electorate along the given political alternatives.

Although the term *cleavage* is central to Rokkan's thinking, he never tried to define the term explicitly. Cleavages are by him understood as fundamental oppositions within a territorial population, which stand out from the multiplicity of conflicts rooted in the social structure. Cleavages are therefore not synonymous with conflict: "Conflicts can arise out of a great variety of relationships in the social structure, but only a few of these will polarize the politics of any given system" (Lipset & Rokkan 1967:6). According to Rokkan, social cleavages broke out at *critical junctures* and took on "manifest" organizational and institutional forms in the process of political system-building. Cleavages vary from country to country and form different combinations of cleavages, which he called *cleavage structures*. Mass alignments would occur when there was collective action among classes/groups that clash along historically distinct cleavage lines (Flora et al. 1999:7,34,136-139).

When analyzing a potential cleavage it is important to remember that electoral cleavages only can be regarded as full if they can be interpreted both politically and socially. If we only can interpret an electoral cleavage politically but not socially (they have no connection to certain demographic and socio-economic indicators), it means that we are dealing with pure "political cleavages" which occur merely due to the impact of political actors and the mass media on voters. If on the other hand these electoral cleavages have no political interpretation but are

linked to certain demographic and socioeconomic indicators, it means that some actors affect the voters directly ("administrative resources") (Korgunyuk 2014:403).

2.2 Stein Rokkan's methodology

Stein Rokkan's fame in the academic world is largely based on his and Lipset's comparative analysis of the evolution of democracy and political institutions in Western Europe. Rokkan's overriding concern was to understand political behavior – particularly the voting behavior of citizens. The approach to dealing with the issue had however changed substantially over time. Rokkan started off with survey research at the individual level, but quickly became interested in variations of citizen behavior across countries. After 1970 he sought to understand more broadly the historical development of up to 16 European states, developing his "conceptual map of Europe" (Flora et al. 1999:136-137). The focus of this thesis will be limited to Rokkan's initial concern with social cleavages and how these shape the development of a political party system in a country.

Social areas were by Rokkan divided into three: (1) economy, (2) territory/politics and (3) culture (ETC). His models were strictly *multidimensional*, and equal weight was given to economic, political/territorial, and cultural/ethnic/religious dimensions (Mjøset 2015:521, Flora et al.1999:140). Rokkan emphasized for his own research, that one should "start from a general theory of conflict". This was an adaptation of experimental logic, where internal principles represented higher theory, with bridge principles that would link such theoretical concepts to actual measurements (variables) (Mjøset 2015:513). Rokkan was always shifting between formal theory, which he called paradigms, and empirical observations. Paradigms are his "conceptual frameworks" that define concepts in an abstract way and relate them to each other (Mjøset 2015:519).

The first and the simplest of Rokkan's paradigms was that of an axis cross. The axis cross was initially combined with Parsons' scheme of the functions of a social system, the AGIL-scheme (Flora et al.1999:278). Rokkan called the horizontal axis *the functional axis* (economy/culture) and the vertical *the territorial axis* (center/periphery), often using *territory* as synonymous with *politics* (Mjøset 2015:521, Lipset & Rokkan 1967:10). Cleavage structures in any country would be placed within this two-dimensional space and always have both territorial

and functional dimensions. Territorial dimensions would however become less significant with political centralization, economic integration and cultural standardization (Flora et al.1999:7,63).

Lipset and Rokkan (1967:3) defined "party" as something that throughout the history of Western politics has "stood for division, conflict or opposition within a body politic". Lipset and Rokkan explained the emergence of parties as a response to cleavage lines generated by the great Industrial and National revolutions of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Lipset & Rokkan 1967:19). Four main cleavages were identified as particularly important in the structuring of party competition up until the 1960s. The first two were seen as direct products of the National Revolution that forced the population to choose sides in conflicts over cultural identities. The *center-periphery* cleavage was the result of a conflict between "the central nation-building culture and the increasing resistance of the ethnically, linguistically, or religiously distinct subject populations in the provinces and peripheries". The second was the *religious-secular/state-church* cleavage between "the centralizing, standardizing and mobilizing nation-state and the historically established corporate privileges of the Church". The last two cleavage lines were brought by the Industrial Revolution and forced the citizenry to choose sides in terms of their economic interests. The *urban-rural* cleavage was between "the landed interests and the rising class of industrial entrepreneurs" and the *owner-worker* cleavage was between "owners and employers on one side and tenants, laborers and workers on the other" (White 2006:13, Flora et al. 1999:38).

Figure 2: The four main cleavages according to Lipset and Rokkan.
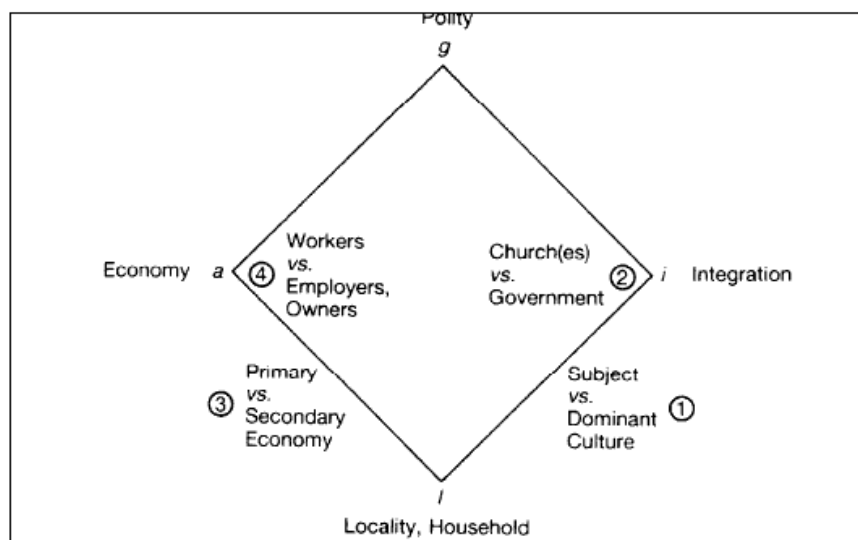
Source: Lipset and Rokkan (1967:14).

22

Lipset and Rokkan's four social cleavages fit within the sociological tradition of Parsimonian modernization theory, where regional, religious, rural and to some extent labor parties reflect the "traditional" orientations, while urban, secular, central and bourgeois parties represent "modernity". Similar to Rokkan and Lipset's thinking, the modernization theory sees parties as representing important social cleavages (Hanson 1998:101).

2.3 Limitations of the traditional cleavage theory when applied to Russia

By the time of their writing, the countries in Rokkan and Lipset's analysis had universal or at least manhood suffrage and most of them had passed to proportional representation (Flora et al.1999:20). Russia was however already a fully industrialized country at the time of post-communist party development. The process of enfranchisement and industrialization did not help parties appeal to particular groups in society, as was the case in Western democracies. By contrast to the older, slowly developing nation-states analyzed by the authors, newer nations had to cope with issues of national/cultural identity, issues of participation, and issues of economic inequality all at once (four stages of modern state formation) (Flora et al.1999:133). In the Russian case, this was happening in the context of a governmental collapse, introduction of political institutions and a transition to a market economy. However, if the communist rule almost entirely wiped out the autonomous regional, religious and peasant communities that formed the social bases of a "traditional society", and the transition failed to create new ones, how can we approach social cleavages in Russia? (Hale 2005:150-51, Chaisty 2012:284).

Herbert Kitschelt (1995:451,453) acknowledged the limits of Rokkan and Lipset's theory when applied to Russia. Because parties in Russia lack the societal and political anchors that would permit programmatic structuring, political parties would according to him be built around charismatic personalities and clientelistic ties. However, Hanson (1998:103) found that the structuring of party voting in the 1995 Duma election appeared to be far more programmatic than Kitschelt's argument initially would predict. Hanson's argument is that the leading Russian parties *are* becoming increasingly programmatic, but with programs that don't reflect the kinds of social cleavages identified by Lipset and Rokkan.

A further limitation of Lipset and Rokkan's theory is their 'freezing thesis', which assumes that political structures are frozen over time. This has been seen as deterministic, failing

to account for significant societal developments in the latter half of the twentieth century, making it impossible to apply cleavage theory to the study of unstable party systems, such as the one in Russia after 2000 (Bornshier 2009:1, Korgunyuk 2014:402). The freezing thesis echoes the theoretical expectations tied to path dependency and historical institutionalism. Path dependency, when applied to institutions, shows that once institutions are established, they perpetuate themselves and close other paths of development. Similarly, historical institutionalism suggests that historical choices institutionalize themselves and later affect both actors and their choices (Roberts 2012a:9-10).

Chapter 3: Russia's Institutions and the Role of the Presidency

A "party system" is according to the dominant school of thought a product of deep social cleavages as mediated, channeled and influenced by political (especially electoral) institutions (Hale 2004:993). In the study of the Russian party system it is therefore crucial to specifically address the political and electoral environment in which Russian elections take place.

3.1 Institutional Factors

Two fundamental factors can be said to drive the process of political party development: social cleavages and state (especially electoral) institutions. While some have divided theorists into 'cleavage' and 'institutional' camps, most leading scholars recognize that both combine to shape the evolution of parties (Hale 2005:147). According to the *cleavage-institutions* school, post-communist countries should have different kinds of cleavages and institutions than their West-European counterparts, but the parties that emerge will nevertheless be grounded in these particular cleavages and institutions. The cleavage model itself remains useful (White 2006:11, Colton & Hale 2005:4).

Sartori (1976:176) alerted us to the danger of analyzing party development from a purely societal angle. Institutional choice is very important in determining the type of party system to emerge in a country and some cleavages may not be translated into political cleavages at all. Sartori argued that the salience of any factor is an effect of the willingness of parties or presidential candidates to politicize it.

Lipset and Rokkan were themselves clear about the importance of transitional timing and the institutional constraints that would determine the social bases of partisanship: "Crucial for the

translation were the opportunities, the pay-offs and the costs of mergers, alliances and coalitions, favoring the aggregation of interest and outlooks within broader party fronts or their fragmentation between competing parties" (Flora et al.1999:45, Evans & Whitefield 2006:23-24). Rokkan was interested in the effects of different electoral systems and the role political institutions played in forming citizens' participation in the political life. More specifically, Rokkan was interested in the development of instiions that would secure citizens' democratic rights, the resilience of these institutions, and the kinds of party systems that would emerge with reference to the cleavages in the society (Flora et al. 1999:136-139, Mjøset 2015:542-543).

Another issue that should be addressed is the actual translation of social cleavages into political blocs. A single structure of social conflicts can result in different combinations of political parties if politicians find it beneficial to deemphasize a conflict or an issue. Electoral institutions are not independent of the social and political context in which they operate (Moser 1998:72, Zielinski 2002:184).

The institutional context in Russia was greatly influenced by the Soviet legacy of patrimonial communism, which played a big role in the choice of the political landscape during the transition. Patrimonial communism was a highly repressive regime, combined with extensive patterns of patronage politics, and accordingly led to the creation of a very strong presidency, extensive patron-client relationships and weak parties in today's Russia (Hale 2006:28, Kitschelt, Mansfeldova, Markowski and Tóka 1999:23, Perepechko, ZumBrunnen & Kolossov 2010:585). Unlike in the countries of East-Central Europe, where the earliest elections after the fall of communism normally were structured along party lines, Russia's founding election of 1990-1991 was largely centered on the personalities of individual candidates. Subsequently, individuals could compete in elections without relying upon meaningful affiliations with political parties (Golosov 2015:400).

Institutions create incentives for political actors, shape actors' identities and establish the context in which policy making occurs. Institutional choices have great consequences for the establishment and development of any party system. In Russia, institutional design, the separation of powers, party legislation and the electoral system, all inhibited the development and success of programmatic parties and made even the party of power subordinate to power from above. Specifically two factors are argued to have a significant impact on the development of political parties in Russia: the electoral system and the presidency. These will be addressed below.

3.1.1 The electoral system

Russia is a semi-presidential system with dual executive of president and prime-minister, similar to the French Fifth Republic upon which Russia's system is based (Roberts 2012a:115; 2012b:234). However, unlike the French system, the Russian prime minister doesn't depend on a parliamentary majority, he doesn't have to represent the largest party (or any party), and although the parliament can pass a vote of no confidence, the president could instead choose to dissolve the parliament and call new elections. So even though Russia officially is a 'semi-presidential' system, the president holds virtually all the power, with the prime-minister mainly responsible for economic affairs (McAllister & White 2008b:604, Sakwa 2008b:106).

The electoral system for the presidential elections in Russia is majoritarian with two-rounds. If no candidate wins the majority of the votes cast in the first round, a second ballot is held two weeks later between the candidates who finished first and second (Clark 2008:343) Presidential elections are believed to suppress local sentiment in the electorate by appealing to national political forces. Indeed, Brancati (2008:158) finds that presidentialism is positively related to party nationalization, but only if the presidential and parliamentary elections are concurrent, something that at least until the electoral cycle of 2016-2018 has been the case in Russia (four months between elections). As presidential elections concentrate on the candidates' personalities rather than their policy programs, they also naturally increase the effects of personalized attachments in the electorate (Evans & Whitefield 1999:262, Remington 2012:179).

The relationship between elections and parties is clear. Elections are the *raison d'etre* of political parties (White 2006:20). Regularly held elections are therefore a "necessary but not sufficient condition for the development of competitive political parties" (Moser 1995:377). In order to hold elections that appear competitive, opposition parties must be tolerated or even created in order to show their limited support (Rose et al. 2011:159). Legislations passed under Putin significantly changed the role of opposition parties in Russia. In the early 2000s, the requirements for registration of parties were raised. A party now needed at least 50,000 members and branches in at least half of the regions to register. Additional electoral law reforms of 2005-2006 increased the electoral threshold from five to seven percent and smaller parties could no longer form 'blocs' with other groupings to reach that threshold. To obtain the right to nominate candidates, the parties had to either be represented in the outgoing Duma, collect the signatures of at least 200,000 electors, or pay a non-refundable electoral deposit of 60 million rubles (approx.

$1 million). In addition, up until the 2007 election, Russia used a mixed electoral system, with half of the seats allocated through proportional representation and half through single member districts. By 2007, the entire Duma was elected by proportional representation, further limiting small parties and increasing the centralization of the country (Roberts 2012a:165, Brader & Tucker 2009:850). The amendments were intended to work as a mechanism to encourage smaller parties to coalesce into larger, more coherent blocs (Sakwa 2008b:143). Indeed, after the changes, only 11 out of the 46 previously existing parties registered for the 2007 Duma election, with only seven parties remaining by 2011. Putin's reforms transformed Russia's political space and a lot fewer, but perhaps stronger parties remained. According to Hale (2006:231), the introduced reforms actually enhanced the role of parties in the society, favoring the largest ones. And of course mainly United Russia.

3.1.2 The Presidency

Robert Moser (1998:57) sees presidentialism as having two competing effects on party formation. For one, a directly elected executive tends to promote consolidation of smaller party formations into larger ones, in the chase of a single prize – the executive office. The second effect of presidentialism is that parties become less cohesive. Geddes (1996:29) explains how parliamentary regimes tend to produce much more disciplined parties, and that there is a correlation between strong presidencies and weak parties. Because there are separate electoral constituencies of executive and legislative power, the formation of disciplined parties is not needed in order to keep the executive office (Moser 1998:58). According to Kitschelt (1995:452), presidentialism promotes a concentration of power on charismatic individuals and leads to the disintegration of parties.

There is a high concentration of power in Russia's presidency, ironically inherited from the democratic movements of the early 90's. The 'super-presidentialist' constitution of 1993 took on features of the Tsarist and Soviet systems, giving the president far more power than any other state official or institution through both formal and informal channels (Hale 2006:31). The president in Russia has the power to form and direct the government, appoint executives, veto legislation of the Duma and in extreme cases dissolve it, issue decrees with the force of law, and command the armed forces without parliamentary authorization (Remington 2012:20, Sakwa 2008b:108). The super-presidential constitution was however imposed *after* Boris Yeltsin had

illegally and violently suppressed the parliament, making the presidential power a *product*, not the cause of authoritarianism (Levitsky & Way 2010:183,187,233).

In the Russian political system, the presidency is effectively 'the only game in town' and the effectiveness of the state depends on the presidency in general and the character of the incumbent in particular. In terms of party development, whoever aspires to be president doesn't need a party affiliation and once elected can rule without cooperation with parties (Sakwa 2008a:137). Neither Yeltsin, Putin nor Medvedev were ever party members, and even though there is an actual law from 2004 that prohibits an elected president to be a party member, there is a general understanding that the power holders have preferred to stay 'beyond' or 'above' parties, seeing them as limiting their legitimacy (Roberts 2012a:69, Turovsky 2014:82, Korgunyuk 2015:2). Even though Putin never formally joined the party, he endorsed UR more unequivocally than any president during any Duma election (Hale 2006:233).

According to Hale, the main reason for the weakness of parties in relation to the president is the existence of more cost-effective options in a principle-agent framework, that don't come with the many string and costs attached to parties (Hale 2006:173,206). These 'party-substitutes' are understood as alternative routes to gain power, with the main options in Russia being the political machines of regional governors and politicized financial industrial groups (Hale 2006:195). I will not go into detail on Hale's discussion here, but will mention his observation of Kremlin itself being a party-substitute in Russia, using its vast resources to influence electoral outcomes (Hale 2006:193). Kremlin's administrative capital includes everything from the outright ownership of national TV-channels, to direct influence over media, governors and the entire governmental apparatus. Post-communist presidents then, getting everything they need from the government, have little need for the kinds of support a party can provide with, and has resulted in them avoiding party labels (Hale 2006:206).

The concentration of presidential power is reinforced by the lack of checks and balances on its use. The institutions that could monitor the president and his government, like the mass media, the parliament or interest groups, are monitored by the Kremlin and don't have free access to the resources they need. For example, the government can deny licenses to oppositional broadcasts and newspapers. By concentrating state power on the executive, and reducing the autonomy of other political centers like the parliament, parties, governors and the mass media, Putin strengthened the state and placed the entire executive and legislative branches under his

direct control. For Putin, a strong state meant an unbroken chain of executive authority stretching from the president down to the governors, with accountability running upwards to the center rather than downwards to the citizenry (Remington 2012:10,21).

However, Putin's hold on the post as Russia's president is less due to his constitutional prerogatives and more due to his personal authority (McAllister & White 2008b:606). A president that looks powerful on paper may be quite weak in reality, as was the case with Yeltsin.

3.2 Presidential candidates

Even though the Russian presidency has been argued to hinder the successful development of a party system in Russia, presidential *elections* may have had a different effect. Even though the three post-communist presidents have avoided party labels, all the other major presidential candidates have been party members (with the exception of Mikhail Prokhorov in 2012). Presidential elections themselves are according to Hale (2006:107) partisan affairs.

Consolidating Russia's party system and creating a party-based government was according to Sakwa (2008a:127) on top of Putin's political agenda upon his coming to power. The shift to a wholly proportional system for electing the Duma did indeed strengthen the role of parties at the national level. However, allowing a party or a coalition of parties to form the government and nominate the prime minister was considered a risky move in the unstable political environment Russia was in during the 2000s. The Putin administration feared that a decision like that would deliver the country into the hands of the oligarchs and Putin dropped the question, saying: "We have not yet developed stable national political parties. How under such conditions can we talk about a party-based government? […] while we have a developing economy, a statehood that is being consolidated and are finally determining the principles of federalism, we need strong presidential power" (as quoted in Sakwa 2008a:128).

Given the fact that the 1993 Russian constitution gives the president almost tsar-like powers, in addition to all the reforms that have limited the role of the Russian parties, it is clear that one cannot study the political system in Russia without taking the presidential role in general, and Putin's role in particular, into account. United Russia does not simply provide the president with a support base, it actually gains its position from its support of the president (Gelman 2008:921, Roberts 2012a:66,188). Already by 2003, 80 percent of the respondents expressed the belief that Putin fully supported UR and 84 percent believed that UR fully

supported Putin. Support for Putin was by far the most important single predictor of a vote for United Russia. When asked about the motives to vote for United Russia, 69 percent said they did so simply because Putin headed the party list (Rose et al. 2011:59, Roberts 2012a:160, McAllister & White 2008b:624). A survey in 2007 found that the intention to vote for UR was strongly linked with Putin's ideological positions and his performance in office. However, growing mass loyalties to United Russia have also been and continue to be a distinct source of votes for Putin (Colton & Hale 2009:481,499).

According to the Eurasia Party chairman Alexandr Dugin (as cited in Sakwa 2008:185), Russians do not believe in parties, and judge politics according to entirely different standards than those offered by political parties. According to him: "Mr. Putin basically stands alone as a political party. Contrary to United Russia, he epitomizes a real political party, representing the historical interests of a social and national majority".

3.2.1 The President - Vladimir Putin

Upon his appointment to the presidential post, Putin had lived abroad for five years, learned German, worked as head of the FSB, worked for over a decade as a security official, and had successfully defended his doctoral dissertation. Additionally, as a senior member of the presidential administration in Moscow, he was quite familiar with the problems of the regions, and the workings of the government, the presidential apparatus and the security services (Sakwa 2008a:15). During his first term in office, Putin's popularity grew due to several factors. Studies of voter behavior tended to conclude that his personality and leadership style were large parts of his victory in 2000 with performance being a strong predictor of his continued popularity and support (Colton & Hale 2009:478,491). Four factors can explain his meteoric rise. First, the country experienced an economic boom in 2000, and even though the boom was strongly influenced by the rise of oil prices, it was viewed as the greatest achievement of Putin and his government. He also made the economy more stable, managing to pay wages and pensions on time, something considered an achievement in the unstable environment Russia was in (Sakwa 2008a:83, Rose et al. 2011:142, Robinson 2013:452). Second, in September 1999, terrorist explosions destroyed two apartment buildings in Moscow killing hundreds of sleeping Russians. Putin's response, his resolute statements, decisive actions and the willingness to take personal responsibility in the second Chechen war contributed both to his electoral success in 2000, and to

the continuing growth of his popularity after the election (Sakwa 2008a:83). The third factor is the Kremlin's entire weight behind Putin, using their resources to manipulate the candidate field, the political system and the elections themselves. The tightened laws on political parties, the reduced autonomy of regional governors and the overtaking of most influential television networks all played their part in securing Putin's popularity. However, as Sakwa (2008a:83,135) wrote, Putin's popularity can't be reduced to electoral manipulation, which leads us to the fourth factor. Putin appeared able to restore Russia's national dignity. As noted by Sergei Kovalev, Putin came to epitomize Russia, its sufferings and its aspirations and thus became 'the president of hope' (Sakwa 2008a:23). Putin was viewed as a decisive leader who was prepared to stand up against Western powers, but still treat the West as an "ally or a friend" (Remington 2012:176).

Ideologically, the electorate placed Putin on the right as early as 2000 (Colton & Hale 2009:495). Still, his political position was not clear to everyone. While about half associated Putin with a "market economy", 30 percent of the respondents found it impossible to classify him in terms of political positions (McAllister & White 2008b:615). This could be explained by the unique ideological approach taken by Putin. According to Sakwa (2008a:98), Putin created a 'third way' that attempted to find a balance between socialism and capitalism, between market and non-market and between individualism and collectivism. This third way was linked with genuine politics of the center, drawing from the older tradition of liberal conservatism. Liberal conservatism supports liberal principles in the economy (market reforms and international economic integration), state authority and patriotism in domestic policy, and great power nationalism in foreign policy (Sakwa 2008a:42,217).

The strengthening of central authority was at the heart of Putin's reform of federal-regional relations. The most important factor in strengthening the state was the centralization of power and "a unified system of executive power in the country" (Sakwa 2008b:275). The first step towards this goal was the creation of seven federal district, each headed by a Kremlin appointee responsible for supervising regional activities and its regional governors. In 2004, Putin centralized further, abolishing direct elections of regional governors and claiming the right to appoint them himself (Hale 2006:232, Sakwa 2008b:267). Putin insisted that the reforms were intended to secure individual security and to prevent the misuse of power and financial resources by the regional and local authorities. Indeed, regional autonomy had under Yeltsin years often taken undemocratic forms, threatening the right of minorities and individuals (Sakwa

2008a:186,213). The reforms naturally weakened the federal element in the separation of powers, and raised questions about whether Russia could be defined as a federal system at all[6].

The relative uniformity of Putin's support across all Russia reflected the success of his policies aimed at centralizing the country, but also his success in appealing to all classes, social forces and ends of the political spectrum. He drew support from the communists and from the liberals, from the old and the young, educated and economically successful (Sakwa 2008a:34,86). People strongly identified with Putin and supported his decisions related to the economy, followed by his decision to restore law and order in the country (with Chechen policy most frequently cited). By 2008, the majority of the Russian electorate tended to agree with most of Putin's national policies, believing that Russia both had an increased influence in the world (71 percent) and experienced increased national stability (60 percent) (Colton & Hale 2009:493).

3.2.1.1 Vladimir Putin's electoral support between 2004 and 2012

Putin won his first election in March 2000, gaining 53.4 percent of the vote. If Chechnya was the predominant theme in the 1999-2000 electoral cycle, by 2004 it was the struggle against the oligarchs and their dominance in the political sphere. Oligarchs were people with financial and industrial capital that had direct access to the government (Sakwa 2008a:136). Hoping to remove one of the sources of their domination and corruption in general, Putin increased the paychecks of his administration, the police and judges, actually increasing the judges' salaries fourfold (Sakwa 2008a:156,165). The fact that Putin weakened leading business oligarchs by prosecuting or exiling them, secured him another wave of popular support (Levitsky & Way 2010:197).

A weak opposition also contributed to his success in 2004. Following UR's victory in the 2003 Duma election, all other major parties withheld their strongest candidates from the presidential elections, with CPRF being represented by Kharitonov, LDPR nominating Zhirinovsky's bodyguard Oleg Malyshkin and Yabloko not filing a candidate at all. Opposition's withdrawal could have given the electorate the impression of their weakness and defeat on the electoral playing field, resulting in Putin achieving his electoral peak with 71 percent of the ballots in 2004 (Colton & Hale 2009:479).

---

[6] Riker (1975:101) defines a federal political organization as one dividing the activities of government between regional units and a central government (Flora et al.1999:209). The direct elections of governors were introduced again in 2012.

If in 2001 his approval rating was 76 percent, by December 2007 it was 87 percent, an almost unprecedented situation for any leader in any peacetime democracy (Remington 2012:9, McAllister & White 2008a:950). After his two four-year terms in office, Putin stepped down as president and took the post as Russia's prime minister. With popular approval ratings of over 80 percent, and with 70 percent believing that the president could be "completely trusted", it was widely believed that whomever Putin picked as his successor easily would win the election (McAllister & White 2008b:613-615). Putin endorsed Dmitry Medvedev, his earlier assistant and the deputy head of the presidential administration (Sakwa 2008a:29). He promised to continue Putin's policies, and much of the electoral campaign came down to a referendum on Putin's eight years in power (Clark 2008:344). Medvedev won a landslide victory securing 70.3 percent of the vote, gaining at least 60 percent in all but one region[7].

The succession was not perceived as democratic, as the Kremlin controlled every aspect of the election process and effectively allowed Putin to abide by constitutional term limits while retaining effective power. The mass media, the regional governors, big businesses and the electoral commission all demonstrated that the entire Russian political elite supported Medvedev (Remington 2012:1). Approval of Putin's performance was according to Colton and Hale (2009:491) the single strongest predictor of the Medvedev vote and he is in the analysis treated as an extension of the presidential incumbent vote. Only 9 percent thought that Medvedev actually had 'real power', compared to 36 percent that believed it was still held by Putin (McAllister & White 2008b:624-625). Of those who voted for him, 73 percent saw him as someone who either would be subordinate to or share power with Putin (Rose et al. 2011:134). The temporary president helped avoid changing the constitution, simulate democracy and at the same time preserve Putin's policies (Levitsky & Way 2010:199-200, Roberts 2012a:2).

In 2011 Medvedev announced that he wouldn't stand for reelection and that the presidential candidacy would be returned back to Putin. The two men revealed that they had planned this power-exchange already back in 2007, leading to widespread criticism both from within and outside Russia, including large-scale demonstrations in Moscow and St. Petersburg (Roberts 2012a:88, White 2009:171, Nichol 2007:4). OSCEs election observation report stated: "This move was widely perceived as being a prearranged handover of power and contributed to widespread public discontent" (OSCE 2012:3). On top of that, Putin announced that if elected, he

---

[7] Smolensk oblast is the exeption, where he still won 59.3 percent of the vote.

would nominate Medvedev for the post of prime minister (White 20099:173). Still, Putin won with 63.3 percent of the vote, and even though this was 7 million votes less than what Medvedev secured in 2008, he still received three times as many votes as Zyuganov. Only in Moscow did Putin come short of the 50 percent mark (still gaining 46.7 percent) (Clark 2013: 374-376).

3.2.2 Gennady Zyuganov

Gennady Zyuganov has been the First Secretary of the Communist Party since 1993, and presented a real challenge to the incumbent power in the 1996 presidential election. That year, he came in second with 32.5 percent of the vote, right behind Boris Yeltsin, who captured 35.8 percent[8] (Mathews 2015). In all the subsequent elections, Zyuganov has been Putin's main challenger, however not coming close to him in ratings or electoral results (Sakwa 2008a:29).

Zyuganov's thinking was traditionally characterized by such terms as *sobornost'* (unity of the nation), *derzhavnost'* (great power status) and *narodnost'* (community, populism). His thinking was a mix of a desire for a strong state, *Slavophilism*[9] and populism. He believed in *ethnos*, or nation, as the moving force in history. From this comes the idea about Eurasia as a geopolitical entity dominated by the Russian 'super ethnos'. Here, Zyuganov explicitly drew on Samuel Huntington's notion of the 'clash of civilizations' to justify his 'Russian Idea' (Sakwa 2008b:460, Hanson 1998:115-118). While stressing the reintegration of the old USSR, Zyuganov sought to reassure Western businesses that he would not destroy the private sector if he came to power. His policies were incoherent in that elements of the market were accepted, but market *forces* had to be constrained. The contradictory nature of his policies, in addition to ideological rigidity contributed to Zyuganov's weak electoral performance (Sakwa 1998:146,153,172).

It could be argued that while United Russia is the party of the president, Zyuganov is the leader of the Communist Party. In other words, while Putin enhances the vote of UR, Zyuganov gains votes from CPRF's core supporters. Zyuganov's rating have always lagged behind that of the party itself (White et al. 1997:209). His general lack of charisma and old age could partially explain why the communist party, even though representing a real opposition to the government, is allowed to exist: their leader is 'unelectable'.

---

[8] This was in the first election round, in the second Zyuganov gained 41 percent, versus Yeltsin's 54.
[9] Slavophilism strives to achieve the restauration of territories like Crimea, has a confrontational attitude towards the West and is based on autachic, non-market oriented economic policies (Sakwa 2008a:99).

In the 2000 presidential election, Zyuganov gained 29.5 percent of the vote. Even though the vote itself only sank by three percent in four years, compared to Putin's 53.4 percent, the loss was obvious. About a fifth of the communist vote was drifting to Putin, and Zyuganov, together with his party, was from that election on condemned to a second place in all of the following Russian elections (Levitsky & Way 2010:194, Sakwa 2008a:29,33).

The first presidential election of study in this thesis is the 2004 presidential election, which Zyuganov chose not to run. To demonstrate the resentment towards unfair elections Zyuganov appointed the former Agrarian Party member, Nikolay Kharitonov as CPRF's candidate (Clark 2005:517). Kharitonov did well, coming in second with 13.7 percent of the votes cast. Ideological and programmatic attachment to CPRF was by far the most important influence on voting for Kharitonov, and he is in the analysis treated as an extension of the presidential communist vote (Rose et al. 2011:134, Clark 2008:342). CPRF's choice not to run their strongest candidate in the presidential election of 2004 raised doubts about their own willingness and ability to remain important (Hale 2006:98-99).

In 2008 Zyuganov chose to run again, this time against Dmitry Medvedev. He gained 17.7 percent of the vote, which was up from what Kharitonov got in 2004, but still 53 percent less than Medvedev. In 2012, Zyuganov emphasized his commitment to the renationalization of resources and calling for a reduction in influence of international organizations such as the NATO and WTO (Mathews 2015). Unlike CPRF, that in 2011 increased their vote shares by 7.6 percent, Zyuganov actually lost 0.5 percent, gaining 17.2 percent of the vote.

Chapter 4: Russian party system

Much of the literature on the Russian party system has been a debate of whether social cleavages providing bases of support for political parties, exist or not. Scholars seem to disagree about the strength and quality of political parties in Russia (White 2006:12).

Most insist that Russian parties are organizationally weak and stagnating, pointing to their lack of penetration of state organs (Hale 2006:3, Roberts 2012a:118, Sakwa 2008a:144-145). Rose and Munro (2002:118-119) claim that Russia has an underdeveloped, 'floating' party system. There are many reasons for why parties in Russia are regarded as weak. Voters are suspicious of the very idea of "party" after their experience with Communist Party rule; the

Soviet regime destroyed the social cleavages and the related social infrastructure that was expected to create parties; and the transition has failed to create new stable ones (White et al. 1997:135, Hale 2005:150-51, Chaisty 2012:284, Roberts 2012a:7). In addition, according to the federal law, parties have the right to nominate presidential candidates, but candidates may also nominate themselves and run for presidential office without the support of any party, something all the post-communist presidents have done, further weakening the parties' position (Hale 2006:3, Roberts 2012a:69). Sakwa (2008b:151-159) actually lists eleven factors that prevent the development of strong parties and a party system in Russia, including; the electoral system, Russian history and political culture, the powerful presidency, the legacy of patrimonial communism, the weakness of the civil society, the fading of ideological cleavages, and the existence of party substitutes.

On the other hand are scholars who believe that Russia's parties distinguish themselves in the minds of Russian citizen, and that voters base their voting on different parties' stated views on policy positions (Hale 2006:100). Whitefield (2001:235) for example found that Russian partisan voting was rooted in socioeconomic class cleavages. Perepechko et al. (2010:590) argue that contemporary Russian parties are expressions of both new and rediscovered cleavages engendered by the Tsarist and Soviet history as well as by post-Soviet developments. According to this group of scholars, parties still influence public opinion and do so both ideologically and along social cleavage lines. Indeed, already by the 1995 and 1999 elections, at least three quarters reported knowing each of the major parties and their political stands on important issues, implying that parties had established themselves in the minds of the electorate (Turovsky 2014:70-71, Brader & Tucker 2009:844,857, Hale 2005:148; 2006:92-93).

The two views are however not mutually exclusive and can both be correct. Their difference might be rooted in the different approaches to studying party strength. Most of the optimistic analyses are based on surveys of potential Russian voters, where the voters' connections with the parties are established, while most of the pessimistic analyses focus on macro political outcomes where the parties appear weak with low penetration of provincial organs. However, there is still disagreement in the literature, with several authors claiming that parties in Russia are not embedded in the country's social structure and that they don't effectively represent social interests (Sakwa 1998:128;2008a:134, Hanson 1998:107, Hale 2005:151-152).

4.1 Russian Parties

Russian political tradition involves strong executives and weak legislatures, leaving parties little role to play between elections. One of three considerations prevail when voters chose parties: sympathy with the personality of the party's leader (charismatic party), expected personal and selective advantages derived from the victory of the party (clientelistic party), or the production of advantages and collective goods if the party wins the election (programmatic party) (Kitschelt 1995:449). Programmatic parties have historically not done so well in Russia, as with the party Yabloko, and as the Soviet legacy damaged the idea of ideologically-based appeals, voters turn instead to charismatic and clientelistic parties (White 2006:173,225).

During the Soviet period, one party claimed to represent the interests of the entire society. Since the end of the communist era, numerous parties have emerged, but a stable party system has not formed. During the 1990's, parties had shallow roots, often forming right before an election and fading soon afterwards (Rose et al. 2011:45). In the 2000s, the regime attempted to create a more stable party system, but placing it under tight state control. The success of United Russia suggests that the country might be turning back to a new form of single-party rule (Remington 2012:172). But as political parties consistently come in last in approval ratings of political institutions, it is not surprising that all the presidents chose to run as independents (Roberts 2012a:99, Sakwa 2008a:84).

The definition of party groupings does not always make sense in Russia. Words like left, right, conservative, liberal, socialist, communist and nationalist are often applied in conflicting and confusing ways. A big majority of Russians don't know how to understand the typical political divisions of "left" and "right" that is commonly used in Europe (Kitschelt 1995:462, Colton 2000:148). When the European Social Survey asked Russians in 2007 to place themselves on a left/right scale, almost half said they did not know where to place themselves and an additional 29 percent put themselves in between the two alternatives (Rose et al. 2011:56). Given the ambiguities, several authors have argued that the Russian political spectrum is almost unidentifiable because parties often shift their political positions and make it hard to qualify them even for the political scientists, not only for the voters (Sakwa 1998:128, Hanson 1998:107).

Fish (1995:372-7) for example, insists that the ideological spectrum of Russian party politics during the 90's was 'one-dimensional', with market liberalism at one pole and the 'red-brown' coalition at the other. Rose and Tikhomirov (1996:375-376?) similarly found that Yeltsin

and Zyuganov appealed to diametrically opposed constituencies. Back then, the electoral success of the Communists was explained by the enormous dislocation produced by marketization in the post-Soviet context, which pushed voters towards the anti-liberal and anti-market side of the spectrum. While White (2006:2) thinks the emergence and the popularity of the 'party of power' means that Russia's party system is not developing along the traditional left-right axis, Colton and Hale (2005:iii; 2009:488) find the main political cleavage to be between the left represented by the communists and the right represented by the incumbents.

Regardless, until the emergence of United Russia, CPRF was the only real mass party with its half million members. Even according to Putin himself, the only stable party in Russia by 2008 was CPRF, with United Russia still emerging, but already becoming a stable political force (Sakwa 2008a:129,145).

4.2 Selection of parties

Analysts of the Russian party system usually select parties based on the criteria that they surpass the threshold to achieve parliamentary representation. This selection makes sense, as over the last three consecutive elections, only four parties enjoyed parliamentary representation, and in 2007 received together almost 92 percent of the vote (Gelman 2008:914). These parties are United Russia, Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF), Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR) and Just Russia. LDPR and Just Russia are however not regarded as real opposition (Turovsky 2014:76, Gelman 2008:920, White 2006:188-190). Out of all the parties competing against United Russia only two can be viewed as opposition parties: CPRF and Yabloko. As Yabloko since 1999 has failed to gain representation in the Duma, the most significant opposition to date is according to several authors CPRF (White 2009:173, Hale 2011, Roberts 2012a:96).

Studying the political parties and examining the organizational differences between them help illuminate the real, but often hidden, intentions of people and institutions involved in party formation and development (Perepechko et al. 2010:582). Opposition parties in authoritarian regimes are often idealized as "freedom fighters", but this underestimates their opportunistic behavior and even their role in providing *de facto* support for the regime. From the beginning of the 2000s there has been a huge record of opposition's collaboration with the authorities, provoking some authors to speak of its extinction (Gelman 2008:913). Opposition parties in Russia lack the collective strength to challenge UR, and become what Lenin called "useful

idiots", giving the appearance of competition but not threatening United Russia's dominance (Rose et al. 2011:61). The existence of multiple competing parties lets the Russian government demonstrate to the electorate and the outside world that democracy in Russia isn't waning, while providing an outlet for the opposition (March 2009:518,515, Roberts 2012a:95).

4.2.1 United Russia

The rise of United Russia can be traced back to the equally sharp rise of the party's predecessor, Unity, that came in second after the Communist Party with 23.3 percent of the vote at the parliamentary election in 1999. Unity's success was largely based on Putin's endorsement of the party, which in turn provided a platform for the successful election of Putin himself in 2000. Unity was created less than three months before the election, and a number of reports indicate that it got much of its funding through governmental structures and oligarchs (Boris Berezovsky) (Gelman 2008:920, Hale 2006:82-84).

Several attempts by the Kremlin to create a "party of power" in the 1990s went in vain, but when the party Fatherland – All Russia (FAR) ended up with almost as many seats in the Duma as Unity in 1999, FAR was given an offer to merge with Unity to create United Russia[10]. The first regional branch for United Russia was opened in Moscow in 2001 and by May 2002 the party had branches in all but one of the then 89 regions (Golosov 2014:272, Hale 2006:230). Within a relatively short time, UR became the most successful party since the demise of the Soviet Union, winning all the consecutive elections for the state Duma with a super-majority since 2003 (Turovsky 2014:69, Roberts 2012b:226, 2012a:116,148-151). In addition to the "Putin factor", UR's electoral result largely benefitted from the ability of the federal, regional and municipal power holders to control financial flows, governmental structure and the media.

United Russia has tried to avoid having an identifiable ideology, and has unequivocally supported virtually all bills proposed by Putin and his government since its formation. The party's program was in 2007 titled "Putin's Plan: A worthy future for a great country". Putin was described as Russia's "national leader", which had the "political support" of United Russia (White 2009:172). Roberts (2012a:161) calls this the party's ideological strand of "Putinism". Putinism is an embodiment of qualities associated with a strong leader and an authority figure, with the party becoming an extension of Putin's personality. More recently, the party has

---

[10] Unity also incorporated the party Our Home is Russia in 2001 (Hale 2006:231).

attempted to develop Putin's personality politics into a coherent set of ideas, uniting the often contradictory ideas of liberal reform, social justice, national pride and patriotism (Roberts 2012a:162-164). According to survey evidence, only 6 percent of the respondents actually knew what "Putin's Plan" was, but no less than 65 percent approved of it. In short, Putin's plan was: "preservation of Russia as a 'unique and great civilization'", "building of a competitive economy", "new quality of life", "establishment of the institutions of civil society" and "further development of Russia as a sovereign democracy" (McAllister & White 2008a:938). Surveys conducted between 2006 and 2008 show that only 4 percent of those positive towards UR cited the party's program as the reason for the positive attitude (Roberts 2012a:160)

Since the party considers itself as a basis support for the president, it has argued that it is a party of neither left nor right, but a centrist one, capable of resolving "real problems for real people". Its key principles are "order and legality" (Sakwa 2008a:112). The party's statements however, in addition to voters' perceptions, place UR slightly right of center. Three quarters of the people surveyed believe that UR wants to continue and deepen market reforms, such as cutting taxes and reducing regulation (Hale 2006:83, Remington 2012:176).

In terms of electoral strategy, the party is best described as a non-ideological catch-all-party, where the party employs a fuzzy programmatic focus to reduce the risk of alienating segments of the population with concrete policy promises (White 2006:32). They don't have an ideology but tailor their message so as to resonate with as many as possible, resting upon three "isms" of centrism, conservatism and Putinism[11] (Levitsky & Way 2010:189, Roberts 2012a:63,77,85,181). According to Roberts (2012a:87-88), 80 percent of the party's first manifesto (*"Programma Vserossiiskoi Politicheskoi Partii "Edinstvo" i "Otechestvo" Edinaya Rossiya"*) were valence issues, or rhetoric of good and bad (for example strong economy is good, corruption is bad), as opposed to position issues that would inform voters about the party's positions on important issues. Unity's partisans were against socialism, preferred market economy and a strong presidency. United Russia's partisans were similarly against socialism, pro-presidential and antinationalist (believing that Russia should treat the West as an ally/friend).

There are actually several similarities between the system we see in today's Russia and the French Fifth Republic. Specifically, United Russia resembles the presidential party under

---

[11] Conservatism reflects stability, something that resonates with ordinary voters and is probably the strongest collective benefit that the party offers. Putinism is the party's extremely close association with the president, while centrism is best understood in terms of the commitment to the catch-all strategy (Roberts 2012a:160-163).

Charles de Gaulle. It gained its legitimacy largely from its identification with the national leader, making it a personalist movement of "Gaullism", similar to UR's ideological strand of "Putinism" (Cole 1993:50, Roberts 2012a:161). The party hoped to transcend the left/right divide in an attempt to represent the majority of the population. De Gaulle's authority over the Gaullist party was immense, and similar to United Russia, Cole (ibid:63) identified it as a "dominant, but dominated" party. Similar to the Russian case, it was the systemic constraints of the country's semi-presidentialism and the French constitution of 1958 that gave the president overwhelming power and reduced the ability of parties to act independently. In fact, all of the presidents under the Fifth French Republic[12] wanted to be above parties and party-politics, subordinating them to their executive power (Cole 1993:54-60).

In addition to similarities between UR and the "Gaullist" party, Vladimir Putin reminds of de Gaulle himself. De Gaulle emphasized a "certain idea of France" with a strong state and a strong executive, a strong economy and a stable society. In foreign policy, de Gaulle emphasized French exceptionalism, seeking to impose French influence on world politics. De Gaulle didn't like the idea of a bipolar world and sought independence from United States to achieve greatness. The development of an independent French nuclear capability and the withdrawal of France from NATO military operations was an outgrowth of this worldview (Bernstein 1993:333).

4.2.1.1 United Russia's electoral support between 2003 and 2011

The 2003 election marked the first time that a pro-governmental party gained two-thirds majority in the Duma, winning the largest percentage (37.6%) of any party in the four post-communist elections in Russia. The victory ensured the passage of the president's legislative agenda and he could now undertake constitutional amendments if he so desired (Wegren & Konitzer 2006:678, Clark 2005:513, Remington 2012:179).

Retaining high popularity ratings throughout its first term, UR won the 2007 Duma election with 64.3 percent of the vote, with almost twice as many individual votes as in 2003. Putin was still very popular and if in the 2003 Duma campaign the party used the slogan "together with the president", in 2007 they adopted "Putin's Plan" and the entire election itself became a referendum on the president's two terms in office. UR's connection to Putin and his

---

[12] De Gaulle, Pompidou, Giscard d'Estaing and Mitterand.

own association with a rapid rate of economic growth was a major reasons for the enormous success of the party (McAllister & White 2008a:931,948, Gelman 2007:12).

The electoral support for United Russia declined from 64.3 percent in 2007 to 49.3 percent in 2011. Several factors could explain the party's failure to gain as high ratings as in previous elections. The personal popularity of Putin went down as his plans of returning back to office became official and the election was followed by the biggest anti-regime protests since the fall of the Soviet Union (Clark 2013:374). Other reasons for the decline in support for UR could be weaker "administrative resources", both in form of governors as pushers and in financial terms (Whitmore 2013). Regardless, United Russia still gained over three times as many votes as the Communist Party and dominated the political scene.

4.2.2 Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF)

The Communist Party was established in 1993 and as a direct successor of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), had a unique claim to represent the old regime. During the 1990s, CPRF was the only party that managed to increase the number of voters in each successive election. It was by far the largest in Russia, and had over half a million members, at least double of all the other parties combined (Sakwa 1998:130, Wegren & Konitzer 2006:680). In 2003 however, the party suffered great electoral defeat and has been coming in second in all the elections that followed.

It is commonly assumed that the transition to market economy created two economic groups in the society: "winners" and "losers", which differed substantially in their support for parties. The winner-loser split was found to be one of the strongest predictors of voting in post-communist countries in general (Evans & Whitefield 2006:30, Mateju, Rehakova & Evans 1999:233). In Russia, those who suffered from the economic and political transition, traditionally comprised CPRF's support base. In addition, CPRF's support base was with those who were nostalgic over the social guarantees of the Soviet era[13] (Sawka 1998:131, McAllister &White 2008a:939). Even though the party kept its "national communist" approach and continued opposing market-oriented policies, they recognized political pluralism, private property and no longer believed in violence and revolution as means to achieve their goals (Remington 2012:174,

---

[13] The Soviet Union was identified with industrialization, victory over Nazi Germany, superpower status, and the development of a modern, urbanized and literate society (Sakwa 1998:145).

Sakwa 2008a:178, Ryabov 2015). However, the Communist Party is ideologically rigid: if it moves too much to the center of the political spectrum, it will lose its distinctiveness as a clear alternative to the government, but if it moves more to the left, it will further marginalize itself given the widespread anti-communism sentiments in the electorate (Sakwa 1998:135). Fish (1995:348) argued that CPRF had become the leading conservative party in Russia, embracing nostalgia for the Soviet's socio-economic system and power blended with Russian nationalism and anti-system sentiment. White, Rose & McAllister (1997:233) could predict four-fifths of the communist voters in 1997 because of their distinct political attitudes. CPRF has a clear-cut ideological identity and organizational stability that let it maintain its position as the main opposition to United Russia under the increasing pressures from the authorities (Gelman 2008:925, Golosov 2014:275). CPRF is also according to a Levada poll, regarded as the main opposition to United Russia by 54 percent of the surveyed (KPRF 2007).

According to Buzgalin (as cited in Sakwa 1998:151), the party "had to be radically oppositionist in appearance (otherwise, it would not have won support from below) but only mildly oppositionist in substance (otherwise, it would have been prohibited from above)." After Putin became president, the CPRF adopted a less oppositional stance, allying itself on some major issues with the Kremlin (Roberts 2012a:97). On one hand, it consistently offered a negative view of the introduction of the free market in Russia and of cooperation with the West. On the other, the CPRF leadership was gradually integrated into the political elite, creating contacts with many businesses on their own. Despite the fact that CPRF now often supports the budgetary bills submitted by the president and the government, it is still regarded as the strongest (if not the only) opposition party in Russia (Ryabov 2015). The CPRF is caught in a paradox: it is an anti-system party with coalition potential. It is unable to become a party of government, but is strong enough to have the major say in the passage of legislation in the Duma. Consequently, CPRF had been obliged to cooperate with the government on key issues

4.2.2.1 The Communist Party's electoral support between 2003 and 2011
In 2003 The Communist Party suffered great electoral defeat with their vote share almost halving from 24.3 percent in 1999 to 12.6 percent in 2003. There are three major reasons for the party's electoral decline. For one, The Agrarian Party of Russia, which used to cooperate with CPRF over their party lists in 1993 and 1995, formed a bloc with the Kremlin backed party Fatherland-

All Russia in 2003, and effectively siphoned voters away from CPRF (Wegren & Konitzer 2006:685, Roberts 2012a:146). Second, United Russia managed to become the main representative of the many issues CPRF previously dominated, like protection of the rural interests, the pensioners and the post-Soviet transitional "losers" (Wegren & Konitzer 2006:683-686). Third, CPRF became a major Kremlin target during the 2003 electoral campaign, with large-scale negative coverage on television further damaging what was left of CPRF's electoral support (Gelman 2008:925, Hale 2006:109).

In the 2007 Duma election, CPRF came again in second with just under 12 percent of the vote, slightly down on its 2003 support. Even though the party experienced a big defeat in the previous election, they rejected any major changes to the party structure. Greene (2007:5) notes that those casting their ballots for the opposition, particularly in dominant-party states, appear to have stronger ideological positions and strongly disagree with the status quo policies offered by the incumbent. CPRF's immobilization helped them preserve their organizational and electoral bases from a total collapse, something their strong performance in regional elections witnessed about (Gelman 2008:925). As CPRF traditionally devoted a significant portion of their campaign to berate the existing government for destroying the economy and threatening the wellbeing of Russians (criticism comprised 40 percent of CPRF's electoral platform in 1993) (Oates 1998:83), the economic growth of the last years made the criticism futile.

Demographic changes, increasing incomes and the declining support for the return to the Soviet regime all predicted the decline in electoral support for the communists. Indeed, rural voters, pensioners, long-time communists and those hit hardest by the economic reforms are all constituencies that have shrunk over time (Rose et al. 2011:92). However, in the 2011 parliamentary election CPRF again stood strong, gaining 19.2 percent of the electoral vote, a 7.6 percent increase from their 11.6 percent in 2007. The traditional assumption that the Communist Party would lose its electorate seemed to fall through, as the party maintained its position as the most obvious alternative to an otherwise entirely dominant United Russia (Ryabov 2015, McAllister &White 2008a:946).

4.2.3 Just Russia and Liberal Democratic Party – Fake Opposition

In electoral authoritarian regimes, opposition parties take part in a game that is designed to defeat them (Schedler 2013:295). Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR) and Just Russia are by several

authors regarded as fake opposition, as they have been turned into loyal and weak political groups supporting Kremlin in all their initiatives (Turovsky 2014:76, Gelman 2008:920, White 2006:188-190). The two parties serve Kremlin in two important ways. First, they form a reserve or substitute to the party of power if UR's popularity goes down, and second, they weaken the different opposition parties by siphoning votes away from them (Just Russia from the left, LDPR from the right) (Wilson 2005:187, Gelman 2008:922)

Just Russia was a successor of the nationally developed and centralized party, Rodina (that contested the 2003 election). Rodina was established four months before the 2003 election as a project party with the sole goal of stealing votes from the communists (March 2009:516, Sakwa 2008b:147). Just Russia explicitly sought to tap the protest vote with mimicking a leftist ideology as a "party of the working people". In 2007 however, the party failed to attract voters away from CPRF, probably as it could not outbid the communists in their "oppositionness" (Turovsky 2014:76, Gelman 2008:923, March 2009:511,521, Roberts 2012a:97). Just Russia was designed to balance UR from a center-left perspective, and was by the party leader himself called the "left leg" in a managed two-party system. The leader of the party Sergey Mironov is also one of Putin's close political associates and ran in the 2004 presidential election as an "insurance" campaign in support of Putin, coming in last (Roberts 2012a:97, Clark 2013:376). March (2009:508) describes Just Russia as a "parastatal" party, a party that mimics opposition and attempts to channel it in regime-supporting directions, without being an opposition party in any meaningful sense of the word. Oversloot and Verheul (2006:392) similarly describe the "alternative party of power" as ideologically identical to the party of power, but designed as a sparring partner to keep the elite on its toes and test new personnel.

The misleadingly named Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) is a pure charismatic party, basing its support on the party's outspoken leader, Vladimir Zhirinovsky. Zhirinovsky has self-consciously embraced offensive extremism and authoritarianism, leading Hanson (1998:120) to even calling it Nazi ideology. Zhirinovsky has for a long time been viewed as a useful Kremlin tool, representing a fake nationalist alternative, without threatening the status quo (Gelman 2008:924, Clark 2008:344, White 2009:172). Hale (2006:105) actually finds a complete lack of issue-grounding for loyalties to LDPR, because the support is based on the appeal to the leader. Nationalist attitudes in the electorate, like spending more on the armed forces, retaining nuclear weapons and a commitment to Slav traditions, didn't influence support

for Zhirinovsky at all, even *before* Putin came to power, suggesting that the LDPR vote is a non-ideological protest vote (White et al. 1997:145). LDPR has been a faithful supporter of the government in the Duma, in addition to blocking several initiatives of the opposition (Nichol 2007:2, Gelman 2007:14). Roberts (2012a:47) calls the party an "unspecified party of power", created to mitigate the effects of competitive elections. In a personal interview with Sean Roberts (2012b:236) a former senior figure from LDPR said: "LDPR has been used for articulation ideas which the presidential party in not able to pronounce in public. LDPR moves certain ideas and then they check how people react to them".

4.2.4 Yabloko – The failure of the democratic opposition

Yabloko was created in 1993, as an electoral bloc under Yavlinsky, Boldyrev and Lukin (their names form "YABL", "Yabloko" means apple in Russian) and it is the only party in today's Russia that represents western and liberal-democratic values. Union of Rightist Forces was also a party that initially won votes on the basis of democratic appeals, but lost its distinction before 2003 because of a too close association with Putin (Hale 2006:113). Yabloko has contested every election since the beginning of elections in Russian and was in 1999 among Russia's top three parties. In 2003 however, Yabloko suffered great electoral defeat, and has ever since failed to clear the electoral threshold (Gelman 2007:13, Hale 2004:999; 2006:109, White 2006:222).

Yabloko is a programmatic party, with a distinct, consistent and coherent programmatic and ideological agenda. That does not necessarily serve the party well in Russia, as the Soviet legacy damaged the idea of ideologically-based appeals (Gunther & Diamond 2003:187, White 2006:173). Maximov (in Roberts 2012a:171) argued that the demise of the vote for Yabloko was a natural consequence of the administration pushing too hard to get votes for UR, with an unfortunate consequence for the regime itself, as having a democratic faction in the Duma would have had legitimizing effects.

White (2006) identified both endogenous and exogenous factors for the explanation of the demise of electoral support for Yabloko. In some ways, the party was itself responsible for its electoral failure. Yabloko failed at making clear its ideological brand of social liberalism to the electorate, and their 1999 campaign strikingly neglected the ideas in which the party had invested so much over the years (Hale 2004:994). As Hale (2004:1010) put it: "Yabloko failed in 1999 not because it was liberal but because it failed to be liberal during the campaign". Following two

deadly terrorist attacks in Moscow in September 1999, there was disagreement within the party on how to approach the crisis. With the party leaders unable to forge a common line of argument, Yabloko effectively dropped the Chechen war as an issue from the campaign completely (Hale 2004:1011-1012). Yabloko's leaders also failed to co-ordinate their positions on other issues, confusing the electorate with their ambiguities. About half of the people initially planning to vote for Yabloko, abandoned the party during the campaign period (Colton and McFaul 2003:152-153, White 2006:8,109).

Exogenous factors also damaged the party. Their ability to campaign was effectively undermined by the marginalization of oppositional parties, increasing media imbalance and the use of administrative resources favoring United Russia (White 2006:7,204). Several Duma deputies and regional activists left the party ranks, Yabloko lost the financial support of major sponsors that accounted for at least half of its funding, and it lost access to the independent television network NTV where it previously had enjoyed favorable coverage. In addition, the electoral laws of 2007 made Yabloko weaker and its electoral vote share of 1.59 percent in 2007 made its very survival questionable (Gelman 2008:927, White 2006:170). The actual results achieved by Yabloko during the elections were not far off those predicted by the polls (Sakwa 2008a:115). In a poll conducted by the Levada Center in 2010, only one percent of the respondent said they would vote for Yabloko if there was an election next Sunday (Levada Center 2010f). By 2014 and 2015, that one percent turned into zero (Russia Votes 2015).

It has also been argued that Putin and United Russia have co-opted the policies of Yabloko, consistently winning votes from people who are pro-market, who position themselves on the right and who advocate a pro-western policy. As Putin stands for market reforms, voters previously attracted to Yabloko because of their liberal economic policies are now able to vote for the party that has the support of the president (Colton & Hale 2009:494, Perepechko et al. 2010:586, White 2006:198). In addition, if the majority sees Putin as someone who represents the values associated with democracy (see section 1.7), the ideological appeal of the party also weakens.

Chapter 5: Searching for Russia's cleavage structure

5.1 Identifying voter preferences

Voters cast ballots for candidates and parties they think will best represent their interests. Candidates and parties compete to show that they represent those interests the best (Hale 2006:10). The lack of party identification and ideological loyalties makes it necessary for voters to seek alternative cues for making a choice at the polls. The literature on voting behavior establishes two such cues: the so-called "personal component" and national political influences (Golosov 2015:399). The personal component is especially important in the Russian context, and it embraces all personal characteristics of the candidate that has an influence on voter choice. Kitschelt (1995:448) addresses this point in the Russian context: "Why should party systems be organized around political cleavages and related programmatic divisions, rather than around other incentives that bind people, such as clientelistic favors or the attraction to a charismatic personality?".

The traditionally expected patterns of voter preference in Russia rests on the assumption that older, poorer and less educated voters will support the communists to a greater degree, while Kremlin with its party of power will poll more strongly in regions where the population is younger, better educated, more urban and rich. After the emergence of Putin and United Russia, voters have according to White, McAllister and Yun (2002:144,148) become less differentiated socially, and resemble more of a cross-section of the entire society. Bessudnov (2011) makes the argument that unlike in Western countries, in Russia, people with different levels of education and income vote the same. Russians vote for leaders, not party programs.

To measure latent preferences in a country is not simple, because latent cleavages are everything with a potential of being transformed into political cleavages (Stoll 2004:40). Operationalizing such phenomena is very difficult, as it is almost impossible to validly measure exogenous determinants of voter preferences. In addition, the variables can be so entangled or subconscious, that it is almost impossible to include all potentially significant variables (Waterhouse 1983:35, Stoll 2004:43). I will here start with Rokkan's cleavages in the Russian context, and then move on to a theoretical consideration of other economic, demographic and cultural factors that might affect voter preferences. This chapter also lays the ground for the selection of variables in the next chapter.

5.2 Rokkan's cleavages

5.2.1 Center-Periphery

Idolization of Moscow was an element of Soviet ideology. Moscow was the seat of power and to live there was a dream of every provincial resident. Veneration of the capital was however combined with deep envy and a perception of the city as the exploiter of the country, where the residents unfairly enjoyed much better lives than the majority of the country's population. After 1991, Moscow lost their monopoly on cultural, technological and scientific progress. However, politics in Russia remained more centralized than in most other countries. While virtually all important political parties in for example Ukraine are regionally based, almost none of the Russian parties are (Kolstø 2004:17-18). Moscow is still the biggest city and the capital of the country, with tremendous resources, both coercive and financial. Roughly 80 percent of the country's financial capital is controlled by Moscow, in addition to general living standards being significantly higher there than in the rest of the country (Shlapentokh 2004:223-224).

According to Rokkan (Flora et al.1999:7,63), center-periphery contrasts would become less important in politics with the spread of cultural, economic and social standardization. The rise of electronic communication was expected to give people in regions across the country a sense of closeness to Moscow and other cities around the world, regardless of whether they were geographically close or not. This thinking is also labeled as globalization, and supports the conviction that *distance* embodied in the physical, cultural and territorial specificities has lost much of its salience (Berezin & Díez-Medrano 2008:1). However, Nureev and Shulgin (2013:86) found that the support for the communists increases with the distance from both the capitals (Moscow and St. Petersburg).

5.2.2 State-Church – the religious cleavage

Religion has formed a major political cleavage across the industrial democracies in the West, and a variety of studies have concluded that it still has an important influence on political alignments. In the Russian context however, religion has not provided a basis for political mobilization (White & McAllister 2000:359,370).

Even though it has been argued that the Orthodox Church benefits Unite Russia (Rose et al. 2011:89, McAllister & White 2008b:620), religion has a weak influence on politics in Russia. One of the main reasons for this is that there is no competition between denominations. Religious

divisions exist, but often underpinned by ethnic or regional cleavages. Parties generally avoid any explicit appeal to religious voters and there is almost a complete absence of candidates or parties standing on explicitly religious platforms (White & McAllister 2000:367).

One might expect to see two layers of religion in Russia: Orthodoxy at the federal level and the religion of the titular ethnic groups in the republics, mainly Islam (Kolstø 2004:20). The number of Muslims in Russia is estimated to be around six percent (Rose et al. 2011:171).

5.2.3 Urban-Rural

The 1930s-1950s were marked by Soviet industrialization and a rapid urbanization of the regions. Soviet policies blurred the urban population and its culture, mixing it together with the rural one, as a big majority of Russians growing food lived in the city rather than the countryside (Borisova & Zubarevich 2005:9, Rose et al. 2011:89). Indeed, the Soviet society had a high degree of homogeneity as their ultimate goal. Not only the economic classes would cease to exist, but the social and cultural differences between the town and country would also disappear (Tyldum & Kolstø 2004:30).

Following the post-Soviet reforms, urban-rural incomes diverged, rural unemployment and poverty increased and the rural parts of the country became the transitional "losers". It was on this basis that CPRF was able to cultivate the rural vote in the 1990s and Gennady Zyuganov performed significantly better in the rural areas than Yeltsin during the elections of 1993 and 1996 (Nureev & Shulgin 2013:86, Sawka 1998:131, McAllister &White 2008a:939). However, as Putin made rural social development a priority during his first term, CPRF lost a part of its rural votes to United Russia (Wegren and Konitzer 2006:686).

5.2.4 Owner-worker – The class cleavage

Social class has always been defined as one of the main cleavages that parties form around to gain political support. The traditional perspective is that classes differ in their economic conditions and resources and therefore will have different political preferences (Evans & Whitefield 2006:23). This explanation is sociological, and implies a "bottom-up" approach to structuring political division based on class. Another school of thought emphasize political factors and elite choices to mobilizing voters on class grounds. This approach is "top-down" and

echoes Sartori (1969:84), who said that the salience of any factor depends on the willingness of the elites to politicize it.

During the beginning of the last century, the Communist Party claimed to represent the working class, or the industrial proletariat, which eventually was intended to become the only societal class (Tyldum & Kolstø 2004:34, Bessudnov 2011). Rose, Tikhomirov and Mishler (1997:807) wrote, "If 70 years of communist rule did little else, it made traditional social structural cleavages of limited significance in post-communist Russia". However, with the development of the market in Russia, class bases to partisanship were expected to increase in importance (Evans & Whitefield 1999:254). Evans and Whitefield (2006:23) found an association between class position and presidential choice already in 1993, continuing into the 2000s, in which the two largest classes, the working class and professional and managerial workers, provided a stable basis of support for the main free market versus socialist axis of political division. Class is argued to be more closely associated with the economic left-right division because of the different economic effects the transition had on different classes, creating groups of "winners" and "loser".

5.3 Economic cleavages

Economic developments matter profoundly for voter choice in parliamentary and presidential elections. Voters are expected to reward the "good" and punish the "bad" performance of elected officials (the classical "sanctioning model"), or they are expected to select candidates and parties they trust to be competent managers of the economy (the "selection model") (Bartkowska & Tiemann 2015:203). The general expected relationship between economy and support is positive.

There is a further distinction in the literature between how voters view their own (egocentric) economic situation and how they evaluate the country's (sociotropic) economy. Some scholars hold the view that evaluations of the country's economy exert more influence on voting behavior (McAllister & White 2008a:947-948, Rose et al. 2011:8), while others say that a person will tend to vote for the incumbent party only when he or she *personally* has benefitted from the country's economic performance (Colton and Hale 2005:4).

From 2000 to 2008 average incomes in Russia rose by 250 percent and pensions more than doubled. Living standards in Russia were higher than ever before, poverty and inflation were falling and unemployment halved. Russians viewed this as the greatest achievement by Putin and

his government (de Vogel 2013, Robinson 2013:452). Economic progress is according to theories of economic voting believed to influence the popularity of the incumbents positively, and several authors have found the relationships between Russia's economy and the popularity of the incumbents to be positive (Colton & Hale 2009:488, McAllister & White 2008b:617-623).

However, even though poverty has been declining in Russia since Putin came to power, income inequality has been rising. Economic growth is concentrated in the biggest cities and has mainly befitted the wealthier segments of the population. Lower incomes have been stagnant and in 2010, 12.8 percent of Russians lived under the poverty line (Minaev 2011, Ria Novosti 2012b, Remington 2011:102,110). Average per-capita income is according to Bashalkhanova, Bashalkhanov and Veselova (2012:158) the most important economic determinant of social inequality. In the Russian context, not only will a decline in personal economic well-being hurt the incumbents, it can be expected to benefit the communists, because they constitute a systemic leftist opposition (McAllister & White 2008a:949-950). Another economic factor expected to influence voter preferences is unemployment, with rising unemployment expected to damage the popularity of the incumbents (Nureev & Shulgin 2013:85, Layton & Smith 2015:854).

5.4 Demographic Cleavages

Demographic influences are factors related to the structure of a population as a whole (in our case regional population) (Oxford Dictionaries 2015). Demographic characteristics such as gender, age, ethnicity, birth rate, death rate, life expectancy and urbanity (grouped with Rokkan's variables) are among factors that can influence voter choice.

Age is actually according to several authors the best predictor of voter preferences in Russia, explained by the nostalgic voting for the communists by the older constituency (Bessudnov 2011, Evans & Whitefield 2006:29). This is in line with socialization theories that assume continuity in individual values and outlooks (Rose et al. 2011:17). Lipset (1960:269) noted that people keep the perspectives and the loyalties they had when they were young.

Ethnicity is a second factor often assumed to affect voter preferences. In a competitive authoritarian regime, geographically concentrated ethnic minorities can contribute to authoritarianism through collusion with (rather than competition against) central authorities, especially when it comes to manipulation of elections. Here, central authorities and regional elites enter into a patronage relationship where the former provides economic and political benefits in

exchange for votes that regional elites provide. From the perspective of the central authorities, large concentrations of ethnic minorities are perceived as a potential threat, as the local elites have the opportunity to use nationalism for mobilization. The central authorities will thus have additional incentives to try and manipulate elections in these regions. The local elites on the other hand, have resources to manipulate elections and engage in patronage through ethnic networks with the titular minority group (Tatars in Tatarstan, Bashkirs in Bashkortostan) (Dennis & Moser 2009:8, Goodnow Moser & Smith 2014:15-16,20, Hale 2006:170-172).

Ethnic Russians today comprise around 82 percent of the population, making Russia a more ethnically homogenous state than most of the other Soviet successor states. Russia's system of ethnic federalism has however promoted a degree of regional autonomy to the elites in ethnically non-Russian regions[14] (Goodnow et al. 2014:16). They alone are defined as "states", they alone have a right to adopt their own constitutions and only their regional leaders can call themselves "presidents" (Kolstø 2004:6).

Despite Putin's centralizing policies that have undermined regional autonomy in the ethnic republics, and the war in Chechnya that was followed by a turmoil across the entire Caucasus, non-Russian regions have provided some of the strongest support for Vladimir Putin and United Russia (Whitmore 2013, Korgunyuk 2014:411). However, several authors explain the high turnout and support for the incumbents with the high degree of electoral manipulation reported in those regions (Roberts 2012a:170). Goodnow et al. (2014:16-18) define a region as fraudulent when reported voter turnout is higher than 75 percent. Both United Russia and Putin have gained over 80 percent in six of the regions in North-Caucasus[15] throughout the last six elections, with UR gaining 99.4 and 99.5 percent in Chechnya in 2007 and 2011 (Roberts 2012a:170). These exact six regions are by Korgunyuk (2015:18) identified as least competitive by the degree of their electoral competitiveness. The electoral life is here "fully substituted with fraudulent manipulations". Given the anomalous distribution of voter support for UR and Putin, it might be reasonable to assume electoral misconduct based on the quantitative indicators.

Other demographic factors that can have an influence on voting preferences are variables associated with the **health and prosperity** of the population. Life expectancy or infant mortality

---

[14] The 21 Republics, four autonomous okrugs and the Jewish Autonomous Oblast (26 regions) are named after a non-Russian ethnic group and were initially designated as homelands for these particular groups (Goodnow et al. 2014:20-21, Hale 2006:152).
[15] Karachay–Cherkessia, Kabardino-Balkaria, North-Ossetia, Ingushetia, Chechnya and Dagestan.

rates are examples of such measures and have both been widely used as indicators of the level of health in a society[16] (Mackenbach 2013:134).

Even though **gender** is a common demographic measure believed to affect voter preferences, it is hard to measure this on an aggregate scale. Rose et al. (2011:90) did however find gender to have a slightly negative effect on regime support among women. Colton and Hale (2009:502) and McAllister and White (2008b:608) on the other hand, find the opposite pattern, with the vote for the incumbents being positively influenced by the female gender.

5.5 Cultural cleavages

Cultural cleavages (especially Rokkan's) are traditionally not expected to play a major role in the Russia because of the homogenous nature of the Russian culture, with the majority being ethnic Russian and virtually the entire population speaking the same language (White et al. 1997:64). However, other cultural factors than ethnicity and language are believed to influence voter preferences.

The traditional West-European approach assumes that rising levels of **education** are associated with one's orientation towards liberal views (Chaisty & Whitefield 2012:194). In Russia, Shlapentokh (2004:42,227) finds that people with higher education exhibit stronger support for democracy as a political system. Similarly, Gibson and Duch (1993:86) find that higher education is positively correlated with rights consciousness in Russia. Contrary to the traditional expectations, Rose et al. (2011:89) expect education to affect the popularity of Putin and UR positively, as people with higher education are more able to adapt to and benefit from the opportunities created by the transition. They didn't however find education to have any effect on voter preferences in Russia. Education is often used as an alternative measure to status, since highly educated people tend to have better jobs, higher incomes and more power in the society.

Another cultural factor strongly influencing voter choice is the national **media** and the extent of access to the national media by different political parties and different segments of the population (Golosov 2015:400). In a country where democratic institutions are weak, media is actually expected to affect political outcomes even more than in countries where democratic principles protect the equal representation of the opposition (Enikolopov, Petrova & Zhuravskaya 2011:3254). Particularly important is the regional access to independent media, as media freedom

varies substantially across the country. According to Mikhail Zygar (Dyrnes 2013), the press freedom in Chechnya can be compared to the one in North Korea, while Moscow is similar to other European countries.

In 2002, the government took over the last independent TV-channels, leaving Russia without independent television. Pressure on independent radio stations has also been documented, as with the famous *Echo Moskva* station. National television is the main source of information for around 80-85 percent of the population (Levitsky & Way 2010:198, Sakwa 2008a:154). The two media channels that have remained somewhat free in Russia are print publications and the largely uncensored Internet (Rose et al. 2011:48, Arapova 2012). While around 50 percent of the population read newspapers, only a small proportion of the population has access to the Internet. In 2006, 76 percent of those polled by the All Russian Centre for Public Opinion Research said they didn't use the Internet at all. Out of those who did, only 19 percent said they used it as a source of news (Arutunyan 2009:24,159, Sakwa 2008a:152-154, Remington 2012:91).

Chapter 6: Data

6.1 The dataset

The dataset is created by the author and is comprised of aggregate electoral results and statistics. Electoral data is provided by the results of the national legislative elections (2003, 2007, 2011) and the national presidential elections (2004, 2008, 2012), as reported in the official publications of the Central Electoral Commission in Russia (http://www.cikrf.ru). The statistical data is gathered from the Federal Statistical Service in Russia (ROSSTAT) (http://www.gks.ru) and All Russian Census from 2002 and 2010[17].

The units of analysis are the 83[18] Russian regions observed over three years (2003, 2007, 2011), creating 249 observations. This is a *short panel*, in which the number of units is bigger that the number of observations per unit; and a *balanced panel*, because all the units of analysis are observed at all time periods (Clark & Linzer 2014:6). Panel data (also called longitudinal data or cross-sectional time series data) are data where multiple cases are observed at two or more time periods. With the right methodological approach, panel data can let us gain cross-sectional

---

[17] All Russian Census was used as a source for two variables: Ethnicity and Religion. As the census only was conducted in 2002 and 2010, the data for the years 2007/2008 is calculated as the average of the two.
[18] The number of regions was officially reduced from 89 to 83 in 2008.

information reflected in the differences *between* subjects, and information reflected in the changes *within* subjects over time (Data and Statistical Service 2015).

6.2 Regions as units of analysis

Geographically, Russia is composed of 83 administrative regions with 46 oblasts, nine krais, two cities (Moscow and St. Petersburg), 21 republics, four autonomous okrugs and one autonomous oblast (Goodnow et al. 2014:20-21). Even though Russia covers 11 time zones, over 50 of Russia's regions are located in *one* of them, all centered around Moscow (see Appendix A for a map of the Russian regions). The territory is also quite heterogeneous in terms of population density, as a third of Russia's entire population lives in only ten regions (Roberts 2012a:72). All the regions are in the analysis weighted equally.

Despite the efforts of the authorities to redistribute financial resources across Russia, the trend continues to be increasing economic disparity between the regions. For example, in 2003, 31 percent of the total GDP was shared by only two regions (Moscow and Tyumen). Tyumen actually has 30 times larger GRP than Ingushetia (Mosley & Mussurov 2009:13). In the same manner, regions differ dramatically in terms of unemployment, income and other socio-economic factors. In 2012 for example, the unemployment rate in Moscow was one percent, while Ingushetia's unemployment rate was 49 percent (Ria Novosti 2012).

The selection of Russia as a case and the Russian regions as the units of analysis lets us control for event-related factors that would affect all the regions at the same time. Analysis of aggregated data also controls for some of the pitfalls associated with survey-data. First, one avoids misinterpretations of survey-questions, as the only data presented are aggregated statistics. Second, as long as the researcher is careful in drawing conclusions from regional trends to individual behavior, the generalization potential (or external validity) of aggregate data is higher, as they combine all of the regions' citizens and not just draw a random sample of a subset of individuals later used to estimate characteristics of the whole population.

6.3 Dependent variables

The dependent variables are the regional electoral vote shares collected by the different parties (UR and CPRF) and candidates (Putin and Zyuganov) for three parliamentary and three presidential elections. As Putin didn't participate in the 2008 presidential election and Zyuganov

didn't participate in 2004, Medvedev and Kharitonov's vote shares are used as substitutes. Unlike regional executive and legislative elections, federal Duma and presidential elections take place across the whole country on the very same day, controlling for time-related factors.

Table 1: Statistical summary of the dependent variables, across all years

Party/Candidate	Mean	Min	Max	No. of obs.
United Russia	51.1 %	25.9 %	99.5 %	249
Vladimir Putin/ Dmitry Medvedev	68.7 %	47 %	99.8 %	249
CPRF	14.3 %	0.1 %	32 %	249
Gennady Zyuganov/ Sergei Kharitonov	16.3 %	0.03 %	29.1 %	249

The democratic party Yabloko's vote shares were initially included in the analysis as a dependent variable, but as the electoral mean across the years didn't even reach three percent (2.6%), with a maximum of 11.6 percent registered in St. Petersburg in 2011, the variable was dropped.

6.4 Independent variables - Initial dataset

The search for relevant independent variables combined deductive and inductive approaches. The deductive approach was employed in the previous chapters, exploring Lipset and Rokkan's variables in addition to other economic, demographic and cultural theories. The inductive approach involves a search for variables expected to have an impact on voter preferences. The initial dataset was comprised of 25 independent variables divided into five categories of *Rokkan's* (6) *economic* (7), *demographic* (6), *cultural* (3) and *other* (3) explanatory variables.

Table 2: Overview of all the variables in the initial dataset [19]

Rokkan's	Economic	Demographic	Cultural	Other
1. Distance to Moscow	1. Gross regional product (GRP) – change	1. Pensioners	1. Published newspapers	1. Crime
2. Religion – Orthodox	2. Average income	2. Ethnic Russian	2. Higher education	2. Population per doctor
3. Religion - Islam	3. Unemployment	3. Working population	3. Higher education among the	3. Density of public roads

---

[19] See Appendix B for a comprehensive codebook of the initial dataset.

			unemployed	
4. Urbanity	4. Incomes below subsistence minimum	4. Migration rate		
5. Industrial laborers	5. Agricultural production	5. Life expectancy		
6. Peasantry	6. Social Assistance	6. Infant mortality rate		
	7. Subsistence Minimum			

6.5 Considerations towards the final dataset

6.5.1 Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity is a state of very high correlations among the independent variables and is a type of disturbance in the data. If present, the statistical inferences made about the data may not be reliable (Statistics Solutions 2015). After testing the variables included in the initial dataset for multicollinearity, the most important variables were kept and the ones correlated with them were discarded. The variable *Religion-Islam* was dropped because of high correlation with *Ethnic Russian (-0.646)*. Since ethnicity and religion are closely associated in Russia, Dennis and Moser (2009:11) actually use ethnicity as a proxy for religious tradition. Other variables that were dropped from the analysis are: *Income below subsistence level* (correlated -0.625 with *Income*), *Subsistence level* (correlated 0.8926 with *Income*), *Higher education among the unemployed* (correlated 0.691 with *Higher Education)* and *Peasantry* (correlated -0.793 with *Urban*).

     Unemployment is also highly correlated with *Ethnic Russian* (-0.614), but as these two variables measure different things we can look past multicollinearity.

6.5.2 Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency of a measurement, i.e., that the application of the same procedure in the same way will always produce the same measure (Gerring 2012:83, King, Keohane & Verba 1994:25). The reliability of published statistics depend on the stability of how the data is collected over time. It often happens that the methods of data collection change, but without any indication of this to the reader. Another aspect important to be aware of is whether

geographical or administrative boundaries have been changed within the studied time period[20]. Other aspects of research methodology that may affect the reliability of secondary data is the sample size, response rate, questionnaire design and modes of analysis (Crawford 1997).

As the sources for the electoral data are governmental and define the electoral outcomes, the level of reliability is rather high. However, the abnormally high turnout and support for Putin in the regions of North-Caucasus[21] should serve as a warning of electoral manipulation in those regions. The statistical data provided by ROSSTAT is according to OECD (2013) compiled with a high degree of professionalism, but their scope, timeliness and international comparability needs to be improved. The overall view of Russia's statistical system is however positive and I assume that the reliability of that data also is high.

However, even though the service itself is reliable, some of the independent variables may not be. For example, the variable *crime* doesn't seem reliable, as the lowest numbers of crime are by ROSSTAT recorded in the North-Caucasian regions predominantly ethnically non-Russian (Chechnya, Ingushetia, Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachay–Cherkessia North Ossetia). These regions are however associated with high rates of crime, violence and terrorist acts (BBC Monitoring Former Soviet Union 2010). FSB chief Aleksands Bortnikov announced 365 terrorist acts in 2011 in these regions, while the MVD (Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs) reported 622 terrorism-related crimes in Chechnya only (International Crisis Group 2012:2,19). Doubts about the reliability of the officially registered crime in some of the regions led to the exclusion of the variable.

6.5.3 Validity

Conceptual validity refers to the operationalization of a concept and the degree to which the empirical indicator measures what it is supposed to measure (Gerring 2012:442, King et al. 1994:25). Considerations of conceptual validity led to the exclusion of several variables. For example, *migration rate* was initially meant to test whether hostility towards immigrants would have an effect on the dependent variables. The variable doesn't however separate ethnic non-Russians from ethnic Russians and makes immigration and potential xenophobia impossible to

---

[20] Zabaikal krai was created in 2008 as a merge between Chita Oblast and Agin-Buryat Okrug. For the years before 2008, the data for Zabaikal is the average of the two regions that comprise it today.
[21] Regions in the Russian North-Caucasus: Republic of Adygea, Karachay–Cherkessia, Kabardino-Balkaria, North-Ossetia, Ingushetia, Chechnya, Republic of Dagestan, Krasnodar Krai and Stavropol Krai.

measure. The variable *population per doctor* was intended to measure accessibility to health services, but an inspection of the values showed that accessibility doesn't necessarily represent the true picture of the level of health in a region, nor of the quality of the health services provided. The variable was excluded from the analysis, with *life expectancy* kept as an indicator of the level of health in Russia. Another variable that might not be suitable is *social assistance.* The variable was collected to see whether voters reward incumbents or the communists for existing social assistance programs in a region. However, the variable is not depicted in real numbers, but in percentage of the total social benefits in that region (which equals 100 percent). The measure was therefore not valid and was dropped from the final dataset.

There is also a distinction between internal and external validity, where the former refers to the sample at hand, and the latter concern whether the findings can be generalized to a broader population of cases (Gerring 2012:84). In a way, both refer to degrees of generalizability. The internal validity of the data is very high, as the entire population of possible cases (Russian regions) is included in the analysis. However, given the unique Russian context, one should be careful in drawing any conclusions beyond the studied sample.

6.5.4 Ecological Fallacy

Because the units of analysis are regions, but the expected relationships between the covariates and the dependent variables are derived from theories largely based on individual relationships, we need to be extra careful to not draw conclusion about individuals based on our analysis of regional data. When results obtained from group-level data are misattributed to individuals we get a problem commonly known as ecological fallacy (Waterhouse 1983:36). Ecological fallacy occurs when a researcher mistakenly believes that the observed relationship between two variables at the aggregate level also applies at the individual level (Curran & Bauer 2011:587). Others define ecological fallacy as the more general erroneous generalization from an observed relationship at one level of aggregation to another (Robinson 1950:351-357, Van de Pol & Wright 2009:754). The relationships may ultimately be the same, but a relation at one level does not imply the same relation at another level. A classic case of ecological fallacy is found in Durkheim's (1897) famous study of suicide in Europe. He found that countries with a higher proportion of Protestants were characterized by higher rates of suicide, and proposed an explanation that people with Protestant faith were more likely to end their own lives. The fact that

a certain set of geographical areas with a certain pattern of demographic and social characteristics behaves in a certain way, doesn't mean that individuals in those areas possessing these characteristics all behave in the same manner (Jones 1972:249). It is in our case difficult to know whether an increase in the vote share of regions with higher proportions of ethnic minorities is due to increased support of minorities or members of the ethnic majority who also reside there. The study may however still be indicating of true patterns in a society. In fact, Terrence Jones (1972:262) found that the method of estimating individual relationships from aggregated data produced results very similar to those produced from actual individual data.

6.5.5 Too many variables

When there are too many variables in a regression model i.e., the number of parameters to be estimated is larger than the number of observations, the model lacks degrees of freedom and is in the risk of *overfitting*. Overfitting occurs when a statistical model describes random error or noise instead of the underlying relationship. Overfitting generally occurs when a model is excessively complex, such as having too many parameters relative to the number of observations (Frost 2015). A rule of thumb for the sample size requires that you have at least 10-15 (Frost 2015) or 20 (Statistics Solutions 2015b) observations per independent variable. With 249 observations, there should be between 12 and 16 independent variables in the final dataset.

One common approach to decrease the size of a sample is a stepwise regression. A stepwise regression is a procedure that examines the impact of each variable in the model and removes the variables that do not have any significant impact on any of the dependent variables. A preliminary regression analysis was undertaken to eliminate those variables and *agricultural production, working population* and *density of public roads* were removed from the analysis. Because of their substantive interest, a few variables, such as *urbanity, religion-Orthodox* and *education,* have been retained despite their weak or absent influence.

6.6 The final dataset

Table 3: Statistical summary of the independent variables in the final dataset, across all years.

Variable	Description	Mean	Min	Max	No. of obs.
Rokkan's variables					
1. Distance to Moscow	Measured in kilometers.	1753.8 km.	0 km.	6426 km.	249
2. Religion – Orthodox	Percentage of the total regional population that identify with the Orthodox Church.	38.8%	1%	78%	240
3. Urbanity	Percentage of the total regional population that live in urban areas.	69.4%	26.3%	100%	249
4. Industrial laborers	Percentage of the regional working population employed in manufacturing industry[22].	18.6%	3.7%	35.7%	248
Economic variables					
5. Gross regional product (GRP) - change	The change is the general indicator of yearly economic productivity per capita, measured in rubles (/10 000 in regressions).	160,090.8 rub.	10,332.4 rub.	1,203,269 rub.	239
6. Income	Average monthly income measured in rubles (/1000 in regressions).	11,667.5 rub.	1,438 rub.	54,632 rub.	247
7. Unemployment	Percentage of unemployed of the total regional population.	8.9%	0.8%	70.9%	249
Demographic variables					
8. Pensioners	Percentage of pensioners of the total regional population.	27.4%	11.8%	36.6%	249

---

[22] Manufacturing industry is defined as the branch of manufacture and trade based on the fabrication, processing, or preparation of products from raw materials and commodities (NASA 1996). It the dataset, the variable is composed of the proportion of people working in mining and quarrying, and manufacturing.

9. Ethnic Russian[23]	Percentage of the total regional population that are ethnic Russian.	74.3%	0.8%	96.6%	249
10. Life expectancy	Life expectancy at birth, in years.	66.7	54.3	79	249
Cultural variables					
11. Higher education	Percentage of the regional working population with higher education.	24.2%	12.4%	47.6%	248
12. Published newspapers	Daily circulation of published newspapers (copies), per 1000 people. (/1000 = newspapers per person)	864.8	19	10867	247

Chapter 7: Hypotheses

Combining the deductive approach of the theoretical chapters and the inductive approach employed in the process of data-collection, this chapter will present the hypotheses for each variable included in the analysis. For all of the following variables, I assume a null-hypothesis (H_0), but refrain from presenting it for each variable. A null hypothesis is always stated in the negative and assumes that there is no relationship between variables. This is because one needs to prove something to be true (Carroll 2015). In addition to the null-hypothesis, I will through a careful consideration of the relevant literature, create alternative hypotheses (H_1, H_2). These hypotheses either state that the relationship between the variables is different from the null-hypothesis (non-directional), or that the relationship between the variables is positive or negative (directional) (Minitab 2015a). A two-tailed test will be applied to all the variables. The reason for this is the appreciation of inductive discovery and the decision of letting the variables affect the variation in all directions even if theory assumes otherwise.

Given the ideological and factual similarity between Putin and United Russia on one hand, and CPRF and Zyuganov on the other, the hypotheses assume similar patterns of variable

[23] The reason why ethnicity is measured by the regional share of 'ethnic Russians' is because there are dozens of very small minority groups in Russia. The largest minority group, Tatars, makes up less than four percent of the population and only three groups (Tatars, Ukrainians and Chuvash) comprise over one percent of the country's population.

effects on each political "bloc". United Russia and Putin will here be referred to as "the incumbents", and CPRF and Zyuganov as "the communists".

7.1 Center-periphery: Distance to Moscow

Rokkan's center-periphery dimension is in this thesis understood in pure geographical terms, and is operationalized as distance to Moscow (in kilometers). According to Rokkan (Flora et al.1999:7,63) himself, center-periphery contrasts would over time lose their significance, especially with the spread of cultural, economic and social standardization. However, Nureev and Shulgin (2013:86) found that the support for the communists increases with the distance from both the capitals (Moscow and St. Petersburg). This could partially be explained by the fact that Moscow still has a dominant position in the country, holding around 80 percent of the country's financial capital (Shlapentokh 2004:223-224). According to Berezin and Díez-Medrano's (2008:23), globalization strengthens the emotional and cognitive significance of distance by making people more distrustful of rule from afar.

$H_{1.1:}$ *In regions further away from Moscow the vote shares for the communists will be higher, and for the incumbents lower.*

7.2 Religion – Orthodox

Rokkan's religious cleavage is in this thesis simply operationalized as the regional share of the population identifying with the Orthodox Church. The connection between religion and party choice in Russia is ambiguous. As communism by definition is an atheist doctrine, McAllister and White (2000:361,368) found that believers are more anti-communist. The Communist voters are the least religious, and the most "religious" party that cleared the electoral threshold in 1995 was actually the democratic party Yabloko, 80 percent of whose voters were Orthodox and just 14 percent secular.

While those deeply religious were among the most bitterly opposed to the Yeltsin government, going to the Orthodox Church is by some authors found to positively affect the incument (Rose et al. 2011:89, McAllister & White 2008b:620). The Church is less favorable to multiparty politics and the market, favoring order above democracy (White & McAllister 2000:361,368). In today's Russia, attitudes to religion have practically no influence on sociopolitical opinions and there is a general lack of religious appeals to the electorate (White et

al. 1997:65). The lack of competition between denominations also weakens the role of religion in politics and believers themselves are hostile to the idea of religious parties, almost as much as the atheists are (White & McAllister 2000:369). Given the theoretical expectations, I only assume the null-hypothesis of no relationship between regional share of Orthodox Christians and vote shares.

7.3 Urbanity

Scholars seem to agree that a big part of the CPRF's electoral support was traditionally owed to rural voters and agricultural regions in the southern and western parts of European Russia, the so-called "Red Belt" (Colton 1998:76, Wegren & Konitzer 2006:680-682, Nureev & Shulgin 2013:86, White et al. 2002:144). The well-known dichotomy between the "red belt" and the rest, that was maintained in 1996, was according to Sakwa (2008a:33) completely wiped away by 2000. Wegren and Konitzer (2006:683) similarly found a correlation between the percentage of the vote cast for CPRF and the percentage of the population engaged in agricultural production in the elections of 1995 and 1999, but this trend strongly declined in 2003.

CPRF's representation of the rural population was shaken by the emergence of Putin. During his first term as president, he made rural social development a priority, increased state investment in agriculture and imposed higher import tariffs on meat, poultry and sugar. Per capita rural incomes actually increased by 262 percent during his first term as president (Wegren & Konitzer 2006:685-686). Because of a split in the literature regarding the direction of the effect of urbanity, I create a non-directional alternative hypothesis.

$H_{3.1}$:   *The share of regional urban population will have an effect on vote shares for the incumbents and the communists.*

7.4 Industrial laborers

Rokkan's class-cleavage is in this thesis operationalized as the share of *industrial laborers* in a given region. Traditionally, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union represented the industrial proletariat (Tyldum & Kolstø 2004:34, Bessudnov 2011). Over the period 1993-2001, Evans and Whitefield (2006:23) found an association between class position and presidential choice, where the working class provided a stable basis of support for the socialist axis and professional and managerial workers for the main free market axis. Similarly, Klobucar and Miller (2000:668) found strong correlations between traditional class cleavages and party loyalties.

Class is often understood as structured differences in occupation and are operationalized using occupational titles (Erikson & Goldthorpe 1992). Evans and Whitefield (1999:261) operationalized class as a combination of workers and peasants. I tested whether the regional share of people employed in agriculture had an effect, both by itself and combined with industrial laborers, but it had no significant effects. A potential reason for the lack of effect of peasantry is the Soviet Union's collectivization of farms that turned agricultural workers into employees and destroyed peasantry as a class (White et al. 1997:65, Sakwa 2008b:319).

As industrial workers with time would comprise a lot smaller portion of the workforce than before, Sakwa (1998:145) believed that the social base for socialist parties would be undermined. Similarly, Kitschelt (1995:459) wrote that workers no longer preferred communist parties. A recent poll conducted by the Russian Public Opinion Research Centre indeed showed, that occupation may no longer have an effect on voter preference, with all occupational groups supporting United Russia equally (Bessudnov 2011).

$H_{4.1}$: Higher share of regional population employed in industry will have a positive effect on the vote shares for the communists and a negative effect on the vote shares for the incumbents.

7.5 Gross regional product

According to the theories of sociotropic voting, when the country's economy is booming, people are more likely to vote for the party they deem most closely associated with those in charge of running the economy (Colton & Hale 2005:3). Bartels (2011:11-12) did indeed find that GDP was positively correlated with support for the ruling party. If GDP had gone up during the last two years, the popularity went up too, but if GDP went down, so did the popularity. The clear lines of accountability from the economic boom of the 2000s to Putin and United Russia imply that when national economy is on the upswing, their popularity will rise, while when there's economic downfall, the communists will be rewarded (McAllister & White 2008a:949-950, Colton & Hale 2005:19). Almost all regions experienced growth in their GRP over the two years prior to all of the elections under study[24].

$H_{5.1}$: In the regions where GRP has grown during the last two years, the vote shares for the incumbents will be higher, and the vote shares for the communists will be lower.

---

[24] The regions that experienced a decline in their GRP is Kalmykia and Ingushetia in 2003 and Chukotka AO in 2011.

7.6 Income

Several scholars have found the relationship between income and support for CPRF to be negative; at lower levels of income, support for the communists rises. Indeed, in the 2003 parliamentary election, 25 percent of the CPRF's voters said they could "barely make ends meet", while only 5.5 percent of the party's support base came from those with "enough for durables" (Russia Votes 2003). Support for CPRF by the poorer constituency is theoretically logical, as people with lower incomes are more prone to supporting those favoring income redistribution (Rose et al. 2011:20). The same pattern seems to be present at the regional level, as the communists historically have done better in the poorer regions (Colton 1998:88-89, Sakwa 1998:136). It could also be argued that people with higher incomes would reward the incumbents for their well-being, as well as they are generally more capable of adapting to the transitional reforms, making them the so-called "winners" (McAllister & White 2008b:621).

Contrary to the theoretical expectations, Rose and Mishler (2010:52,101) find no effect of income on voter preferences, concluding that Russian's are not motivated by their personal economic circumstances at all. Similarly, Wegren and Konitzer (2006:690) found that CPRF had lost its support among the transitional losers already by 2003. Neither the poorest, nor the richest parts of the electorate voted for CPRF. As poverty and unemployment in Russia started to decline with the economic boom of the early 2000s, Putin pulled votes from the transitional losers as well as the winners. A poll conducted in 2007 showed that 53 percent of the surveyed believed that the government significantly had improved the social protection of the poor, ranking it the second best achievement of the government, after promoting order (Sakwa 2008a:83, Rose et al. 2011:52). Colton and Hale (2009:490) actually find that Putin largely drew voters from people who experienced no net change in their incomes. Although this simply could mean that people reward the incumbents for decreasing the economic problems of the 1990s, this differs from the expectation that it is a *rise* in incomes that has been driving the incumbents' appeal. Actual economic improvement following the 2000s reforms was personally felt by no more than 26 percent of the population and by only about 40 percent of the Putin voters. Colton and Hale (2009:489,493) therefore conclude that even though the economy has been a strong source of Putin's electoral success, the effect is indirect and not based on egocentric economic voting.

A different theoretical approach is to look at income as a measure of modernization. Both Samuel Huntington (1991:67) and Seymour Martin Lipset (1960:83) assumed that higher

incomes and increased living standards would create a middle class that would demand democratic freedoms. Shlapentokh (2004:227) actually found support for this hypothesis in Russia, showing that support for liberal values increased with the rise in income. Similarly, economic wealth is expected to favor opposition mobilization (Schedler 2013:310). Indeed, 70 percent of the 2011 and 2012 protestors categorized themselves as relatively well off. Given the theoretical split, I create two alternative hypotheses.

$H_{6.1}$:   *Higher regional incomes will have a positive effect on the vote shares for the incumbents and a negative effect on the vote shares for the communists.*

$H_{6.2}$:   *Higher regional incomes will have a negative effect on the vote share for the incumbents and a positive effect on the vote shares for the communists.*

7.7 Unemployment

Another economic factor regarded as one of the most important parameters that voters usually hold the government accountable for is unemployment (Nureev & Shulgin 2013:85). Bartels (2011:10) discovered that unemployment has a negative effect on the incumbents, but only when reaching a critical level. The communists are also expected to benefit from higher unemployment rates as they traditionally favor redistribution from rich to the poor (Langørgen & Rønningen 2004:9). Unemployment rates were low in Russia during the 2000s, and in 2007 Russia had their lowest rates of unemployment since the collapse of the Soviet Union (6.1%) (McAllister & White 2008a:948, Robinson 2013:457). However, unemployment in general is a phenomenon not familiar to the Russians (at least to the older constituency), given the guarantees of the former communist regime, and as it varies tremendously between regions, it is expected to have an effect on the vote shares.

$H_{7.1}$:   *Higher regional unemployment rates will have a negative effect on the vote shares for the incumbents and a positive effect on the communists.*

7.8 Pensioners

When one studies the effect old age has on voter preferences, something called "party identification" is especially relevant. Party identification is claimed to be one of the strongest and most enduring voter cues (Colton & Hale 2009:483). The concept implies that voters choose parties less through detached and rational understanding of the parties' stands on important

issues, but through long-term processes of socialization and through deep-rooted sentiments, often inherited from one's parents (Hale 2006:94). As pensioners were socialized during the communist rule, older Russians are expected to vote for CPRF and Zyuganov (Rose et al. 2011:86, Hale 2006:109). In addition, the communists have a programmatic appeal to pensioners, as they promise higher and more reliable pensions (Colton & Hale 2005:9). Indeed, the average party member of the CPRF in 1996 was 52 years old, and 64.5 percent of CPRF's voters were 55 years or older in the 2003 parliamentary election (Russia Votes 2003, Sakwa 1998:132). However, by December 2010, the average age in the UR faction in the Duma was 53 years (versus CPRF's 58). This can indicate that more or less the same elite comprise the party of power today as the one that existed in the late Soviet period (Roberts 2012a:174).

United Russia has been claimed to pull votes from the young (Colton & Hale 2009:502). Additionally, as UR embraced the flat 13 percent income tax policies in 2001 and rejected the luxury tax, it could be suggested that the incumbents are opposed to using the tax system for redistributive purposes, further decreasing their support base among the pensioners (Colton & Hale 2009:493, Remington 2011:106,117).

$H_{8.1}$:   Higher regional share of pensioners will have a negative effect on the vote shares for the incumbents and a positive effect on the vote shares for the communists.

7.9 Ethnic Russian

Building on the existing literature, one would expect regions with higher shares of ethnic non-Russians to provide a very favorable environment for United Russia and Vladimir Putin (Whitmore 2013, Korgunyuk 2014:411). It might however be reasonable to assume electoral misconduct based on the anomalous distribution of vote shares favoring the incumbents. Goodnow et al. (2014:19) do indeed find that the incidences of electoral manipulation in ethnically non-Russians regions significantly exceed those in regions with a Russian majority.

$H_{9.1}$:   Higher regional share of ethnic Russians will have a negative effect on the vote shares for the incumbents and a positive effect on the vote shares for the communists.

7.10 Life expectancy

Political decisions may influence population health either directly through decisions on public health measures (clean drinking water, vaccinations, road traffic safety, air pollution control etc.),

or on health care provisions in general (Mackenbach 2013:134). One could assume that better health would benefit the incumbents, as they would be rewarded for increasing living standards.

However, increasing living standards are also associated with increasing socio-economic status, education and income, implying a link between life expectancy and modernization (Gissler 2015, Down & Hamoudi 2015). Indeed, life expectancy has by several studies been shown to be higher in democratic regimes (Mackenbach 2013:143). If life expectancy is interpreted as a measure for the general level of modernization, we could according to Huntington (1991:67) and Lipset (1960:83) expect the variable to affect the vote shares of the incumbents negatively.

$H_{10.1}$:   Higher regional life expectancy will have a positive effect on the vote shares for the incumbent and a negative effect on the vote shares for the communists.

$H_{10.2}$:   Higher regional life expectancy will have a negative effect on the vote shares for the incumbents and a positive effect on the vote shares for the communists.

7.11 Higher education

The traditional expectation of the effect of education in Russia has been that less affluent and educated voters will favor the communists, while the prosperous voters with higher education would offer greater support to parties that support market economy (White et al. 2002:144).

The traditional West-European approach however, would expect the opposite, as it assumes that rising levels of education are associated with one's orientation towards liberal values, and hence damage the popularity of the undemocratic incumbents (Chaisty & Whitefield 2012:194). Shlapentokh (2004:227) and Gibson and Duch (1993:86) find that higher education in Russia is positively correlated with rights consciousness and support for democracy as a political system. Colton and Hale (2005:22) similarly find that United Russia does better among people with lower levels of education. In addition, about 80 percent of the protestors in the 2011-2012 demonstrations had higher education, while not more than 25-30 percent of the entire country's population has that (Volkov 2012:57). However, it could also be argued that the better educated are better able to adapt to the economic reforms of the 90's and the 2000s, therefore increasing their support for the current regime.

By 2003 Parliamentary election, there wasn't a big difference in support for United Russia and CPRF based on education. Eleven percent of the CPRF voters had a higher education,

compared to United Russia's 14.5 percent (Russia Votes 2003). Similarly, Bessudnov (2011) didn't find any evidence that parties managed to attract voters based on education.

$H_{11.1}$:   Higher share of the regional population with higher education will have a negative effect on the vote shares for the incumbents and a positive effect on the vote shares for the communists.

$H_{11.2}$:   Higher share of the regional population with higher education will have a positive effect on the vote shares for the incumbents and a negative effect on the vote shares for the communists.

7.12 Published newspapers

Given the lack of national independency of all other media outlets, I use the amount of daily -published newspapers as an indicator of regional access to independent information. Gerber, Karlan and Bergan (2009:47) find that even short exposure to a daily newspaper appears to influence voting behavior. Access to independent media implies exposure to regime-critical media and could be expected to effect the vote shares of the incumbents negatively. Similarly, access to independent media is expected to benefit the communists, because of their expanded reach. Newspaper exposure also has a positive effect on political turnout in general, suggesting that increased exposure might have an important long term effect on the level of political interest (Gerber et al. 2009:48, Enikolopov et al. 2011:3256).

$H_{12.1}$:   Higher regional circulation of newspapers will have a negative effect the vote shares for the incumbents and a positive effect on the vote shares for the communists.

Chapter 8: Method - Random Effects Modeling

The main methodological approach in this thesis will be random effects (RE) modeling. In the first sections of this chapter, I will explain why random effects modeling is appropriate, the problems associated with the method, and the regression results. In section 8.4, I apply a method that corrects for the problem most often associated with RE modeling, heterogeneity bias. The method separates the within- and between-effects of the covariates, and in addition to being statistically more sophisticated, it allows for a more informative interpretation of the results. The method is Bell and Jones's random effects model with a within-between formulation (REWB) inspired by Mundlak (1978), and involves adding additional time-invariant predictors. I will explain the methodology, the benefits of the method and present the regression results. The regression analyses are performed in the statistical software program *Stata.*

8.1 Why Random Effects Modeling

There are generally two main approaches when analyzing panel data and time-series cross-sectional (TSCS) data: Fixed effects (FE) modeling and random effects (RE) modeling (Bell & Jones 2014:133). FE modeling works best if you have relatively fewer cases (N) and more time periods (T), as each dummy variable removes one degree of freedom from the model. The RE approach is widely used in analyses of panel data with a large N relative to T. If there are few observations per unit, the unit effects alone may account for most of the variation in the dependent variables (Bartels 2008:7). The smaller the data set, the more support for RE modeling, as the random effects will tend to produce superior estimates of β when there are few observations per unit, and when the correlation between the independent variables and the unit effects is relatively low (Clark & Linzer 2014:4,6). Random effects modeling is also preferable if there are any time-invariant variables present in the dataset, as the FE model doesn't measure the effects of time-invariant variables at all (they are perfectly collinear with the set of unit dummy variables). If there is theoretical reason to believe that differences across entities may have some influence on the dependent variables, RE modeling should be used (Bell & Jones 2014:139, Clark & Linzer 2014:5).

The RE model looks like this:

$$(1) \qquad y_{ij} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_{1ij} + \beta_2 z_j + (u_j + e_{ij}),$$

where y_{ij} is the dependent variable, β_0 is the intercept term, x_{1ij} is a (series of) covariate(s) that are measured at the lower (occasion) level with coefficient β_1, and z_j is a (series of) covariate(s) measured at the higher level with coefficient β_2. The "random" part of the model (in brackets) consists of u_j, the higher-level residual for higher-level entity j, allowing for differential intercepts for higher-level entities, and e_{ij}, the occasion-level residual for occasion i of higher-level entity j. Higher-level entities refer to the units of analysis, while lower-level (occasion) entities refer to the repeated measures nested in these higher-level entities. Consequently, time-varying attributes are measured at the occasion level, while time-invariant observations are unchanging attributes measured at the higher-level (Bell & Jones 2014:135). The random error is separated into a within- (e_{ij}) and a between- cluster (u_{ij}) component (ibid:136, Bartels 2008:8).

Bell and Jones (2014:134) argue that random effects modeling is preferable over fixed effects in almost all occasions, because of its greater flexibility, generalizability and its ability to model context. Random effects is also said to be a more efficient estimator and should be used as long it is statistically justifiable (Data and Statistical Service 2015). Because FE uses dummy-variables to control out context, the results derived from FE models may be overly simplistic. RE models on the other hand, can reveal specific differences between higher-level entities. As the units of analysis in this thesis are regions, controlling out context and assuming that all higher-level entities are affected in the exactly same way, puts us in the risk of missing important information. The regions are indeed very different and modelling their differences should be an important part of the analysis.

8.2 The problems of Random Effects Models - Omitted Variable Bias/Heterogeneity Bias

Panel data in general (both FE and RE) allows us to solve a common problem encountered in statistics: heterogeneity bias or omitted variable bias. The bias results from a violation of the strict exogeneity assumption in regression models that assumes that the individual-specific effect is a random variable uncorrelated with the explanatory variables across all time periods. FE models solve the problem of heterogeneity bias (correlation between the covariate of interest x, and the unit effects a_j) by controlling out all higher-level variance, and with it any between effects, using the higher-level entities themselves included in the model as dummy-variables (Waldinger 2014:26). RE models on the other hand don't estimate separate unit effects, but assume strict exogeneity in the same manner. The assumption is then almost impossible to uphold as observations within a given higher-level entity are almost always related to each other. Any correlation between x and a_j in a RE model can imply an omitted variable z that produces bias in estimates of β. Because FE model only estimates within effects, they cannot suffer from heterogeneity bias, often leading to researchers using the simpler FE model (Clark & Linzer 2014:4, Bell & Jones 2014:137).

There is however a solution to heterogeneity bias in the RE model framework that doesn't involve losing 82 degrees of freedom (produced by the 82 region-dummy variables in the FE model framework). The solution lies in the understanding of the source of endogeneity, which is separate "within" and "between" effects of a given time-varying covariate. The attempt to model the two processes in one term is what leads to heterogeneity bias (Bell & Jones 2014:141, Deaton

2010:430). Time-varying covariates often contain two effects that together comprise its total effect: one that is specific to the higher-level entity and doesn't vary over time *(between effect)* and one that varies over time, within the higher-level entity *(within effect)* (Bell & Jones 2014:137). In the standard RE model framework (equation 1 above), it has assumed that the within and between effects are equal. This may be the case, but as Snijders and Bosker (2012:60) argue, "it is the rule rather than the exception that within-group regression coefficients differ from between-group coefficients". When the effects indeed are different, β_1 becomes an interpretable average of the two processes. If the between effect is omitted and β_1 attempts to account for both the within and between effect, it fails to account fully for either, resulting in omitted variable bias (Bell & Jones 2014:137). This will consequently lead to the error term to be correlated with the covariate, violating the strict exogeneity assumption of the RE model.

Researchers often use a Hausman specification test (Hausman 1978) to choose between FE and RE modeling. The Hausman test is however not a test of FE versus RE, but a test of the similarity of within and between effects. It tests whether the unique errors (u_i) are correlated with the regressors, the null hypothesis is that they are not (Bell & Jones 2014:144, Torres-Reyna 2007:29). The true correlation between the covariates and unit effects is however never zero, and there will almost always exist bias (if perhaps negligible) in the estimates. The source of endogeneity is what is interesting and important to model explicitly (Bell & Jones 2014:137). The conventional understanding that any correlation rules out the use of RE models is according to Clark and Linzer (2014:6) misguided and they argue that the presence of non-zero correlation is neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition for choosing a FE model, and that the choice needs to be based on the nature of the data. Bell and Jones (2014:138) propose a model that makes the Hausman test redundant, because it eliminates the correlation (between the covariate of interest, *x*, and the unit effects a_j) entirely. Before we move on to their model however, the regression results for the standard RE model are presented.

8.3 Regression results of Random Effects Modeling
The *random effects estimator* is the feasible generalized least squares (GLS) estimator and is also what Stata requests by default, producing a matrix-weighted average of the between and within results (Schmidheiny 2014:6, Stata 2015:4). The accepted significance level is in all of the

following regressions set to five percent, but it may also be interesting to look at the variables significant at the ten percent level.

Several dozens of models were run to test how each variable and its significance level changed with additional variables. The results presented in Table 4 include all the variables.

Table 4: Model 1: Random effects model, controlled for heteroscedasticity[25]

Variable	United Russia	Putin	CPRF	Zyuganov
Distance to Moscow	-.0021066 (-2.53)**	-.0012421 (-3.08)***	.0007381 (2.43)	.0002148 (0.80)
Religion - Orthodox	-.0087191 (-1.21)	-.0235946 (-0.34)	.0046549 (0.12)	.0375994 (0.83)
Urbanity	.0731603 (0.49)	.092621 (1.63)	-.1384586 (-3.65)***	-.0936879 (-2.00)**
Industrial laborers	-.9207074 (-3.37)***	-.0828644 (-0.64)	.1105338 (1.31)	-.1928097 (-1.97)**
GRP change	25.13882 (6.57)***	.9658771 (0.63)	-4.812988 (-4.42)***	4.014138 (3.84)***
Income	-1.1478441 (-0.69)	-.3878545 (-3.94)***	.2930741 (3.86)***	.0172489 (0.23)
Unemployment	-1.147467 (-3.26)***	-.063463 (-0.41)	.1660646 (1.01)	-.272919 (-3.63)
Pensioners	-.5028892 (-1.30)	-.4948268 (-2.67)	.6584587 (4.48)***	.2934628 (2.44)**
Ethnic Russian	-.3389814 (-4.04)***	-.2341251 (-4.09)***	.0886067 (2.79)***	.0987305 (2.81)***
Life expectancy	.9767574 (2.14)	-.4163333 (-2.11)**	.5046111 (3.09)***	.2849178 (2.15)**
Higher education	.9767574 (0.35)	.0701754 (0.67)	-.0536991 (-0.64)	-.0433344 (-0.53)
Newspapers	-3.207176 (-3.72)***	-.8944639 (-1.48)	.310269 (0.86)	-.1436536 (-0.32)
Sig. level: * = 0.10, ** = 0.05, *** = 0.01				

Note: The regression was performed using Stata's *xtreg, re robust* command. Z-values in parenthesis.

As we can see, many of the variables produce significant results in line with our theoretical expectations. Distance to Moscow affects to vote shares of the incumbents negatively, and regions with higher shares of rural population vote for the communists to a greater degree. Income affects Putin negatively and the Communist Part positively, in addition to regions with

---

[25] See chapter 9 on regression assumptions and section 9.2 for information about heteroscedasticity and the homoscedasticity assumption.

higher shares of pensioners showing greater support for the communists. Ethnic Russian produces significant results for all of the dependent variables, with higher shares benefitting the communists and damaging the incumbents. Life expectancy appears to significantly benefit the communists, while newspapers produce a very significant and negative effect on Putin. However, the results of this table are challenged by heterogeneity bias and the interpretation of the results will be reserved to the estimates produced by the more superior model I turn to in the following section.

8.4 A Random Effects solution to Heterogeneity bias: Within-Between formulation

In longitudinal data, observations are nested within units. One of the strengths of longitudinal data is that it allows us to disaggregate the between- and within- effects of a time-varying covariate. It can be quite challenging to unambiguously separate the expected effects of a given influence when looking within regions versus across regions. The matter is further complicated by the fact that the two influences can operate simultaneously and in opposite directions (Curran & Bauer 2011:583,585). This can be better explained using an example of the relationship between exercise and heart attacks. An individual is more likely to experience a heart attack while exercising. This is the within-person effect. However, people who exercise more have a lower risk of getting a heart attack. This is the between-person effect. Generalizing the between-person effect to the individual would be an error of inference (ecological fallacy), in addition to the direction of the covariate potentially being the opposite of the true value. The separation of the within- and between- effects lets us better test our underlying theories and hypotheses, and develop a more advanced understanding of true relationships (Curran & Bauer 2011:586).

As discussed in section 6.5.4, even without disaggregating the within- and between-effects, the data in this thesis puts us at risk of making an error of ecological inference. The statistical models disaggregating the within- and between- effects therefore need to be carefully specified to avoid confounding the two sources of variability. Simply put, the between component is unique to the unit N and the within component is unique to time T for unit N (Curran & Bauer 2011:592). The between effect is assessed through the average levels, while the within effect through variation across time. When we estimate only one effect, we combine potentially different effects operating at two levels of analysis (The effect of a time-varying covariate in the standard RE model is an aggregation of between-region and within-region

influences). To differentiate these effects, we need to decompose the time-varying covariate into components that isolate between- and within-region differences (Curran & Bauer 2011:590). There are several traditional methods for disaggregating between- and within- effects, usually involving the strategy of "within-subject centering", that involves subtracting the subject's mean value from each observation value ($x_{ij} - \bar{x}_j$) (Aiken & West 1991:28-48, Van de Pol & Wright 2009:755). Centering around the subject's mean effectively eliminates any between-subject variation and the new predictor variable ($x_{ij} - \bar{x}_j$) is used as a fixed effect that expresses only the within-subject variation. A second predictor variable that only expresses the between-subject variation is simply the subjects' means[26]

As random effects modeling is preferred where there is no correlation between covariates and residuals, Bell and Jones (2014:149) propose a solution within the RE model framework that removes this correlation entirely. Inspired by Mundlak's (1978:69) initial formulation, they separate the within-subject and between-subject effects creating a "within-between RE model":

$$(2) \qquad y_{ij} = \beta_0 + \beta_1(x_{ij} - \bar{x}_j) + \beta_4\bar{x}_j + \beta_2 z_j + (u_j + e_{ij}),$$

where β_1 is the within effect and β_4 is the between effect of x_{ij} (Bell & Jones 2014:141). The estimation of distinct within- and between- effects makes the data more interpretable, and allows us to test whether the within-subject effect, the between-subject effect, or both are significant (Van de Pol & Wright 2009:756). Most importantly, the separation of the effects removes the heterogeneity bias in the model, also making the coefficients more reliable (Skrondal and Rabe-Hesketh 2004:52-53, Bell & Jones 2014:142).

If the within and between effects are properly specified, the estimates of β_1 in equations (2) and (3) will actually be identical to those obtained by a FE model. Therefore, we can use a corrected RE model, keeping the informative between-region effects and avoiding losing 82 degrees of freedom (Bell & Jones 2014:144, Mundlak 1978:70).

It is however still possible that omitted variables bias the estimates, and as with any other model, care is required when interpreting the results. However, as long as we account for the key

---

[26] Two additional variables are created, one by averaging each time-varying variable across the three time-periods (between estimator), the other by subtracting the average value from the observed values for each regian, for each year (within-estimator).

source of the correlation by splitting the within and between effects, we don't simply solve the heterogeneity bias, we model it. It is important to use theory to consider whether important variables have been omitted and whether causal interpretations are justified.

8.5 Regression results of RE modeling with a "within-between" formulation (REWB)

The interpretation of the second model is somewhat more complicated, as it separates the effects of the time-varying variables into one within- and one between- estimator. This is clearly specified in Table 5. First, we average each time-varying variable over the three time points, with the covariates representing the effect *between* regions. Second, we subtract the average value from the observed value for each time period for each region, with that covariate estimating the effects *within* regions, considering change over time. There are ten time-varying covariates in the dataset, and two time-invariant ones (*distance to Moscow* and *religion-Orthodox*). The time-invariant covariates assess the between effects of these variables. The initial random effects model with the "within-between" formulation (REWB) contained 22 variables, but only the variables that were significant on at least one of the four dependent variables were included in the end. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Model 2: Random Effects model with the within-between formulation, controlled for heteroscedasticity

Variable	United Russia	Putin	CPRF	Zyuganov
Distance to Moscow	-.0004635 (-0.81)	-.0011136 (-4.14)***	.0005812 (3.10)***	.000661 (3.67)***
Industrial laborers – *within*	-2.471974 (-5.33)***	-.0741211 (-0.37)	.4505565 (2.95)***	-.3105664 (-1.82)*
GRP Change – *within*	13.15194 (2.70)**	-.2107259 (-0.12)	-.6940462 (-0.47)	3.873506 (3.01)***
Income – *between*	.1878844 (0.60)	.4061816 (2.42)**	-.4431985 (-5.32)***	-.5998719 (-5.93)***
Income – *within*	.2180088 (0.55)	-.3585919 (-2.62)***	.2527065 (1.81)*	.1606901 (1.71)*
Unemployment – *between*	.2043728 (0.76)	.2492145 (1.59)	-.2528421 (-2.66)**	-.3357451 (-3.59)***
Unemployment – *within*	-2.425036 (-5.35)***	-.4314737 (-1.92)*	.6463991 (3.80)***	-.1653597 (-1.41)
Pensioners – *within*	-3.350339 (-2.97)***	-.2585112 (-0.55)	1.120906 (3.18)***	.0266722 (0.09)

Ethnic Russian – *between*	-.3305235 (-4.94)***	-.2380131 (-5.21)***	.0797134 (3.90)***	.107071 (3.97)***
Life expectancy – *between*	.3068656 (0.71)	-.0437904 (-0.21)	.3541218 (3.35)***	.3002286 (2.46)**
Life expectancy – *within*	-.5249456 (-0.49)	-.69548 (-2.00)**	.9490001 (2.86)***	-.1216558 (-0.47)
Newspapers – *between*	-1.704246 (-1.94)*	-1.587428 (-3.46)***	.5514956 (2.06)**	.7031212 (1.89)*
Newspapers – *within*	-3.770793 (-3.75)**	-1.085702 (-2.00)**	.7926658 (2.06)**	-.2460308 (-0.63)
Sig. level: * = 0.10, ** = 0.05, *** = 0.01				

Note: The regression was performed using Stata's *xtreg, re robust* command. Z-values in parenthesis.

Comparing table 4 (RE model) and table 5 (within-between RE model) shows not only how omitted variable bias can bias our estimates, but also that the separation of the within-region and between-region effects produce a very different and more nuanced picture of the relationships between the variables. Controlling for heterogeneity bias and separating the within- and between-effects resulted in two variables gaining significance for Putin and four variables gaining significance for CPRF and Zyuganov. Similarly, two variables' effect on UR and one variable's effect on CPRF and Zyuganov lost their significance. Additionally, the variable urbanity entirely lost its significance. Some variables are clearly only significant within regions, some only between, while some variables have simultaneous effects, and even in opposite directions.

The standard RE model is outperformed by the REWB model because of bias resulting from the omission of the between effect (Bell & Jones 2014:145). However, despite the fact that the REWB model is methodologically and theoretically superior to the standard RE model, there are a number of potential violations in the data we need to address. Before the final model (Table 6) is presented, the next chapter will address regression assumptions upon which all multiavariate regressions rely on to produce unbiased estimates. The RE model could be further extended to the random coefficients model (RCM), which would allow the effects of the covariates to vary across units, but this is not a method I will elaborate on here.

Chapter 9: Regression Analysis Assumptions

Most statistical tests rely upon certain assumptions about the variables in the dataset. When these assumptions are violated, the results become unstable, with a risk of over- or under-estimating the size of the effects, as well as the significance levels (Osborne & Waters 2002, Wooldridge

2013:362). The strict exogeneity assumption (that assumes no omitted variable bias/heterogeneity bias) was addressed in the previous chapter (section 8.2), where the final within-between RE model eliminated the correlation between the covariates of interest and the unit effects. This chapter will address the assumptions of no multicollinearity[27], homoscedasticity, normality, linearity and no auto-correlation. I will also address the potential bias introduced by outliers.

9.1 Absence of multicollinearity

Because the final REWB model (Model 2) has several new variables, splitting most in two, we need to again test for multicollinearity. Repetition of the same kind of variable or the inclusion of a variable that is computed from other variables in the data set can result in multicollinearity. Indeed, there are several new critically high correlations in the dataset. The variable measuring the within-effect of *industrial laborers* has a correlation with the within-effects of *income* (-0.688) and *life expectancy* (-0.784). The within-effect of *income* is also highly correlated with the within-effects of *pensioners* (0.790) and *life expectancy* (0.877). Stata's user-written Collin-test for multicollinearity shows a very large condition number (105.5530), indicating very high instability. To correct for multicollinearity we need to leave out the variables causing it, leading to the exclusion of the variables measuring the within-effects of *income* and *industrial laborers*.

9.2 Homoscedasticity assumption

The assumption of homoscedasticity implies that the variation around the regression line is the same across all levels of a given independent variable. If the variance of errors differs at different values of the independent variable, heteroscedasticity is indicated (Skog 2004:246). Assuming homoscedasticity when heteroscedasticity is present will not cause inconsistency in the estimates of the coefficients (Baltagi 2008:87). However, marked heteroscedasticity can lead to distortion of findings and weaken the analysis (Osborne &Waters 2002).

A graphic plot of the residuals versus the fitted (predicted) values indicate heteoscedasticity in the data (see Appendix C) However, Stata's **xtreg, re robust** command controls for heteroscedastic errors (Hoechle 2007:285, Torres-Reyna 2007:38). This command was used on all of the models.

---

[27] Multicollinearity was addressed in section 6.5.1 as well, but all the regression assumptions are in this chapter tested for the REWB model.

9.3 Multivariate normality assumption

The regression analysis assumes that the variables are normally distributed. Non-normally distributed variables that are skewed, or have substantial outliers can bias the estimates and the significance levels of the variables (Osborne &Waters 2002). According to Bell and Jones (2014:136) RE models perform well even when the normality assumption is violated. This is because normality is required for valid hypothesis testing, and doesn't matter for the obtainment of unbiased estimates of the regression coefficients.

A test for univariate normality in Stata (**mvtest normality** *varlist*, **univariate)** shows how kurtosis and skewness varies across the variables. Kurtosis indicates how the peak and tails of a distribution differ from the normal distribution. Data that follow a normal distribution have a kurtosis value of zero. Kurtosis that significantly deviates from zero may indicate that the data is not normally distributed. Skewness is on the other hand the extent to which the data is not symmetrical. As data becomes more symmetrical, its skewness value approaches zero (Minitab 2015b).

The two problematic variables are the same variables that caused multicollinearity in the data: the variables measuring the within-effects of *income* (skewness: 0.5789) and *industrial laborers* (kurtosis: 0.5894). When the data is not normally distributed a non-linear transformation may fix the issue (e.g. log-transformation, square root or inverse). However, as this can introduce effects of multicollinearity and complicate the interpretation of the results, in addition to the two variables already creating instability, I choose to drop them all together (Osborne &Waters 2002).

9.4 Linearity assumption

The fixed predictor variables (and their within- and between-subject components) have here been assumed to be continuous and linear. The assumption of linearity implies that the effect of the independent variables can be described in form of a straight line (Statistics Solutions 2015b). As there are many instances where the relationships may not be linear, it is essential to examine the possibility of non-linearity. Stata's non-linearity test (**nlcheck** *indepvars*) didn't reject the linearity assumption for any of the dependent variables (a significant test result indicates that the linearity assumption is violated).

9.5 The assumption of no autocorrelation

Autocorrelation, also called serial correlation, occurs when the residuals are not independent from each other. Especially when the data consists of repeated measures over time, there is almost always dependence between observations on one variable. This is known as autocorrelation (Statistics Solutions 2015b). The variable measuring the within-effect of *income* was dropped because of high autocorrelation.

Wooldridge derived a simple test for autocorrelation in panel-data models. Stata's user-written program **xtserial** by David Drukker performs this test. A significant test statistic indicated the presence of autocorrelation in the data. Stata's **xtregar, re** command controls for autocorrelation, and indicated instability of the variable *GRP Change.* Ignoring serial correlation when it is present results in consistent but inefficient estimates of the regression coefficients and biased standard errors (Baltagi 2008:92).

9.6 Outliers

Outliers in a regression analysis are observations that are very far from the linear regression line (they have large residuals). Observations like this may influence the estimated regression coefficient (Skog 2004:249).

A thorough examination of the data identified outliers on all of the independent variables (see Appendix D). There are particularly four regions that continuously have values far from the regression line: Moscow, St. Petersburg, Ingushetia and Chechnya. However, despite the fact that outliers exist, it is not always desirable to remove them unless their values are critical. All of the Russian regions (including the outliers) are the target population in this thesis and I choose to keep them as indispensible parts of Russia (Osborne & Overbay 2004). Outliers can also be dealt with using dummy variables in a RE framework (Bell & Jones 2014:136).

Chapter 10: Analysis of the regression results

In addition to the theoretical grouping of the incumbents and the communists that lay ground for the creation of the hypotheses, it is important to keep in mind that there might be a significant difference between presidential and parliamentary elections. This chapter is mainly concerned with answering the first of the research questions, while the next chapter will address the second.

1. Which demographic and socio-economic variables affect the regional vote shares for the incumbents and the communists in Russian national elections between 2003 and 2012?

The following sections will evaluate the significance and the direction of each variable, in addition to commenting how patterns differ during presidential and parliamentary elections. While approaching the different effects of the variables, it is important to remember that in the real world, variables overlap in a great amount of ways, in addition to being in different relationships with each other across the regions of Russia. In Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, for example, ethnic non-Russians are highly educated, urbanized, modern and relatively wealthy compared to their fellow ethnic non-Russians in Caucasus (Dennis & Moser 2009:11). It is not easy account for the possibility that certain cleavages may overlap. It would require determining which cleavages overlap, how and why, and as Stoll writes (2004:44), even for a specialist this would not be a straightforward task. I will therefore interpret each variable individually.

10.1 The Final Model

The final model is controlled for heteroscedasticity, normality and multicollinearity and is presented in Table 6. The colored fields are significant variables, with the yellow fields marking theoretically logical and expected patterns, and the pink fields indicating unanticipated, ambiguous or theoretically illogical patterns.

Table 6: Model 3: Final REWB model, controlled for heteroscedasticity, normality and multicollinearity.

Variable	United Russia	Putin	CPRF	Zyuganov
Distance to Moscow	-.0003659 (-0.63)	-.0010887 (-4.13)***	.0005796 (3.15)***	.0006703 (3.78)***
GRP Change – *within*	17.10615 (3.10)***	.8191725 (0.45)	-2.466068 (-1.63)	4.029395 (3.13)***
Income – *between*	.1395242 (0.45)	.3966638 (2.43)**	-.440723 (-5.47)***	-.6046725 (-6.12)***
Unemployment – *between*	.0521734 (0.23)	.2089363 (1.59)	-.2472735 (-3.33)***	-.3463761 (-4.29)***
Unemployment – *within*	-2.807051 (-5.75)***	-.4122442 (-2.16)**	.6290395 (4.16)***	-.2336045 (-2.16)**
Pensioners – *within*	-1.938558 (-2.10)**	-.7414145 (-2.04)**	1.345212 (4.46)***	.4005873 (1.67)*
Ethnic Russian – *between*	-.3407375 (-5.13)***	-.2406275 (-5.36)***	.0801768 (4.09)***	.1063683 (4.05)***

Life expectancy – *between*	.3001228 (0.66)	-.0281998 (-0.13)	.3607626 (3.48)***	.2950361 (2.48)**
Life expectancy – *within*	1.91513 (3.50)***	-1.390871 (-5.31)***	1.066007 (5.87)***	.4603659 (3.25)***
Newspapers – *between*	-1.696425 (-1.91)*	-1.602444 (-3.52)***	.5455593 (2.05)**	.7093093 (1.92)*
Newspapers – *within*	-3.134328 (-2.65)**	-.7994307 (-0.93)	.4466372 (0.91)	-.2642169 (-0.52)
Sig. level: * = 0.10, ** = 0.05, *** = 0.01				

Note: The regression was performed using Stata's *xtreg, re robust* command. Z-values in parenthesis.

10.2 Rokkan's variables

Out of the four variables I used to operationalize Rokkan's four main cleavages, only one is significant and pulls in the expected direction: *distance to Moscow*. Contrary to even Rokkan's expectations (Flora et al.1999:7,63), center-periphery contrasts still not only prevail in the society but are actually visible in the electoral results. In line with Nureev and Shulgin's (2013:86) findings, regions further away from Moscow support the communists to a greater degree. The variable appears to create a very significant electoral cleavage during presidential elections, with regions further away from the capital supporting Putin less and Zyuganov more. Despite the fact that Moscow is the city where Putin continuously gets his lowest ratings, regions closer to the capital have higher vote shares for Putin. There are several potential explanations for the observed pattern. Berezin and Díez-Medrano's (2008:23) explanation would rest on the assumption that globalization strengthens the emotional and cognitive significance of distance and makes people more distrustful of rule from afar. A poll conducted by the Levada Center in 2010 showed that 85 percent believed they as an individual had "practically no" (34 percent) or "absolutely no" (51 percent) influence on governmental decisions (Levada Center 2010a; 2010e). The belief that one cannot influence national politics even if one wanted to could be a potential source of alienation from Moscow. However, there are doubts to whether the effect the variable has is reliable. The reason for this is the nature of how the regions are located over the vast territory of Russia. Even though Russia stretches over 11 time zones, over 50 of the 83 regions are clustered in only *one* time zone, all around the city of Moscow. Since distance is measured in kilometers, the regions that are far become outliers, significantly influencing the estimates. Even though we fail to reject $H_{1.1}$, we encourage readers to keep in mind the potential instability of the measure and be cautious with drawing any conclusions.

The two variables that don't have any significance on any of the four dependent variables are *religion-Orthodox* and *urbanity*. Religion's lack of effect was expected because of the lack of competition between religious denominations and religious cues from parties and incumbents to voters. Here, we confirm the null-hypothesis $H_{2.0}$. Urbanity on the other hand, having significance in the standard RE model, lost all of its significance in the REWB model. This is a good example of how a wrong model specification and heterogeneity bias can lead to misleading conclusions. The disappearance of traditionally expected patterns could partially be explained by the fact that Putin, making rural social development a priority and substantially increasing the living standards of the rural electorate, managed to attract the rural vote away from the communists. However, not enough to where they constitute a clear part of his own or UR's electoral support. An alternative explanation to why regions with bigger shares of rural population don't support CPRF is because the rural electorate is more controllable and prone to administrative pressures than the urban one (Whitmore 2013, Gandhi & Lust-Okar 2009:409, Lehoucq 2003:251). Regardless, even though CPRF used to draw voters from the agricultural and rural regions, the findings are in line with Sakwa's (2008a:33) and Wegren and Konitzer's (2006:683) findings that the urban-rural cleavage disappeared by 2003. The analysis shows that a new cleavage based on urbanity didn't emerge and we confirm the null-hypothesis $H_{3.0}$.

The variable used to operationalize Rokkan's fourth "owner-worker" cleavage was removed from the analysis because of a multicollinearity problem with several of the other variables in addition to the violation of the multivariate normality assumption (see section 9.1 and 9.3). Industrial laborers did however produce a significant party cleavage in Model 5, with regions characterized by higher shares of industrial workers supporting CPRF more and UR less. Given the design of this thesis, we cannot draw any conclusions about this variable, but perhaps a different methodological approach, or a restriction to Rokkan's variables only, would produce results that are more reliable. To avoid misleading interpretations I choose to drop the variable from the final model and neither confirm nor reject any of the hypotheses.

10.3 Economic variables

10.3.1 Gross regional product

According to theories of sociotropic voting, when the country's economy is on the upswing, support for the incumbents is higher. A higher percentage-increase in gross regional product over

the last two years indeed seems to have significantly benefitted UR, with a one percentage point increase in GRP predicting a 17 percentage points rise in the vote share for the party. The variable has no effect on Putin or CPRF, but has a surprisingly *positive* and highly significant (3.13) effect on the vote shares for Zyuganov. This pattern is not in accordance with the theoretical expectations.

As the variable is computed by the researcher[28], there were concerns about the reliability of the measurement. However, the variable *GRP* produced the same positive and significant numbers for Putin and Zyuganov, not solving the puzzle. We therefore reject both the null-hypothesis and the alternative hypothesis.

10.3.2 Income

Because of several violations of the regression assumptions (multicollinearity, normality, autocorrelation), the variable measuring the within-effect of income was dropped. However, the variable measuring the between-effect of income was unproblematic, and produced significant results for three of our dependent variables. As previously mentioned, the between effect looks at the structural characteristics of the regions and how the variable affects them differently (Curran & Bauer 2011:583,585). Income between regions has a significant positive effect on the vote shares for Putin, in line with the sociotropic expectation that economic prosperity of a region leads to increased support for the incumbent. Similarly, income between regions has a very significant and negative effect on the vote shares for both CPRF (sig. -5.47) and Zyuganov (sig. -6.12). This is line with the theoretical expectations of Colton (1998:88-89) and Sakwa (1998:136) who found that the communist do better in poorer regions. In addition, in line with theories of sociotropic voting, incumbents are rewarded for economic prosperity of the region. The findings do not support the claims that the economy does not matter for voter preferences in Russia (Rose & Mishler 2010:52,101, Wegren & Konitzer 2006:690). Similarly, the interpretation of income as an indicator of modernization is not supported in the final model (Huntington 1991:67, Lipset 1960:83). We reject both the null-hypothesis and $H_{6.2}$, and conclude that $H_{6.1}$ is strengthened.

Contrary to the findings found for GRP-change, the between-effect of income is more in line with the theoretical expectations. The possible reason for why GRP-change and the between-

---

[28] GRP-change in percentage = $\left(\dfrac{2011-2009}{2009} , \dfrac{2007-2005}{2005} , \dfrac{2003-2001}{2001} \right)$.

effect of income have different effects is the nature of the measures. Gross regional product measures the market value of all final goods and services produced within a region during a year (Shafrin 2011). Regional income is on the other hand based on individual performance and does not incorporate any measures associated with the economic prosperity of the region itself.

While poorer regions support CPRF to a greater degree, income does not create a regional cleavage during the Duma elections, because it has no significant effect on UR. This could be explained by the fact that UR pulls voters from regions with both high and low average incomes, removing the variable's significance on the party's vote shares (Rose et al. 2011:52, Sakwa 2008a:83, Wegren & Konitzer 2006:690).

Unlike for United Russia, regional wealth has significantly benefitted the incumbent president, with regions where the general level of income is higher, positively affecting Putin and negatively affecting Zyuganov. The variable for Zyuganov is actually stronger and more significant (-6.12) and it appears as though the communist leader has succeeded in keeping the representation of the poorer regions (Colton 1998:88-89, Sakwa 1998:136). The positive effect the variable has on Putin is in line with sociotropic economic theory: regions with higher average incomes reward the president. This finding is expected, as most Russians viewed economic growth as the greatest achievement of Putin and his government (Rose et al. 2011:142, Robinson 2012:452, McAllister & White 2008a:948). The "Putin phenomenon" dominating Russia is according to McAllister and White (2008b:622) indeed largely explained by positive evaluations of the economy. It is however not him as an individual, but the high value placed on economic prosperity, which itself is associated with Putin that generates the effect (McAllister & White 2008b:624). Similarly, Rose et al. (2011:122) find that political and economic performance of the government contributed to Putin's personal popularity. Even though these evaluations are made by others and are mostly based on survey evidence, the regression results reflect scholarly consensus.

It should be noted that nominal average income doesn't reflect the actual differences in the standard of living between the regions because of very different costs of living across the country. To get reliable estimates we would need to control incomes with an indicator of the minimum subsistence level (Borisova & Zubarevich 2005:50). The regressions were performed

with the variable *subsistence minimum*[29], but the variable was not included in the final model because it was highly correlated with *income*. Subsistence minimum had somewhat similar effects as income, with negative between-effects on CPRF and Zyuganov (however no significant between-effect on Putin). Given these implications, interpretation of the variable should be done with caution. A potential solution to establishing a central regional tendency would be to use median income, as it to a greater degree would represent a social collectivity (Remington 2011:101). Unfortunately, the Russian Federation Statistical Service does not report regional median income.

10.3.3 Unemployment

Unemployment is the first variable in our dataset that produces significant within- and between-effects, in addition to operating in opposite directions on one of the dependent variables (CPRF). The within-effects of the variable is in accordance with our theoretical expectations: higher levels of regional unemployment have a negative effect on the vote shares for UR and Putin, and a positive effect on the vote shares for the CPRF. This is in accordance with Bartels' (2011:10) assumption that unemployment affects the incumbents negatively. However, the variable also affects Zyuganov's vote share negatively, contradicting our theoretical expectations. A potential explanation for this could be Zyuganov's general lack of charisma and his negative candidate effect, as people might not believe he can solve the problems of unemployment. Unemployment actually affects Zyuganov negatively between regions as well, where he is joined by CPRF. This finding diverges from the expected pattern and the pattern we find in the within-formulation. However, as the between effect reflects the structural differences between the regions, another structural variable could be creating a spurious effect. A study of the dataset revealed that the highest levels of unemployment rates are found in regions with a high proportion of ethnic non-Russians and indeed, the variables are highly correlated (.614). As regions with higher unemployment rates also have large shares of ethnic non-Russians, the negative effect unemployment has on the communists between regions could be caused by the distortion of electoral manipulation in the ethnic regions.

---

[29] Subsistence minimum includes a minimum set of food, non-food goods and services necessary for the preservation of human health and his or her life.

If we assume that the between-effect is spurious and only focus on the within-effect, unemployment actually creates an electoral cleavage during parliamentary elections. In line with Bartels' (2011:10) and Langørgen and Rønningen's (2004:9) expectations, unemployment affects UR negatively and CPRF positively. It is however not easy to say whether the unemployed people in a region actually are the ones voting for CPRF, or if it is due to increased support of the employed people who also reside there. Because of the contradictory between- and within-effects of unemployment, we cannot say that the alternative hypothesis $H_{7.1}$ is strengthened. However, the variable's significant effects during parliamentary elections might indicate the existence of a party cleavage based on unemployment, so we do not reject $H_{7.1}$ either.

10.4 Demographic variables

10.4.1 Pensioners

In accordance with the literature, a bigger constituency of pensioners in a region affects the vote shares for the incumbents negatively and the communists positively (Rose et al. 2011:86, Colton & Hale 2005:9, Evans & Whitefield 2006:29). The variable is significant for all of the four variables (however only at the ten percent level for Zyuganov), creating one of the strongest electoral cleavages, both during parliamentary and presidential elections.

The negative effect the variable has on UR and Putin can be explained by the party's pro-market policies that favor big businesses and put the pensioners at a disadvantage. On average, Russians can anticipate losing about three-fourths of their incomes when they retire, receiving only 27 percent of their incomes as pensions. Despite the fact that average pensions have increased by 34.8 percent since 2009, pensions are still too low to survive on. The 20 percent of Russia's pensioners who work, manage, but the majority struggles and the hard living conditions under the current regime could explain why regions with a higher share of pensioners support incumbents less (Borisova & Zubarevich 2005:44, Remington 2011:112,116, Zaostrovtsev 2013).

CPRF and Zyuganov on the other hand, promise higher and more reliable pensions, making them a more natural representor of the older constituency in Russia. Additionally, the communists are associated with the policies of the Soviet regime, further increasing the nostalgic vote from those who long back to the "good old days" (Colton & Hale 2005:9). The findings reflect scholarly consensus and strengthen the alternative hypothesis $H_{8.1}$.

10.4.2 Ethnic Russians

In accordance with the previously observed patters, regions with higher concentrations of ethnic Russians support the incumbents less and the communists more (Whitmore 2013, Korgunyuk 2014:411). The effect is between regions and is strongly significant on all of the dependent variables, creating an electoral cleavage both during parliamentary and presidential elections.

However, interpretation of this variable is somewhat distorted by the intervening effect of the "administrative resources" believed to be extensively used in the ethnic regions. Indeed, the effect is only significant between regions, indicating that it is the pure demographic characteristic of the region (and not the change in ethnicity) that matters for the vote shares. Colton and Hale's (2005:11) study lends some support to this finding, as they don't find Russian vs. Non-Russian ethnicity to have any relevance to voting behavior in their survey study. Residency in one of the minority republics does not seem to have any significant influence either. This could serve as an additional sign of electoral manipulation, as it at the individual level does not seem to matter whether a voter is ethnically Russian or not, but does matter at the structural level of aggregate data.

It could of course be the case that regions with very high voter turnout and a great support for United Russia and Putin simply are areas with high concentrations of regime supporters. However, it is hard to believe that results showing greater than 95 percent turnout and 95 percent support for United Russia in regions like Dagestan and Chechnya, where violent attacks against the state are a regular occurrence, are provided by pure regime support from the electorate. Rather, it is more likely that the trend is driven by what Sakwa (2008a:117) called "the enthusiastic use of 'administrative resources'". Allegedly, over half a million votes may have been added to Putin's total in Dagestan, while Chechnya had a registered turnout of 107 percent in 2011 (Kramer 2012, Sakwa 2008a:32). Goodnow et al. (2014:21) find that even during the elections in 2007 and 2011, when electoral manipulation was deemed to have spread beyond the ethnic republics, the incidence of electoral manipulation in regions with large concentrations of ethnic minorities greatly outstripped that of majority-Russian regions.

The invasion of the so-called "administrative resource" distorts our understanding of the variable. As ethnicity is not an actual factor parties or candidates use to mobilize voters, ethnicity is deprived of its political interpretation and cannot be regarded as a full cleavage. The variable can only be understood socially, linked to a certain demographic characteristic of the region

(Korgunyuk 2014:403,413). We should however not automatically assume that non-Russian ethnicity implies electoral fraud. Ethnic republics with a large proportion of the rural population (Ingushetia, Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria, North Ossetia, Mordovia, Tatarstan, Bashkortostan) are a lot more subject to the "administrative resource" pressures than the more urbanized Nenetsk, Taimyr, Arkhangelsk, Perm and Tomsk (Korgunyuk 2014:411, Hale 2006:172).

10.4.3. Life expectancy

Even though the variable produces significant within- and between- effects, they operate in the same direction, simplifying the interpretation of the results. Both within and between regions, life expectancy has very significant and positive effects on both CPRF and Zyuganov. This is contradictory to the expectation that regions with higher life expectancy would reward the incumbents for the increasing living standards. The finding is however in line with the theoretical expectations that interpret life expectancy as a general measure of a region's level of modernization, affecting the incumbents negatively. In line with this, life expectancy has a very significant (-5.31) negative effect on Putin. This pattern holds despite the fact that the highest life expectancies are found in the ethnically non-Russian regions.

However, the opposite pattern emerges when we look at the positive effect the variable has on UR. This is a within-effect, meaning that increasing life expectancy increases support for the incumbent party. This finding could lend some support to the hypothesis interpreting life expectancy as a general measure of health in a region, expected to benefit the incumbent party ($H_{10.1}$). However, as the interpretation of this hypothesis only can be applied to one of the dependent variables, we only fail to reject it. The variable does not produce a significant party cleavage, but does create an electoral cleavage during the presidential elections. The variable has a very significant negative effect on Putin and a positive effect on Zyuganov, strengthening the interpretation of life expectancy as an indicator of modernization and lending support to $H_{10.2}$. However, because of the ambiguous nature of the results, we fail to reject both of the alternative hypothesis, only rejecting the null.

10.5 Cultural variables

Out of the three cultural variables expected to potentially affect the vote shares of the incumbents and the communist, only one produced significant results in the analysis. Neither religion

(grouped together with Rokkan's variables), nor education produces significant effects on any of the dependent variables in neither of the models. Newspapers however, have a significant effect on the vote shares for both the incumbents and the communists.

10.5.1 Newspapers and the media

Newspapers produce both significant within- and between- effects, but they operate in the same direction, again simplifying the interpretation of the results. Newspapers are in this thesis used as a measure of access to independent media, and create an electoral cleavage both during parliamentary and presidential elections.

In line with the theoretical expectations that access to even partly independent media can damage the incumbents, newspapers have a very significant and negative effect on both UR and Putin. The between-effect shows the same pattern, and we see that regions that generally have higher circulation of daily newspapers support both UR and Putin less. The effect is significant only at the ten percent level for UR (-1.91), but is strongly significant for Putin (-3.52). The variable also produces significant positive effects for both CPRF and Zyuganov, with the effect however being under the accepted significance level for Zyuganov (1.92). The findings are in line with the theoretical expectations that regional access to independent media significantly can benefit the opposition in a region (Rose et al. 2011:48).

Access to independent media could also be regarded as an additional indicator of modernization in a region, increasing the negative effect the variable has on Putin and UR. The number of published newspapers per person varies between 0.02-0.2 copies in the less modernized regions of Chechnya, Ingushetia, Altai Republic and Dagestan, to 3-11 copies per person in Moscow, St. Petersburg and Nizhny Novgorod. Even though newspapers aren't as far-reaching as television, around 50 percent of the population read newspapers. It is however important to note that not all newspapers are independent, and as we cannot separate the dependent from the independent ones, we need to be careful with the interpretation of the results. The variable also raises questions of validity, as newspapers is not a direct measure of access to independent media.

The findings are to a certain degree supported by empirical evidence from the other somewhat independent media-channel in Russia, the Internet. Internet is mostly used in the biggest cities and by the younger constituency, but access to it also varies significantly across

regions. In 2010, over 70 percent of the population in Moscow (71.9%) and St. Petersburg (71.3%) had Internet, while less than five percent had that access in three North-Caucasian regions (Ingushetia: 2.7%, Dagestan 4.3%, Chechnya 4.6%) (Ria Rating 2013). These numbers again indicate a correlation between regional modernization and access to independent media.

It was through the Internet that the opposition of 2011-2012 organized the demonstrations and chose the person to represent them December 24th on Prospekt Akademika Skharova. They chose Aleksei Navalny (Krastev & Holmes 2012:42). Aleksey Navalny was the first opposition figure in many years to have generated and sustained support from the Russian middle class and BBC described Navalny as "arguably the only major opposition figure to emerge in Russia in the past five years" (BBC 2014, Kuchinsky 2014:271). He was however detained and even arrested for leading the opposition, something that damages his political carrier and precludes him from running in presidential elections in the future (Wilhelmsen 2013). The fact that the demonstrations found place in the biggest and most modernized cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg, lend strength to the assumption that access to independent media can damage the popularity of the incumbents and benefit the opposition, in this case non-systemic.

The effect of independent media is not independent. People with lower incomes may not afford a computer and therefore not have access to the Internet. As the opposition used the Internet to organize, the less well off part of the population automatically got excluded. Income then creates an economic cleavage between the rich and the poor, but also an informational one: between those that have access to information and those who do not. This is commonly known as the "digital divide" (Semetko & Krasnoboka 2003:78). Even though Internet is rapidly growing, its reach is quite limited. In 2006, 76 percent of those polled by the All Russian Centre for Public Opinion Research said they didn't use the Internet at all. Out of those who did, only 19 percent said they used it as a source of news (Arutunyan 2009:24,159). Therefore, even though the Internet potentially is a powerful and influential medium, newspapers are ahead in terms of their ability to reach out to the Russian population (Arutunyan 2009:160).

So can we say that there is a party system based on social cleavages in Russia? In line with Turovsky (2014:70-71) Brader and Tucker (2009:844,857) and Hale (2005:148), this study shows that several cleavages are visible through the regional vote shares, and several of these can be identified as full political cleavages, having both social and political interpretation. During the

93

presidential elections however, a slightly different pattern emerges, with one cleavage disappearing and three new ones emerging. The explanation for this pattern will draw from previous knowledge presented in the paper and be summed up in the following, concluding chapter.

Table 7: Summary of party cleavages and presidential cleavages over the elections 2003-2012

Party cleavages	Presidential cleavages
Unemployment	Distance to Moscow
Pensioners	Income
Newspapers	Pensioners
Ethnicity	Life expectancy
	Newspapers
	Ethnicity

Chapter 11: Conclusion – A political system rooted in social cleavages

This chapter will attempt to summarize previous knowledge about the specific Russian context with the findings found in the previous chapter to answer the second of the research questions:

2. Is there a party system based on social cleavages in Russia? Can the same cleavages explain the distribution of vote shares during the presidential elections?

Even though the regime under Putin has developed to be undemocratic, the Russian electorate has unequivocally chosen him as their national leader three times. The domination of his "party of power" United Russia is also apparent, but the party does not have any real power and was created by the president and his administration to secure majorities in the Duma, and integrate elites across all the regions into one coherent framework. However, even though the regime is far from democratic and manipulation of the political scene has been widely documented, elections are free in that opposition candidates are allowed to compete for voters, and the outcomes are fair in that both the party and the candidate supported by the majority actually wins the election. Pre-electoral polls show very similar support for different parties and candidates as the actual

electoral results. Specifically Putin's popularity cannot be reduced to electoral manipulation, especially since his ratings never have been below 60, and are now over 80 percent, fifteen years after he first came to power. This is not to say that manipulation or an unfair playing field doesn't exist, it just doesn't significantly affect the outcome of the elections. Manipulation is a tool used to test regional governor's loyalties, intimidate opposition and signal Kremlin domination.

Out of the four parties that have had seats in the Russian parliament since 2003, only the Communist Party can be regarded as real opposition. The other two parties, Liberal Democratic Party and Just Russia are "fake opposition", as they support Kremlin in all their initiatives and help siphon voters away from both ends of the political spectrum. The democratic movement has largely failed to gain roots in Russia. The democratic party Yabloko has failed to cross the electoral threshold since 2003, and the non-systemic democratic opposition that manifested itself in massive demonstrations in Moscow and St. Petersburg in 2011 and 2012, failed to organize into a political party and disappeared into thin air.

This thesis investigated whether there exists a social cleavage structure across the Russian regions and whether this structure is manifested in the electoral vote shares for Putin and his party United Russia (UR) on one hand, versus the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF) and its leader Gennady Zyuganov on the other. Beginning with Lipset and Rokkan's model and their cleavages, the thesis expanded to incorporate other economic, demographic and cultural divisions believed to affect regional vote shares. The goal of this thesis was not only to try and understand the relationship between different cleavages and support for opposing parties and candidates, but this relationship in the unique Russian context. As the Russian context is heavily influenced by the presidency in general, and Putin in particular, studying cleavage manifestation during presidential elections became just as interesting as their manifestation in a potential party structure.

Of the twelve variables included in the study, seven produced significant and interpretable effects. Unemployment, pensioners, printed newspapers and ethnicity created opposing effects during parliamentary elections, while distance to Moscow, income, pensioners, life expectancy, printed newspapers and ethnicity created opposing effects during the presidential elections. Ethnicity was concluded to be a redundant cleavage caused by electoral manipulation in the ethnic regions, but the rest serve to create a more informed picture of the Russian political scene.

The first finding of this thesis is not only that the Russian party system is rooted in social cleavage lines, but that it appears to be based on the traditional "left-right" cleavage that characterizes all Western industrialized countries. There are no parties representing cultural, linguistic, rural or ethnic interests, and the two main parties pull along the traditional left-right axis representing opposite poles. Regions characterized by larger shares of unemployed people and pensioners vote for CPRF to a greater degree. These electoral constituencies are expected to support the communists because of their dependency on redistribution policies and the pattern appears to be present at the regional level as well. The variable used to operationalize Rokkan's "owner-worker" cleavage was removed from the analysis because of several methodological issues. Industrial laborers did however produce a significant party cleavage, with regions characterized by higher shares of industrial workers supporting CPRF more and UR less. Given the design of this thesis, it is not possible to draw any conclusions for this finding, but should be investigated further using a different methodological approach.

Even with the emergence of Putin, the two main parties managed to establish themselves on opposing sides of the ideological spectrum. This not only rejects the theories that have claimed that the Russian system isn't based on social cleavages at all, it is also in line with the findings of Fish (1995) and Rose and Tikhomirov (1996), who claimed that the ideological spectrum of the Russian party system was "one-dimensional" with the largest parties appealing to diametrically opposed constituencies. Despite Putin's centralizing policies and the traditional belief that demographic changes and increasing incomes over time would diminish its voter base, the Communist Party appears to have preserved its representation of the so-called "transitional losers". Additionally, as political sympathies don't fluctuate across the parties from one election to the next, the party system could be regarded as consolidated.

However, this does not reject the view held by some scholars that Russian parties are organizationally weak (Roberts 2012, Sakwa 2008). Even the biggest and strongest party UR, lacks the ability to penetrate state organs, with only limited role in presidential elections and with its source of authority completely outside of the party itself. The success of UR might however suggest a significant shift in the minds of the electorate regarding their trust towards parties. It is questionable whether UR will manage to keep attracting significant electoral support independent of the current president, and the significant shift in the electorate could benefit the marginalized parties when the ruling regime weakens. In a comparative perspective, the German, Japanses and

Italian experience in the stabilization period after the WWII indicates that dominant-power party systems may be a prerequisite for democratic consolidation.

The most interesting finding of this thesis concerns the second part of the second research question. The pattern found for the party system along the traditional capital-labor axis also persists during presidential elections. Even though unemployment loses its significance, income creates opposing poles along the same "left-right" cleavage found in the party system. Higher average incomes in a region significantly benefit the incumbent president and Zyuganov preforms better in the poorer regions. This confirms economic theories of sociotropic voting, where regions with higher average incomes reward the incumbent for their prosperity. In addition, in line with Colton's (1998) and Sakwa's (1998) findings, regions characterized by economic decline and stagnation support not only the Communist Party, but also the communist president. This contradicts the theories that claimed that the communists had lost the vote of the "transitional losers" and are consistent with Evans and Whitefield's (2006) finding of an association between income and presidential choice. In accordance with the findings of Colton and Hale (2005;2009), the main political cleavage in today's Russia remains between the left represented by the communists and the right represented by the incumbents.

Pensioners continue to influence the incumbents negatively, with regions with higher shares of pensioners voting for Putin less and for Zyuganov more. This reflects scholarly consensus regarding both the communists and the incumbents. Zyuganov benefits from the "nostalgic vote" as well as from his programmatic appeal to pensioners, promising higher and more reliable pensions. Putin on the other hand, significantly loses in regions with higher shares of pensioners because the policies adopted under his rule significantly complicate the lives of pensioners, especially compared to their experience with the secure and "good old days" under the communist rule. The true representation Zyuganov and CPRF have of clear constituencies is limited by their low electoral vote shares compared to the ones gained by Putin and United Russia. However, their existence provides an outlet for the opposition, makes elections in Russia meaningful and demonstrates to the outside world that democracy in Russia isn't waning. Zyuganov's weakness as an old and uncharismatic leader in a context where personalities prevail over political programs could also be the reason why the Communist Party is allowed to exist: their leader is unelectable. The weakness of Zyuganov as a presidential candidate could potentially be indicated in the regression results. Unemployment actually affects him negatively

both between and within regions, and even though pensioners have a positive effect on Zyuganov's vote shares, the variable is barely significant.

Another factor that has a negative effect on Putin and a positive effect on Zyuganov is distance to Moscow as measured in kilometers. However, there are doubts about the validity of the measure. The reason for this is that even though Russia stretches over 11 time zones, over 50 of the 83 regions are clustered in only *one* time zone, all around the city of Moscow. Perhaps a different measure for distance should have been employed. A social explanation to the pattern could be that regions further away don't trust a capital ruling from afar, or that globalization increased identification with the local rather than with the national. However, this is not necessarily grounded in empiricism. First of all, there is little ground to believe that the locality is more important to Russians than identifying with the nation-state. It could be argued that the North-Caucasian regions with a unifying religion, language or ethnicity identify with locality to a greater degree, but these regions are among the 50 regions close to Moscow *and* they produce abnormally high vote shares for Putin and his party. Second, even though Putin's centralization policies could have damaged the incumbents' popularity in regions far away, the success of UR across *all* the Russian regions indicate the success of Putin's centralizing policies, rather than their failure.

In addition to economic growth, electoral manipulation and numerous other factors positively influencing Putin's popularity, a part of the explanation could be rooted in his success of unifying Russia as a nation-state. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia was a new country with changed borders. Yeltsin's policies of ethnic federalism promoted a degree of regional autonomy and contributed to the decentralization of the country. Centralizing the country again was one of Putin's main goals. He created seven federal districts with leaders all subordinate to his rule, and he abolished the direct elections of governors from 2005 to 2012, appointing them all himself. In addition to his purely territorial policies of state formation, Putin succeeded in creating a sense of a common nation, with people uniting around him. The embarrassing collapse of the great Soviet empire left Russians with a feeling of defeat and no recognizable, unifying national symbols. After the turbulent 90s, characterized by disintegration and decline, Russians were ready for a unifying ideology.

Putin managed to create a strong connection with the Russian electorate, with the majority agreeing with him on the most important issues. His *Millennium Manifest* emphasized all the

factors valued by the Russian electorate: a strong state, an effective economy, and "a Russian idea" comprised of *universal* values, like human rights, and Russian *traditional* values of "patriotism", "great-powerness", "state-centeredness" and "social solidarity". Indeed, polls show that Russians value order and a strong economy over several democratic freedoms. This is not to say that Russians prefer autocracy, but that they don't perceive Putin to be undemocratic. In fact, he represents many of the values Russians associate with democracy.

Like de Gaulle under the French Fifth Republic, Putin sought to create a *great* Russia, independent of Western powers, centered on a strong state and headed by a strong executive. The parties were weak, and were purposefully deprived of any real powers, with the presidential party getting its legitimacy from its identification with the leader. People strongly identify with United Russia and Putin because they achieve what Russians generally want: security and stability at home, and respect abroad. The fact that non-Russian regions give such a substantial amount of support to Putin creates the feeling that he is chosen not by ethnic Russians, but by Russians as citizens, strengthening the appearance of a common nation.

The last important finding of this thesis is that despite the fact that the Russian government controls the majority of the Russian media outlets, regional access to newspapers significantly damages the incumbents and benefits the communists. Newspapers do not necessarily represent a cleavage in the traditional sense, because the electorate probably is unaware of the effect newspapers have and does not mobilize around it as a policy issue. However, access to independent information as a characteristic of the regional electorate creates a very significant split between regions with more and less access to independent print media. In line with the theoretical expectations that access to regime-critical media significantly can damage the popularity of the incumbents, regions with higher daily print of newspapers support both Putin and United Russia less. These regions are more oppositionist in nature and give their preference to CPRF and perhaps even to Zyuganov. Access to independent media also significantly benefits the democratic opposition in Russia, as it was through the Internet that the non-systemic opposition of 2011-2012 organized the demonstrations. Access to independent media is highly correlated with the general level of modernization in a region and there appears to be a pattern between modernization and decreasing support for the incumbents. This interpretation is also strengthened by the significant presidential cleavage created by the variable life expectancy. The variable has a very significant negative effect on Putin and a positive effect

on Zyuganov, strengthening the interpretation of life expectancy as an indicator of modernization expected to damage the undemocratic incumbents and benefit the opposition.

Both the systemic and the non-systemic democratic oppositions performed significantly better in the most modernized cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg. Both the protestors of 2011-2012, and Yabloko's core supporters largely belonged to the middle class, with the clear majority having higher education and earnings well above average. Modernization decreases the ability of the Kremlin to manipulate the political scene, as patronage becomes redundant and electoral manipulation more detectable. However, the democratic opposition in today's Russia is practically absent.

What is interesting and somewhat surprising is that despite the fact that Putin gets over 50 percent of the vote shares in almost all of the Russian regions across all years, and survey's have identified the Putin-voter pretty much as a cross-section of the entire society, the unique design of this thesis found significant factors affecting both the presidential candidates and parties in opposing ways. The study of electoral cleavages using aggregated regional data is not a common practice in political science, and the method employed produces estimates that significantly contribute to the understanding of the Russian political system. The methodological approach accounts for the unique nature of the data, with a random effects model specified to control for endogeneity bias as well as to let the effect of each variable vary both within and between regions.

With regards to the generalization potential of the analysis, the findings reflect the entire population of cases under study and conclusion drawn about this specific context have high internal validity. However, given the unique Russian context, one should be careful in drawing any conclusions beyond the studied sample. The results of the analysis contribute to the research fields studying party systems and political cleavages, elections under authoritarian rule, electoral systems and the relationship between parties and presidents in a semi-presidential system. The findings can also be used in further analyses of Russia's political environment and perhaps of countries with similar historical developments, like Ukraine or Belarus.

Bibliography

- [Adam Przeworski](), [Michael Alvarez](), [José Antonio Cheibub]() and [Fernando Limongi]() (1996) "What Makes Democracies Endure?" *Journal of Democracy* 7:1, pp. 39-55. Accessed 13.06.15 from: https://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_democracy/v007/7.1przeworski.html

- Aiken Leona S. and Stephen G. West (1991) *Multiple Regression: Testing and Interpreting Interactions*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage

- Arapova, Galina (2012) "Media Freedom in the Russian regions? You must be joking…" *Open Democracy,* August 23rd. Accessed 9.18.15 from: https://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/galina-arapova/media-freedom-in-russian-regions-you-must-be-joking%e2%80%a6

- Arutunyan, Anna (2009) *The Media in Russia.* Maidenhead: Open University Press

- Bartels, Brandon L. (2008) "Beyond "Fixed versus Random Effects": A Framework for Improving Substantive and Statistical Analysis of Panel, Time-Series Cross Sectional and Multilevel Data" George Washington University. Accessed 24.01.15 from: http://home.gwu.edu/~bartels/cluster.pdf

- Bartels, M. Larry (2011) "Ideology and Retrospection in Electoral Responses to the Great Recession". *Department of Political Science, Vanderbilt University*. Accessed 01.04.15 from: https://www.google.no/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CMQFjAAahUKEwiftqDjp43JAhXJkSwKHexSAX4&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.princeton.edu%2F~bartels%2Fstimulus.pdf&usg=AFQjCNGeNmAoK6bh-w14bHOwm8JaHPwyng

- Bartkowska, Monika and Guido Tiemann (2015) "The Impact of Economic Perceptions on Voting Behavior in European Parliamentary Elections" *Journal of Common Market Studies* 53:2, pp. 201-217. Accessed 27.09.15 from: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jcms.12158/abstract

- Bashalkhanova, L. B., Bashalkhanov I. A. and V. N. Veselova (2012) "Dynamics of the Subsistence Minimum on Discomfort Territories of East Siberia" *Geography and Natural Resources.* 33:2, pp. 158-164. Accessed 2.03.15 from: http://www.google.no/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CB0QFjAAahUKEwiuiey-54rJAhWLiywKHTfXA4c&url=http%3A%2F%2Flink.springer.com%2Fcontent%2Fpdf%2F10.1134%252FS1875372812020096.pdf&usg=AFQjCNGlbAwM3VcBnz7d4p5GvvDgwiqNVQ&bvm=bv.107406026,d.bGg

- BBC Monitoring Former Soviet Union (2010) "Russian President Blames Weak Economy for Crime in North Caucasus", January 28th. Accessed 11.07.15 from: http://search.proquest.com/docview/460429281?rfr_id=info%3Axri%2Fsid%3Aprimo

- BBC News (2012) "Anti-Putin opposition elected in Russian online poll" October 23rd. Accessed 5.04.15 from: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-20037209

- BBC News (2014) "Profile: Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny", December 30th. Accessed 12.04.15 from: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-16057045

- Bell, Andrew and Kelvyn Jones (2014) "Explaining Fixed Effects: Random Effects Modeling of Time-Series Cross-Sectional and Panel Data" *Political Science Research and Methods* 3:1, pp. 133-153. Accessed 15.06.15 from: http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=9452105&fileId=S2049847014000077

- Berezin, Mabel and Juan Díez-Medrano (2008) "Distance Matters: Place, Political Legitimacy and Popular Support for European Integration" *Comparative European Politics* 6:1, pp. 1-32. Accessed 28.10.15 from: http://search.proquest.com/docview/222350475?OpenUrlRefId=info:xri/sid:primo&accountid=8579

- Bernstein, Serge (1993) "Gaullism" in *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World* edited by Joel Krieger, pp. 332-333. New York: Oxford Univirsity Press.

- Borisova Ekaterina I. and Natalia Zubarevich V. (2005) *Rossiya Regionov: V Kakom Social'nom Prostranstve My Zhivem?* (Region's Russia: What Kind of a Social Space do we Live in?) Moscow: Moscow Independent Institute of Social Politics. Accessed 10.10.15 from: https://istina.msu.ru/collections/5161680/

- Bornshier, Simon (2009) "*Cleavage Politics in Old and New Democracies". Living Reviews in Democracy,* 1:Online. University of Zurich. Accessed 10.05.15 from: http://www.zora.uzh.ch/26412/

- Brader, Ted A. and Joshua A. Tucker (2009) "What's Left Behind When the Party's Over: Survey Experiments on the Effects of Partisan Cues in Putin's Russia" *Politics & Policy* 37:4, pp. 843-868. Accessed 13.06.16 from: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1747-1346.2009.00201.x/abstract

- Brancati, Dawn (2008) "The origins and Strengths of Regional Parties" *British Journal of political science* 38:1, pp. 135-159 http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayFulltext?type=1&fid=1475344&jid=JPS&volumeId=38&issueId=01&aid=1475340&bodyId=&membershipNumber=&societyETOCSession=

- Cain, Bruce, John Ferejohn and Morris P. Fiorina (1987) *The Personal Vote: Constituency Service and Electoral Independence.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Cantillon, Estelle (2001) "Electoral Rules and the Emergence of New Issue Dimensions" *IDEAS Working Paper Series from RePEc.* Accessed 13.03.15 from: http://search.proquest.com/docview/1698226468?rfr_id=info%3Axri%2Fsid%3Aprimo

- Carothers, Thomas (2002) "The End of the Transition Paradigm" *Journal of Democracy* 13:1, pp. 5-21. Accessed 12.05.15 from: https://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_democracy/v013/13.1carothers.html

- Carroll, Susan (2015) "How to state your dissertation research questions and null hypotheses" *Dissertation Statistics.* Accessed 28.08.15 from: http://www.dissertation-statistics.com/research-questions-hypotheses.html

- Central Electoral Commission in Russia: http://www.cikrf.ru

- Chaisty, Paul (2012) "Members and Leaders in Russian Party Organizations" *East European Politics* 28:3, pp. 283-297. Accessed 29.08.15 from: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/21599165.2012.683114

- Chaisty, Paul and Stephen Whitefield (2012) "The Effects of the Global Financial Crisis on Russian Political Attitudes" *Post-Soviet Affairs* 28:2, pp. 187-208. Accessed 19.05.15 from: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.2747/1060-586X.28.2.187

- Clarck, Tom S. and Drew A. Linzer (2014) "Should I use Fixed or Random Effects?" *Political Science Research and Methods* 3:2, pp. 399-408. Accessed 15.06.15 from: http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=9693316&fileId=S2049847014000326

- Clark, Tom S. and Drew A. Linzer (2014) "Should I Use Fixed or Random Effects?" *Political Science Research and Methods* 3:2, pp. 399-408. Accessed 17.02.15 from: http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=9693316&fileId=S2049847014000326

- Clark, William A. (2005) "The Russian Election Cycle, 2003-2004" *Electoral Studies* 24:3, pp. 511-555. Accessed 12.07.15 from: http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0261379405000156

- Clark, William A. (2008) "The Presidential Transition in Russia, March 2008" *Electoral Studies* 28:2, pp. 342-345. Accessed 12.07.15 from: http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0261379408001297

- Clark, William A. (2013) "The 2012 Presidential Election in Russia: Putin Returns" *Electoral Studies* 32:2, pp. 370-387. Accessed 12.07.15 from: http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S026137941300005X

- Cole, Alistair (1993) "The Presidential Party and the Fifth Republic" *West European Politics* 16:2, pp. 49-66. London: Frank Cass

- Collier, David and Robert Adcock (1999) "Democracy and Dichotomies: A Pragmatic Approach to Choices about Concepts" *Annual Review of Political Science* Vol. 2 pp. 537-565 Accessed 26.07.15 from: http://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev.polisci.2.1.537

- Collier, David and Steven Levitsky (1997) "Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research" *World Politics* 49:3. pp. 430-451. Accessed 14.05.15 from: http://www.jstor.org/stable/25054009?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

- Colton Timothy J. (1998) "Determinants of the party vote" in *Growing Pains: Russian Democracy and the election of 1993* edited by Timothy J. Colton and Jerry F. Hough, pp. 75-114. Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press

- Colton, Timothy J. (2000) *Transitional Citizens: Voters and What Influences Them in the New Russia.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Colton, Timothy J. and Henry E. Hale (2005) "Context and Party System Development: Voting Behavior in Russian Parliamentary Elections in Comparative Perspective" *The National Council for Eurasian and East European Research.* Accessed 07.09.15 from: https://www.google.no/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja &uact=8&ved=0CCYQFjAAahUKEwiFup-evojJAhXin3IKHU7TCgk&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ucis.pitt.edu%2Fnceeer%2F2005_819-04_Colton.pdf&usg=AFQjCNFp4GtCsfmSUigMd2hXo6eVYmA_eQ&bvm=bv.106923889,d.bGQ

- Colton, Timothy J. and Henry E. Hale (2009) "The Putin Vote: Presidential Electorates in a Hybrid Regime" *Slavic Review* 68:3, pp. 473-503. Accessed 14.06.15 from: http://www.jstor.org/stable/25621652?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

- Colton, Timothy J. and Michael McFaul (2002) "Are Russians Undemocratic?" *Post-Soviet Affairs* 18:2, pp. 91-121. Accessed 12.02.15 from: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1060586X.2002.10641515

- Colton, Timothy J. and Michael McFaul (2003) *Popular Choice and Managed Democracy.* Washington, DC: Brooking Institution Press

- Crawford (1997) "Chapter 2: Secondary Sources Of Information" *Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations.* Accessed 2.04.15 from: http://www.fao.org/docrep/w3241e/w3241e03.htm

- Croissant, Aurel and Wolfgang Merkel (2000) "Formale und informale Institutionen in defekten Demokratien" *Politische Vierteljahresschrift* 41:1, pp.3-30. Accessed 26.02.15 from: http://link.springer.com.pva.uib.no/article/10.1007/s11615-000-0002-9

- Curran, Patrick J and Daniel J Bauer (2011) "The Disaggregation of Within-Person and Between-Person Effects in Longitudinal Models of Change" *Annual Reviews Pshychology* 62, pp. 583-619

- Dahl, Robert (1966) *Political oppositions in Western democracies.* New Haven: Yale University Press

- Data and Statistical Service (2015) "Panel Data" *Princeton University Library.* Accessed 10.09.15 from: http://dss.princeton.edu/online_help/stats_packages/stata/panel.htm

- de Vogel, Sasha (2013) "From Economic Crisis to Political Crisis. Changing Middle Class Political Attitudes in Moscow and St. Petersburg, 2008-2012" *Institute of Modern Russia,* November 19th. Accessed 21.08.15 from: http://imrussia.org/en/society/605-from-economic-crisis-to-political-crisis

- Deaton, Angus (2010). "Instruments, Randomization, and Learning about Development". *Journal of Economic Literature* 48:2, pp. 424-55. Accessed 24.06.15 from: https://www.aeaweb.org/articles.php?doi=10.1257/jel.48.2.424

- Dennis, Michael P. and Robert G. Moser (2009) "The Voting Behavior of Islamic Minorities in a Fledgling Democracy: The Case of Russia" APSA 2009 Toronto Meeting Paper. Accessed 19.05.15 from: http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1450282

- Dowd, Jennifer B. and Amar Hamoudi. (2015) "Life Expectancy and Education" *American Journal of Public Health* 105:1. Accessed 15.04.15 from: http://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/abs/10.2105/AJPH.2014.302320

- Durkheim, Émile (1897) *Le Suicide. Étude de sociologie.* Paris: Les Presses Universitaires de France

- Dyrnes, Steinar (2013) "Russisk pressefrihet nær bunnen" (Russian pressfreedom close to the bottom). *Aftenposten,* Ferbuary 18th.

- Enikolopov, Ruben, Maria Petrova and Ekaterina Zhuravskaya (2011) "Media and Political Persuasion: Evidence from Russia" *American Economic Review* 101:7, pp. 3253-3285. Accessed 11.08.15 from: https://www.aeaweb.org/articles.php?doi=10.1257/aer.101.7.3253

- Erikson, Robert and John Goldthorpe (1992) *The Constant Flux: A Study of Class Mobility in Industrial Societies.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

- Evans, Geoffrey and Stephen Whitefield (1999) "The Emergence of Class Politics and Class Voting in Post-communist Russia" in *The End of Class Politics? Class Voting in Comparative Context,* edited by Geoffrey Evans, pp. 254-280. Oxford: Oxford University Press

- Evans, Geoffrey and Stephen Whitefield (2006) "Explaining the Emergence and Persistence of Class Voting for Presidential Candidates in Post-Soviet Russia, 1993-2001" *Political Research Quarterly* 59:1, pp. 23-34. Accessed 29.05.15 from: http://www.jstor.org/stable/4148072?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

- Federal Statistical Service in Russia (ROSSTAT): http://www.gks.ru

- Fish, Steven M. (1995) "The Advent of Multipartism in Russia, 1993-1995", *Post-Soviet Affairs* 11:4 pp. 340-383

- Freedom House (2005-2015) "Russia". Accessed 13.03.15 from: https://freedomhouse.org/country/russia

- Freedom House (2013) "Russia. Freedom of the Press". Accessed 02.03.15 from: https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2012/russia

- Frost, Jim (2015) "The Danger of Overfitting Regression Models" *The Minitab Blog* September 3rd. Accessed 17.07.15 from: http://blog.minitab.com/blog/adventures-in-statistics/the-danger-of-overfitting-regression-models

- Gandhi, Jennifer and Ellen Lust-Okar (2009) "Elections Under Authoritarianism" *Annual Review of Political Science* 12:1, pp. 403-422. Accessed 10.03.15 from: http://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev.polisci.11.060106.095434

- Geddes, Barbara (2003) *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Desgisn in Comparative Politics.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press

- Gelman, Vladimir (2007) "The Transformation of Russia's Party System" *Russian Analytical Digest* 19/07. Accessed 24.05.15 from: http://www.google.no/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=web&cd=2&ved=0CCkQFjABahUKEwjQ5p389ojJAhUkc3IKHf4CDig&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.css.ethz.ch%2Fpublications%2Fpdfs%2FRAD-19-12-14.pdf&usg=AFQjCNGGlntZbboX0Ta5htPpJKvsPp4kpg

- Gelman, Vladimir (2008) "Party Politics in Russia: From Competition to Hierarchy" *Europe-Asia Studies* 60:6, pp. 913-930. Accessed 05.07.15 from: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09668130802161165

- Gerber, Alan S., Dean Karlan and Daniel Bergan (2009) "Does the Media Matter? A Field Experiment Measuring the Effect of Newspapers on Voting Behavior and Political Opinions" *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*. 1:2, pp. 35-52. Accessed 12.03.15 from: https://www.aeaweb.org/articles.php?doi=10.1257/app.1.2.35

- Gerring, John (2012) *Social Science Methodology. A Unified Framework.* 2nd Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

- Gibson, James L. and Raymond M. Duch (1993) "Emerging Democratic Values in Soviet Political Culture" in *Public Opinion and Regime Change: The New Politic of Post-Soviet Societies* by Arthur H. Miller, William M. Reisinger and Vicki L. Hesli. Boulder: Westview Press

- Golosov, Grigorii V. (2014) "Co-optation in the Process of Dominant Party System Building: the Case of Russia" *East European Politics* 30:2, pp.271-285. Accessed 6.06.15 from: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/21599165.2014.899211

- Golosov, Grigorii V. (2015) "The Idiosyncratic Dynamics of Party System Nationalization in Russia" *Post-Soviet Affairs* 31:5, pp. 397-419. Accessed 14.07.15 from: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1060586X.2014.926633

- Goodnow, Regina, Robert G. Moser and Tony Smith (2014) "Ethnicity and electoral manipulation in Russia" *Electoral Studies.* Vol. 36, pp. 15-27. Accessed 19.05.15 from: http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0261379414000638

- Greene, Kenneth F. (2007) *Why Dominant Parties Lose. Mexico's Democratization in Comparative Perspective.* New York: Cambridge University Press

- Gunther, Richard and Larry Diamond (2003) "Species of Political Parties: A New Typology" *Party Politics* 9:2, pp. 167-99. Accessed 18.05.15 from: http://ppq.sagepub.com/content/9/2/167

- Hale, Henry E. (2000) "Is Russian Nationalism on the Rise?" *PONARS Policy Memo* 110, Harvard University. Accessed 6.04.15 from: http://www.google.no/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=web&cd=2&ved=0C CYQFjABahUKEwi-- 8L3oPzIAhUBnnIKHWLvBBY&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.gwu.edu%2F~ieresgwu%2 Fassets%2Fdocs%2Fponars%2Fpm_0110.pdf&usg=AFQjCNGOPNecmSCsC- lamhJp79YZNd7Ahw&bvm=bv.106923889,d.bGQ

- Hale, Henry E. (2004) "Yabloko and the Challenge of Building a Liberal Party in Russia" *Europe-Asia Studies* 56:7, pp. 993-1020. Accessed 4.06.15 from: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1465342042000294338

- Hale, Henry E. (2005) "Why Not Parties? Electoral Markets, Party Substitutes, and Stalled Democratization in Russia" *Comparative Politics* 37:2, pp. 147-166. Accessed 4.06.15 from: http://www.jstor.org/stable/20072880?origin=crossref&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

- Hale, Henry E. (2006) *Why Not Parties in Russia? Democracy, Federalism, and the State.* New York: Cambridge University Press

- Hale, Henry E. (2011) "4 Myths of Russia's Party System" *The Moscow Times,* July 25th. Accessed 7.07.15 from: http://www.themoscowtimes.com/opinion/article/4-myths-of- russias-party-system/441017.html

- Hans Oversloot and Verheul, Ruben (2006) "Managing democracy: Political Parties and the State in Russia", *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 22:3, pp. 383- 405. Accessed 23.05.15 from: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13523270600855795

- Hanson, Stephen E. (1998) "Ideology, Uncertainty and the Rise of Anti-System Parties in Post-Communist Russia" in *Party Politics in Post-Communist Russia* edited by John Löwenhardt, pp. 98-127. London: Frank Cass

- Hausman, Jerry A. (1978) 'Specification tests in econometrics'. *Econometrica* 46:6 pp.1251-1271. Accessed 16.07.15 from http://www.jstor.org/stable/1913827?origin=crossref&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

- Hoechle, Daniel (2007) "Robust standard errors for panel regressions with cross-sectional dependence" *The Stata Journal* 7:3, pp. 281-312. Accessed 1.08.15 from: http://ageconsearch.umn.edu/bitstream/119278/2/sjart_st0128.pdf

- Hough Jerry F., Evelyn Davidheiser and Susan G. Lehman (1996) *The 1996 Russia Presidential Election.* Washington DC: The Brookings Institution.

- Human Rights Watch (2015) "Russia". Accessed 03.01.15 from: https://www.hrw.org/europe/central-asia/russia

- Huntington, P. Samuel (1968) *Political Order in Changing Societites.* Newhaven, Yale University Press.

- Huntington, P. Samuel (1991) *The Third Wave. Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century.* University of Oklahoma Press : Norman and London

- International Crisis Group (2012) "The North caucasus: The Challenges of Integration (II), Islam, the Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency. Europe Report No. 221. Accessed 6.04.15 from: http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/europe/caucasus/221-the-north-caucasus-the-challenges-of-integration-ii-islam-the-insurgency-and-counter-insurgency.pdf '

- Jones, Terrence E. (1972) "Ecological Inference and Electoral Analysis" *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 2:3, pp. 249-262. Accessed 16.03.15 from: http://www.jstor.org/stable/202287?origin=crossref&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

- Keesing's World News Archives (2011) "Discontent with Putin and United Russia", 57:50, pp. 727-28. Accessed 14.07.15 from: http://www.keesings.com/search?kssp_search_phrase=discontent+putin&kssp_sortby=Relevance&&kssp_time_start_value[m]=1&kssp_time_start_value[y]=1931&&kssp_time_stop_value[m]=5&kssp_time_stop_value[y]=2013&kssp_date_range_type=publication&x=0&y=0&kssp_a_id=50787n01rus&kssp_selected_tab=article&kssp_rspn=1&kssp_v_id=57

- Keesing's World News Archives (2012) "Presidential election campaign", 58:50, pp. 891-93. Accessed 12.07.15 from: http://www.keesings.com/search?kssp_search_phrase=presidential+russia&kssp_sortby=Newest_First&&kssp_time_start_value[m]=1&kssp_time_start_value[y]=1931&&kssp_time_stop_value[m]=5&kssp_time_stop_value[y]=2013&kssp_date_range_type=publication&x=26&y=6&kssp_a_id=50952n03rus&kssp_selected_tab=article&kssp_rspn=1&kssp_v_id=58

- King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane and Sidney Verba (1994) *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research.* Princeton: Princeton University Press

- Kitschelt, Herbert (1995) "Formation of Party Cleavages in Post-Communist Democracies" *Party Politics* 1:4, pp. 447-472. Accessed 21.04.15 from: http://ppq.sagepub.com/content/1/4/447

- Kitschelt, Herbert, Zdenka Mansfeldova, Radoslav Markowsi and Gábor Tóka (1999) *Post-Communist Party Systems. Competition, Representation, and Inter-Party Cooperation*. New York: Cambridge University Press

- Klobuclar, Thomas F. and Arthir H. Miller (2000) "The Development of Party Identification in Post-Soviet Societites". American Journal of Political Science, Vol. 44, No. 4 (Oct., 2000), pp. 667-686 http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2669274.pdf?acceptTC=true

- Kolstø, Pål (2004) "Nation-Building in Russia: A Value-Oriented Strategy" in *Nation Building and Common Values in Russia* edited by Pål Kolstø and Helge Blakkisrud, pp. 1-27. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield

- Korgunyuk, Yury (2014) "Cleavage Theory and Elections in Post-Soviet Russia" *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, 15:4, pp. 401-415. Accessed 10.10.15 from: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15705854.2014.881051

- Korgunyuk, Yury (2015) "Electoral Cleavage Map of Russia: Based on an Analysis of the 2011 State Duma Election and the Regional Elections of 2012–14" *European Politics and Society* 16:4 pp. 467-487. Accessed 13.05.15 from: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/23745118.2015.1055966

- KPRF (2007) "Oppoziciya? Eto KPRF! Itogi oprosa Levada-Centra" (Opposition? That is CPRF! The Resuls of a Levala poll). Accessed 13.06.15 from: http://kprf.ru/opponents/52020.html

- Kramer, E. Andrew (2012) "At Chechnya Polling Station, Votes for Putin Exceed the Rolls" *New York Times* March 5th. Accessed 25.06.15 from: http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/06/world/europe/fraudulent-votes-for-putin-abound-in-chechnya.html

- Krastev, Ivan and Stephen Holmes (2012) "An Autopsy of Managed Democracy" *Journal of Democracy,* 23:3, pp. 33-44. Accessed 29.01.15 from: https://muse-jhu-edu.pva.uib.no/journals/journal_of_democracy/v023/23.3.krastev.html

- Kuchinsky, George (2014) "Russia: Shifting Political Frontiers" *Comparative Strategy* 33:3, pp. 262-278. Accessed 25.05.15 from: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01495933.2014.926724

- Langørgen, Audun and Dag Rønningen (2004) "Local Government Preferences, Individual Needs, and the Allocation of Social Assistance" Discussion Papers No. 380, *Statistics Norway, Research Department.* Accessed 13.09.15 from: http://www.google.no/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CCIQFjAAahUKEwiD3IPsgInJAhVJvnIKHXkDD2s&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ssb.no%2Fpublikasjoner%2Fpdf%2Fdp380.pdf&usg=AFQjCNFf71ujlUPt4JLqhIdgWTt9Lc2m9g

- Laverty, Nicklaus (2015) "The "Party of Power" as a type" *East European Politics* 31:1, pp. 71-87. Accessed 14.07.15 from: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/21599165.2014.983088

- Layton, Matthew L. and Amy E. Smith (2015) "Incorporating Marginal Citizens and Voters: The Conditional Electoral Effects of Targeted Social Assistance in Latin America" *Comparative Political Studies* 48:7, pp. 854-881. Accessed 13.09.15 from: http://cps.sagepub.com/content/48/7/854

- Lehoucq, Fabrice (2003) "Electoral Fraud: Causes, Types and Consequences". *Annual Review* of Political Science Vol. 6 pp. 233-256. Accessed 5.04.15 from: http://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev.polisci.6.121901.085655

- Levada Center (2010a) "Kak vam kazhetsa, v kakoj mere seichas rossijskoe obshestvo kontrolliruet deistvie vlastei?" (To what degree do you think the Russian society controld the actions of the government?) Accessed 11.05.15 from: http://www.levada.ru/old/archive/gosudarstvo-i-obshchestvo/grazhdane-i-vlast/kak-vam-kazhetsya-v-kakoi-mere-seichas-rossiisko

- Levada Center (2010b) "Byvajut li takie situaciiv zhizni strany kogda narodu nuzhen sil'nyi i vlastnyi rukovoditel', "sil'naja ruka"?" (Are there situations in the life of the country where the people need a strong and powerful leader, a "stong hand"?) Accessed 11.05.15 from: http://www.levada.ru/old/archive/gosudarstvo-i-obshchestvo/grazhdane-i-vlast/byvayut-li-takie-situatsii-v-zhizni-strany-kogda

- Levada Center (2010c) "Smozhet ili ne smozhet bolshinstvo ludej v Rossii prozhit' bez postojannoj zaboty, opeki so storony gosudarstva?" (Will the majority of people in Russia be able to survive without the continuous care, protection from the government?) Accessed 11.05.15 from: http://www.levada.ru/old/archive/gosudarstvo-i-obshchestvo/grazhdane-i-vlast/smozhet-ili-ne-smozhet-bolshinstvo-lyudei-v-ross

- Levada Center (2010d) "Kak vy dumaete, udaetsa li posredstvom reguljarnyh vyborov pobudit' vlasti delat' to chto hotjat prostye ludi?" (What do you think, do regular elections manage to prompt the authorities to do what simple people want?) Accessed 11.05.15 from: http://www.levada.ru/old/archive/gosudarstvo-i-obshchestvo/grazhdane-i-vlast/kak-vy-dumaete-udaetsya-li-posredstvom-regulyarn

- Levada Center (2010e) "Mogut li takie ludi kak vy vliyat na prinyatie gosudarstvennyh reshenij v strane?" (Can people like you influence the decisions taken by the government in the country?) Accessed 11.05.15 from: http://www.levada.ru/old/archive/gosudarstvo-i-obshchestvo/grazhdane-i-vlast/mogut-li-takie-lyudi-kak-vy-vliyat-na-prinyatie-

- Levada Center (2010f) "Storonnikom kakoi iz sledujushih partii/dvizhenii vy sebja schitaete, kakuju iz etih partii vy byli by gotovy podderzhat na vyborah?" (Supporter of which of the following parties/movements do you consider yourself, which of these parties would you be willing to support during elections?) Accessed 11.05.15 from: http://www.levada.ru/old/archive/partii-i-obshchestvennye-organizatsii/storonnikom-kakoi-iz-sleduyushchikh-partiidvizhenii-vy

- Levada Center (2010g) "V kakom napravlenii razvivaetsa sechas politicheskaja zhizn Rossii?" (In what direction is the political life in Russia developing in right now?) Accessed 11.05.15 from: http://www.levada.ru/old/archive/gosudarstvo-i-obshchestvo/rossiya-i-demokratiya/v-kakom-napravlenii-razvivaetsya-seichas-pol

- Levada Center (2010h) "Kak vy dumaete, nuzhna li Rossii demokratija?" (What do you think, does Russia need democracy?) Accessed 11.05.15 from: http://www.levada.ru/old/archive/gosudarstvo-i-obshchestvo/rossiya-i-demokratiya/kak-vy-dumaete-nuzhna-li-rossii-demokratiya

- Levada Center (2010i) "Chto takoe po vashemu mneniju «demokratija»?" (What is democracy according to you?) Accessed 11.05.15 from: http://www.levada.ru/old/archive/gosudarstvo-i-obshchestvo/rossiya-i-demokratiya/chto-takoe-po-vashemu-mneniyu-demokratiya

- Levada Center (2012a) "Protestnaja aktivnost rossijan" (Russians' protest activity), December 13th Accessed 06.03.15 from: http://www.levada.ru/13-12-2012/protestnaya-aktivnost-rossiyan

- Levada Center (2012b) "Protestnaja aktivnost possijan, process po delu Bolotnoj ploshadi" (Russians' protest activity, concerning Bolotnaya Ploshad) Accessed 03.03.15 from: http://www.levada.ru/old/27-12-2012/protestnaya-aktivnost-rossiyan-protsess-po-delu-na-bolotnoi-ploshchadi

- Levitsky, Steven and Lucan A. Way (2010) *Competitive Authoritarianism. Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War.* New York: Cambridge University Press

- Linz, Juan (2000) *Totalitarian and authoritarian regimes*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner

- Lipset, Martin S. (1960) *Political Man.* London: Mercury Books

- Lipset, Seymour M. and Stein Rokkan (1967) *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives.* New York: The Free Press

- Mackenbach, Johan P. (2013) "Political Conditions and Life Expectancy in Europe, 1900-2008" *Social Science & Medicine.* Vol. 82, pp. 134-146. Accessed 13.09.15 from: http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0277953612008453

- Magaloni, Beatriz (2006) *Voting for Autocracy: Hegemonic Party Survival and its Demise in Mexico.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

- March, Luke (2009) "Managing Opposition in a Hybrid Regime: Just Russia and Parastatal Opposition" *Slavic Review* 68:3, pp. 504-527. Accessed 23.05.15 from: http://www.jstor.org/stable/25621653?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

- Mateju, Petr, Blanka Rehakova and Geoffrey Evans (1999) "The Politics of Interests and Class Realignment in the Czech Republic, 1992-1996" in *The End of Class Politics? Class Voting in Comparative Context,* edited by Geoffrey Evans, pp. 254-280. Oxford: Oxford University Press

- Mathews, John H. (2015) "Gennady Andreyevich Zyuganov. *Britannica Academic*. Accessed 3.05.2015 from http://academic.eb.com/EBchecked/topic/658723/Gennady-Andreyevich-Zyuganov

- McAllister, Ian and Stephen White (2008a) " 'It's the Economy, Comrade!' Parties and Voter in the 2007 Russian Duma Election" *Europe-Asia Studies* 60:6, pp. 931-957. Accessed 12.10.15 from: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09668130802180959

- McFaul, Michael and Nikolai Petrov (2004) "What the Elections Tell Us" *Journal of Democracy,* 15:3, pp. 20-30. Accessed 3.04.15 from: https://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_democracy/v015/15.3mcfaul.html

- Minaev, Sergey (2011) "Moscow continues to drive Russia's economic growth"*, Russia Beyond the Headlines* October 13th. Accessed 27.07.15 from: http://rbth.ru/articles/2011/10/13/moscow_continues_to_drive_russias_economic_growth_13571.html

- Minitab (2015a) "Comparison of directional hypotheses and nondirectional hypotheses". *Minitab Support 17.* Accessed 27.04.15 from: http://support.minitab.com/en-us/minitab/17/topic-library/basic-statistics-and-graphs/hypothesis-tests/basics/directional-and-nondirectional-hypotheses/

- Minitab (2015b) "How Skewness and kurtosis affect your distribution" *Minitab Support 17.* Accessed 27.04.15 from: http://support.minitab.com/en-us/minitab/17/topic-library/basic-statistics-and-graphs/summary-statistics/how-skewness-and-kurtosis-affect-your-distribution/

- Mjøset, Lars (2015) "Stein Rokkan's methodology of macro-historical comparison" *Comparative Sociology* 14:4, pp. 508-547. Accessed 13.03.15 from: http://booksandjournals.brillonline.com/content/journals/10.1163/15691330-12341356

- Molinar, Horcasitas J. (1991) *El Tiempo de la Legitimidad. Elecciones, Autoritarismo y Democracia en México* (The time of Legitimacy: elections, authoritarianism and democracy in Mexico). Mexico: Cal y Arena

- Moser, Robert G. (1998) "The Electoral Effects of Presidentialism in Post-Soviet Russia" in *Party Politics in Post-Communist Russia* edited by John Löwenhardt, pp. 54-75. London: Frank Cass

- Mosley, Paul and Altay Mussurov (2009) "Poverty and Economic Growth in Russia's Regions" *Sheffield Economic Research Paper Series.* University of Sheffield. Accessed 24.10.15 from: http://www.google.no/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=web&cd=2&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CCAQFjABahUKEwjpvOWQoZzJAhXFBiwKHfk6A_o&url=http%3A%2F%2Feprints.whiterose.ac.uk%2F10002%2F1%2FSERPS2009006.pdf&usg=AFQjCNGwq5KDQF0mL-yZ_CC8Xe5u6ZAkjA&sig2=xQKc3ZvwkRunOtLPtg4H3A

- Mundlak, Yair (1978) "On the Pooling of Time Series and Cross Section Data" *Econometria* 46:1, pp. 69-85. Accessed 15.06.15 from: http://www.jstor.org/stable/1913646?origin=crossref&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

- NASA (1996) "Manufacturing Industry" Sustainable Development Indicator Group, Working Draft Framework Version 2, June 4th. Accessed 14.07.15 from: http://www.hq.nasa.gov/iwgsdi/Manufacturing.html

- Nichol, Jim (2007) "Russia's December 2007 Legislative Elections: Outcome and Implications" *Congressional Research Service,* December 10th. Accessed 08.07.15 from: https://www.google.no/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CCcQFjAAahUKEwiot-6m-ojJAhXns3IKHSUsDhA&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.fas.org%2Fsgp%2Fcrs%2Frow%2FRS22770.pdf&usg=AFQjCNF-ohdhRpAyoHIgnGwdHAiiHcTNUw

- Nureev, Rustem M. and Sergei G. Shulgin (2013) "Raspredilenie Dohodov Naseleniya I Elektoral'noe Povedenie v Regionah Rossii (po Itogam Prezidentskih Vyborov 2012g.)" (The Distribution of Incomes in the Population and Electoral Behavior in the Regions of Russia (through the results of the 2012 presidential election)). *Journal of New Economic Association* 4:20, pp. 84-108. Accessed 13.08.15 from: http://www.google.no/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CBwQFjAAahUKEwjxm4TO3YrJAhWM2SwKHS8zDd0&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.econorus.org%2Frepec%2Fjournl%2F2013-20-84-108r.pdf&usg=AFQjCNEmhvU3b5__XBAwy-OvitYgbl8AqQ

- O'Donnell, Guillermo (1994) "Delegative Democracy", *Journal of Democracy* 5:1, pp. 55-69. Accessed 28.04.14 from: https://muse-jhu-edu.pva.uib.no/journals/journal_of_democracy/v005/5.1odonnell.pdf

- Oates, Sarah (1998) "Party Platforms: Towards a Definition of the Russian Political Spectrum" in *Party Politics in Post-Communist Russia* edited by John Löwenhardt, pp. 76-97. London: Frank Cass

- OECD (2013) "Russia: Progress made in improving the quality of official statistics but challenges remain" *Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.* Accessed 25.05.15 from: http://www.oecd.org/russia/russia-progress-made-in-improving-the-quality-of-official-statistics-but-challenges-remain.htm

- Osborne, Jason W. and Amy Overbay (2004) "The power of outliers (and why researchers should always check for them" *Practical Assesment, Research and Evaluation* 9:6. Accessed 25.09.15 from: http://pareonline.net/getvn.asp?v=9&n=6

- Osborne, Jason W. and Elaine Waters (2002) "Four Assumptions Of Multiple Regression That Researchers Should Always Test" Practical Assesment, Research and Evaluation 8:2. Accessed 15.07.15 from: http://pareonline.net/getvn.asp?n=2&v=8

- OSCE (2012) "International Election Observation. Russia Federation, Presidential Election – 4 March 2012". Accessed 13.03.15 from: http://www.osce.org/odihr/88667?download=true

- Østerud, Øyvind, Kjell Goldmann and Mogens N. Pedersen (1997) *Statsvitenskapelig leksikon*. Universitetsforlaget, Oslo.

- Oxford Dictionaries (2015) "Demographic". Accessed 04.06.15 from: http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/demographic

- PACE (2007) "Observation of the parliamentary elections in the Russian Federation" *Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe*, March 5th. Accessed 5.05.15 from: http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/X2H-Xref-ViewHTML.asp?FileID=11810&lang=en

- PACE (2012) "Russia's presidential election marked by unequal campaign conditions, active citizens' engagement, international observers say" *Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe*, March 5th. Accessed 5.05.15 from: http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/News/News-View-EN.asp?newsid=3849&lang=2

- Perepechko, Alexander S., Craig ZumBrunnen and Vladimir A. Kolossov (2010) "Organization and institutionalization of Russia's political parties in 1905-1917 and 1993-2007: Similarities and differences from two occidentalist periods". *Party Politics* 17:5, pp. 581-609. Accessed 10.10.15 from: http://ppq.sagepub.com/content/17/5/581

- Przeworski, Adam, Michael Alvarez, José Antonio Cheibub and Fernando Limongi (1996) "What Makes Democracies Endure?", *Journal of Democracy* 7:1, 39-55. Accessed 27.10.15 from: https://muse-jhu-edu.pva.uib.no/journals/journal_of_democracy/v007/7.1przeworski.html

- Putin, Vladimir (1999) "Rossiya na Rubezhe tysyachiletij" (Russia at the turn of the Millenium), December 30th. Accessed 12.09.15 from: http://www.ng.ru/politics/1999-12-30/4_millenium.html

- Remington, Thomas F. (2011) "The Russian Middle Class as Policy Objective" *Post-Soviet Affairs* 27:2, pp. 97-120. Accessed 17.08.15 from: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.2747/1060-586X.27.2.97

- Remington, Thomas F. (2012) *Politics in Russia.* Boston: Pearson/Longman

- Reuter, Ora John and Rostislav Turovsky (2014) "Dominant Party Rule and Legislative Leadership in Authoritarian Regimes" *Party Politics* 20:5, pp.663-674. Accessed 18.09.15 from: http://ppq.sagepub.com/content/20/5/663

- Ria Novosti (2012) "Bezrabotica v regionah RF – ot 1 % v Moskve do 49 % v Ingushetii" (Unemployment in the regions of RF – from 1 % in Moscow to 49 % in Ingushetia), March 23rd. Accessed 17.08.15 from: http://ria.ru/research_rating/20120322/602723913.html

- Ria Novosti (2012b) "Russia's Poverty Rate Rises 1% in 2011 to 18 Mln People", April 12th. Accessed 21.05.15 from: http://en.rian.ru/russia/20120412/172778020.html

- Ria Novosti (2012c) "Bezrabotica v regionah RF – ot 1 % v Moskve do 49 % v Ingushetii" (Unemployment in the regions of RF – from 1 % in Moscow to 49 % in Ingushetia), March 22nd. Accessed 19.08.15 from: http://ria.ru/research_rating/20120322/602723913.html

- Ria Rating (2013) "Raiting subjektov RF po chislu internet-polzovatelei" (Rating of the RF subjects by number of internet users), January 18th. Accessed 17.09.15 from: http://riarating.ru/infografika/20130118/610533923.html

- Roberts, Sean P. (2012a) *Putin's United Russia Party.* London: Routledge

- Roberts, Sean P. (2012b) "United Russia and the Dominant-Party Framework: Understanding the Russian Party of Power in Comparative Perspective" *East European Politics* 28:3, pp. 225-240. Accessed 2.04.15 from: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/21599165.2012.684754

- Robinson, Neil (1998) "Classifying Russia's Party System: The Problem of 'Relevance' in a Time of Uncertainty" in *Party Politics in Post-Communist Russia* edited by John Löwenhardt, pp. 159-177. London: Frank Cass

- Robinson, Neil (2013) "Russia's Response to Crisis: The Paradox of Success" *Europe-Asia Studies* 65:3, pp. 450-472. Accessed 11.06.15 from: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09668136.2013.779462

- Robinson, W. S. (1950) "Ecological correlations and the behavior of individuals" *American Sociological Review,* 15:3, pp. 351-357. Accessed 19.09.15 from: http://www.jstor.org/stable/2087176?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

- Rose, Richard and Evgeny Tikhomirov (1996) "Russia's Forced-Choice Presidential Election", *Post-Soviet Affairs* 12:4 pp. 351-379. Accessed 26.06.15 from: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1060586X.1996.10641429#preview

- Rose, Richard and Neil Munro (2002) *Elections Without Order. Russia's Challenge to Vladimir Putin.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

- Rose, Richard and William Mishler (2010) "The Impact of Macro-Economic Shock on Russia", *Post-Soviet Affairs,* 26:1, pp. 38-57. Accessed 24.04.15 from: http://www.tandfonline.com.pva.uib.no/doi/abs/10.2747/1060-586X.26.1.38#.Vknv6mSrQUs

- Rose, Richard, Evgenii Tikhomirov and William Mishler (1997) "Understanding Multi-Party Choice: The 1995 Duma election": *Europe-Asia Studies* 49:5, pp. 799-823. Accessed 8.05.15 from: http://www.jstor.org.pva.uib.no/stable/153486?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

- Rose, Richard, William Mishler and Neil Munro (2011) *Popular Support for an Undemocratic Regime: The Changing Views of Russians.* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

- Russia Votes (2003) "Social Structure and Voting: 2003" Centre for the Study of Public Policy. University of Strathclyde. Accessed 17.02.15 from: http://www.russiavotes.org/duma/duma_vote_2003_social.php

- Russia Votes (2015) "Duma Voting Trends" *Centre for the Study of Public Policy.* University of Strahclyde. Accessed 17.02.15 from: http://www.russiavotes.org/duma/duma_vote_trends.php

- Ryabov, Andrei (2015) "Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF)" *Britannica Academic*. Accessed 03.09.15 from: http://academic.eb.com/EBchecked/topic/1235250/Communist-Party-of-the-Russian-Federation

- Sakwa, Richard (1998) "Left or Right? The CPRF and the Problem of Democratic Consolidation in Russia" in *Party Politics in Post-Communist Russia* edited by John Löwenhardt, pp. 128-158. London: Frank Cass

- Sakwa, Richard (2008a) *Putin. Russia's Choice.* London: Routledge

- Sakwa, Richard (2008b) *Russian Politics and Society.* 4th ed. London: Routledge

- Sartori, Giovanni (1969) "From the Sociology of Politics to Political Sociology" in *Politics and the Social Sciences* edited by Seymour M. Lipset, pp. 65-100. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Sartori, Giovanni (1976) *Parties and party systems: a framework for analysis.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

- Schedler, Andreas (2002) "The menu of manipulation" *Journal of Democracy* 13:2, pp. 36-50. Accessed 26.03.15 from: https://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_democracy/v013/13.2schedler.html

- Schedler, Andreas (2006) "Electoral Authoritarianism: The Dynamics of Unfree Competition" *Choice* 44:4. Accessed 13.03.15 from: http://search.proquest.com.pva.uib.no/docview/225771396/fulltextPDF?accountid=8579

- Schedler, Andreas (2013) *The politics of Uncertainty: Sustaining and Subverting Electoral Authoritarianism.* Oxford: Oxford University Press

- Schmidheiny, Kurt (2014) "Panel Data: Fixed and Random Effects" *Short Guides to Microeconometrics*, Universität Basel. Accesses 15.10.15 from: http://www.google.no/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CCcQFjAAahUKEwj_mrKTwojJAhUli3IKHX6wCLo&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.schmidheiny.name%2Fteaching%2Fpanel2up.pdf&usg=AFQjCNHmqv1pPnNYdsyKqOz-lVSoVEifKQ&bvm=bv.106923889,d.bGQ

- Semetko, A. Holli og Natalya Krasnoboka (2003) "The Political Role of the Internet in societies in Transition: Russia and Ukraine Compared" *Sage Journals* 9:1, pp. 77-104. Accessed 18.10.15 from: http://ppq.sagepub.com.pva.uib.no/content/9/1/77.full.pdf+html

- Shafrin, Jason (2011) "What is the difference between GDP, GNP, and National Income?", *Healthcare economist* March 23rd. Accessed 12.04.14 from: http://healthcare-economist.com/2011/03/23/what-is-the-difference-between-gdp-gnp-and-national-income/

- Shevtsova, Lilia (2012) "Implosion, Atrophy, or Revolution?" *Journal of Democracy* 23:3, pp. 19-31. Accessed 27.07.15 from: https://muse-jhu-edu.pva.uib.no/journals/journal_of_democracy/v023/23.3.shevtsova.html

- Shlapentokh, Vladimir (2004) "Moscow's Values: Masses and Elite" in *Nation Building and Common Values in Russia* edited by Pål Kolstø and Helge Blakkisrud, pp. 217-238. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield

- Simoniyan, R. Kh. (2009) «Sredniy klass: Social'nyi mirazh ili realnost? (The middle class: social mirage or reality?» *Sociologicheskie Issledovanija* Vol. 1, pp. 55-61. Accessed 17.08.15 from: http://demoscope.ru/weekly/2009/0381/analit06.php

- Simpser, Alberto (2013) *Why Governments and Parties Manipulate Elections: Theory, Practice, and Implications.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

- Sizov, Ilya (2010) "Grazhdane i Vlast' v Sovremennoj Rossii. Cennostnyj Aspekt Politicheskogo Uchastija" (Citizens and power in modern Russia. Value aspects of political participation). *Svobodnaya Mysl'* No. 6. Accessed 19.04.15 from: http://club.bibliopskov.ru/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=211&Itemid=96

- Skog, Ole-Jørgen (2004) *Å Forklare Sosiale Fenomener.* 2. utgave. Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag AS

- Skrondal, Anders and Sophia Rabe-Hesketh (2004) *Generalized latent variable modeling: multilevel, longitudinal, and structural equation models.* Boca Raton: Chapman & Hall/CRC

- Snijders, Tom A.B. and Roe J. Bosker (2012) *Multilevel Analysis:an Introduction to Basic and Advanced Multilevel Modeling,* London: Sage

- Stata (2015) "Fixed-, between-, and random-effects and population-averaged linear models" *Stata Handbook.* Accessed 13.04.15 from: http://www.google.no/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CBwQFjAAahUKEwjr4K-JupzJAhUHiiwKHRnwDbE&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.stata.com%2Fmanuals13%2Fxtxtreg.pdf&usg=AFQjCNEnIjADE10okBTf-nwrF-OoskwXlQ&sig2=9tAsPki_PuakM3VWhyMZWg

- Statistics Solutions (2015a) "Multicollinearity". Accessed 14.09.15 from: https://www.statisticssolutions.com/multicollinearity/

- Statistics Solutions (2015b) "Assumptions of Linear Regression". Accessed 14.09.15 from: http://www.statisticssolutions.com/assumptions-of-linear-regression/

- Stoll, M. Heather (2004) *Social Cleavages, Political Institutions and Party Systems: Putting Preferences Back Into The Fundamental Equation Of Politics.* A dissertation submitted to the department of Political Science and the Committee on Graduate Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Santa Barbara: University of California. Accessed 11.11.2015 from: http://www.google.no/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CCQQFjAAahUKEwjJgN-xpYjJAhXK_XIKHcprDYQ&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.polsci.ucsb.edu%2Ffaculty%2Fhstoll%2Fresearch%2Fthesis.pdf&usg=AFQjCNH2HqDKy7PYJqeF1ZJgZ0EAtQtMYQ&bvm=bv.106923889,d.bGQ

- Torres-Reyna, Oscar (2007) "Panel Data Analysis. Fixed and Random Effects Using Stata". Lecture, Princeton University. Accessed 15.06.15 from: http://www.princeton.edu/~otorres/Panel101.pdf

- Turovsky, Rostislav (2014) "Opposition Parties in Hybrid Regimes: Between Repression and Co-optation: The Case of Russia's Regions" *Perspectives on European Politics and Society* 15:1, pp. 68-87. Accessed 11.04.15 from: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15705854.2013.828957

- Tyldum, Guri and Pål Kolstø (2004) "Value Consensus and Social Cohesion in Russia" in *Nation Building and Common Values in Russia* edited by Pål Kolstø and Helge Blakkisrud, pp. 29-57. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield

- Van de Pol, Martijn and Jonathan Wright (2009) "A simple method for distinguishing within- versus between-subject effects using mixed models" *Animal Behaviour* 77:3, pp. 753-758. Accessed 14.08.15 from: http://www.sciencedirect.com.pva.uib.no/science/article/pii/S0003347208005423

- Variable creation: *Distance From To* "Distance between cities. Places on a map." Accessed 02.03.15 from: http://www.distancefromto.net/

- Villalón, (1994) "Democratizing a (Quasy) Democraccy: The Senegalise Election of 1993" *African Affairs* 93:371, pp. 163-193. Accessed 24.09.15 from: http://www.jstor.org.pva.uib.no/stable/723839?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

- Volkov, Denis (2012) "The Protesters and the Public" *Journal of Democracy,* 23:3, pp. 55-62. Accessed 16.07.15 from: https://muse-jhu-edu.pva.uib.no/journals/journal_of_democracy/v023/23.3.volkov.html

- Volkov, Denis (2014) "Putin's Ratings: Anomaly or Trend?" *Institute of Modern Russia,* December 23rd. Accesed 5.06.15 from: http://imrussia.org/en/analysis/nation/2135-putins-ratings-anomaly-or-trend

- Waldinger, Fabian (2014) "Lecture 2: Panel Data". University of Warwick. Accessed 23.09.15 from: http://www.google.no/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CBwQFjAAahUKEwia4sXjm_7HAhXG_ywKHVq8ALw&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww2.warwick.ac.uk%2Ffac%2Fsoc%2Feconomics%2Fstaff%2Ffwaldinger%2Fteaching%2Fec9a8%2Fslides%2Flecture_2_-_panel_data.pdf&usg=AFQjCNHIstSGhd6yVypE6fTIYIWB-5P4Tg&sig2=SUg0yszzkaLhSNi6S_l_7Q

- Waterhouse, David (1983) "The Estimation of Voting Behavior From Aggregated Data: a Test" *Journal of Social History* 16:3, pp. 35-53. Accessed 16.03.15 from: http://www.jstor.org/stable/3786929?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

- Weber, Max (1947) *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization.* New York: The Free Press

- Wergen, Stephen K. and Andrew Konitzer (2006) "The 2003 Russian Duma Election and the Decline in Rural Support for the Communist Party" *Electoral Studies* 25:4, pp. 677-695. Accessed 12.07.15 from: http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0261379405000934

- White, David (2006) *The Democratic Party Yabloko. Opposition in a Managed Democracy.* Aldershot, UK: Ashgate

- White, Gregory L. (2012) "Putin Wins Disputed Victory; Amid Middle-Class Revolt, Kremlin Boss Reclaims Russian Presidency" *Wall Street Journal (Online),* March 5th. Accessed 12.06.16 from: http://search.proquest.com/docview/926083412?rfr_id=info%3Axri%2Fsid%3Aprimo

- White, Stephen (2009) "The Duma Election in Russia, December 2007" *Electoral Studies* 28:1, pp. 171-173. Accessed 12.07.15 from: http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0261379408000966

- White, Stephen and Ian McAllister (2000) "Orthodoxy in Political Behavior In Postcommunist Russia" *Review of Religious Research* 41:3, pp. 359-372. Accessed 19.05.15 from: http://www.jstor.org/stable/3512035?origin=crossref&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

- White, Stephen and Ian McAllister (2008b) "The Putin Phenomenon" *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 24:4, pp. 604-628. Accessed 9.07.15 from: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13523270802510610

- White, Stephen, Ian McAllister and Yeongmi Yun (2002) "Electoral Behavior in the Russian Far East, 1995-2000: Contextual and Compositional Effects" *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 43:2, pp. 143-159. Accessed 19.05.15 from: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10889388.2002.10641197

- White, Stephen, Richard Rose and Ian McAllister (1997) *How Russia Votes.* Chatnam: Chatnam House Publishers.

- Whitefield, Stephen (2001) "Partisan and Party Divisions in Post-Communist Russia". *Contemporary Russian Politics,* Archie Brown (ed.), 235-43. New York, Oxford University Press.

- Whitefield, Stephen (2005) "Putin's Popularity and its Implications for Democracy in Russia" in Alex Pravda (ed.), *Leading Russia: Putin in Perspective,* Oxford, Oxford University Press.

- Whitmore, Sarah (2013) "Shou Prodolzhaetsa: Vybory, "Edinaya Rossiya" i rezhim Vladimira Putina" (Show Goes On: Elections, "United Russia" and Vladimir Putin's regime). Published in *Neprikosnovennyi Zapas* 1:87. Accessed 12.03.15 from: http://magazines.russ.ru/nz/2013/1/u4-pr.html

- Wilhelmsen, Julie (2013) "Putin fra vondt mot verre" (Putin from bad to worse) *Morgenbladet,* September 5th.
- Wilson, A. (2005) *Virtual Politics: Faking Democracy in the post-Soviet World.* New Haven, Yale University Press.

- Wilson, Jonathan (2010). *Essentials of Business Research: A Guide to Doing Your Research Project*. New Delhi: SAGE Publications.

- Wooldridge, M. Jeffrey (2013) *Introductory Econometrics: A Modern Approach.* 5th edition. Ohio: South-Western Cengage Learning
- Zaostrovtsev, Andrei (2013): "Russia's pension empasse – is there a way out?" *Open Democracy,* January 11th . Accessed 11.07.15 from: http://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/andrei-zaostrovtsev/russia%E2%80%99s-pension-impasse-%E2%80%93-is-there-way-out

- Zielinski, Jakub (2002) "Translating Social Cleavages into Party Systems. The Significance of New Democracies" *World Politics* 54, pp. 184-211. Accessed 23.07.15 from: http://www.jstor.org/stable/25054182?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

Appendix

Appendix A: Map of the Russian Regions
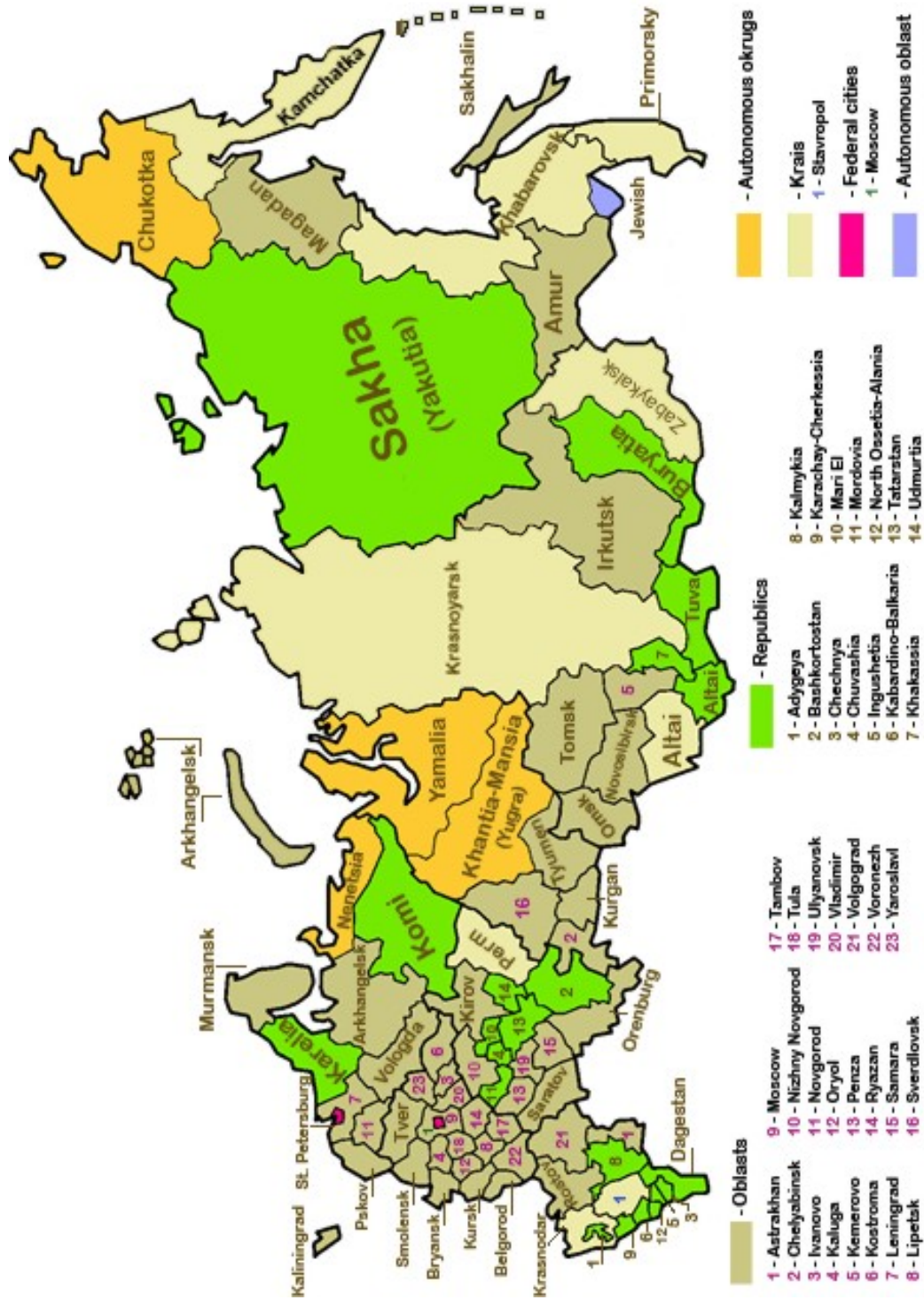
Appendix B: Codebook of the initial dataset

Variable	Description	Mean	Min	Max	No. of obs.
Economic variables					
1. Gross regional product per capita	General indicator of economic productivity in the region measured in rubles	160,090.8 rub.	10,332.4 rub.	1,203,269 rub.	239
2. Income	Average monthly income measured in rubles (in regression/1000).	11,667.5 rub.	1,438 rub.	54,632 rub.	247
3. Unemployment	Percentage of unemployed of the total regional population.	8.9%	0.8%	70.9%	249
4. Incomes below subsistence minimum	Percentage of the total regional population with income below subsistence level.	20.4%	5.7%	79.9%	246
5. Agricultural production	The total sum of crop and livestock production of all agricultural producers, including individual farm sectors, in millions of rubles.	25,350.7 rub.	0 rub.	239,235 rub.	248
6. Social Assistance	Percentage of the total social benefits that goes to social assistance.	23.2%	5.1%	51.4%	247
7. Subsistence minimum	The regional subsistence minimum set by the regional executive bodies every quarter[30]	4318 rub.	1535 rub.	12584 rub.	248
Demographic variables					
8. Urbanity	Percentage of the total regional population that live in urban areas.	69.4%	26.3%	100%	249
9. Ethnic Russian	Percentage of the total regional population that are ethnic Russian.	74.3%	0.8%	96.6%	249
10. Pensioners	Percentage of pensioners of the total regional population.	27.4%	11.8%	36.6%	249
11. Working population	Percentage of the total regional population that are of working age (16-59 for men, 16-54 for women).	62.2%	57.2%	72.2%	249

---

[30] Subsistence minimum includes a minimum set of food, nonfood goods and services necessary for the preservation of human health and his or her life.
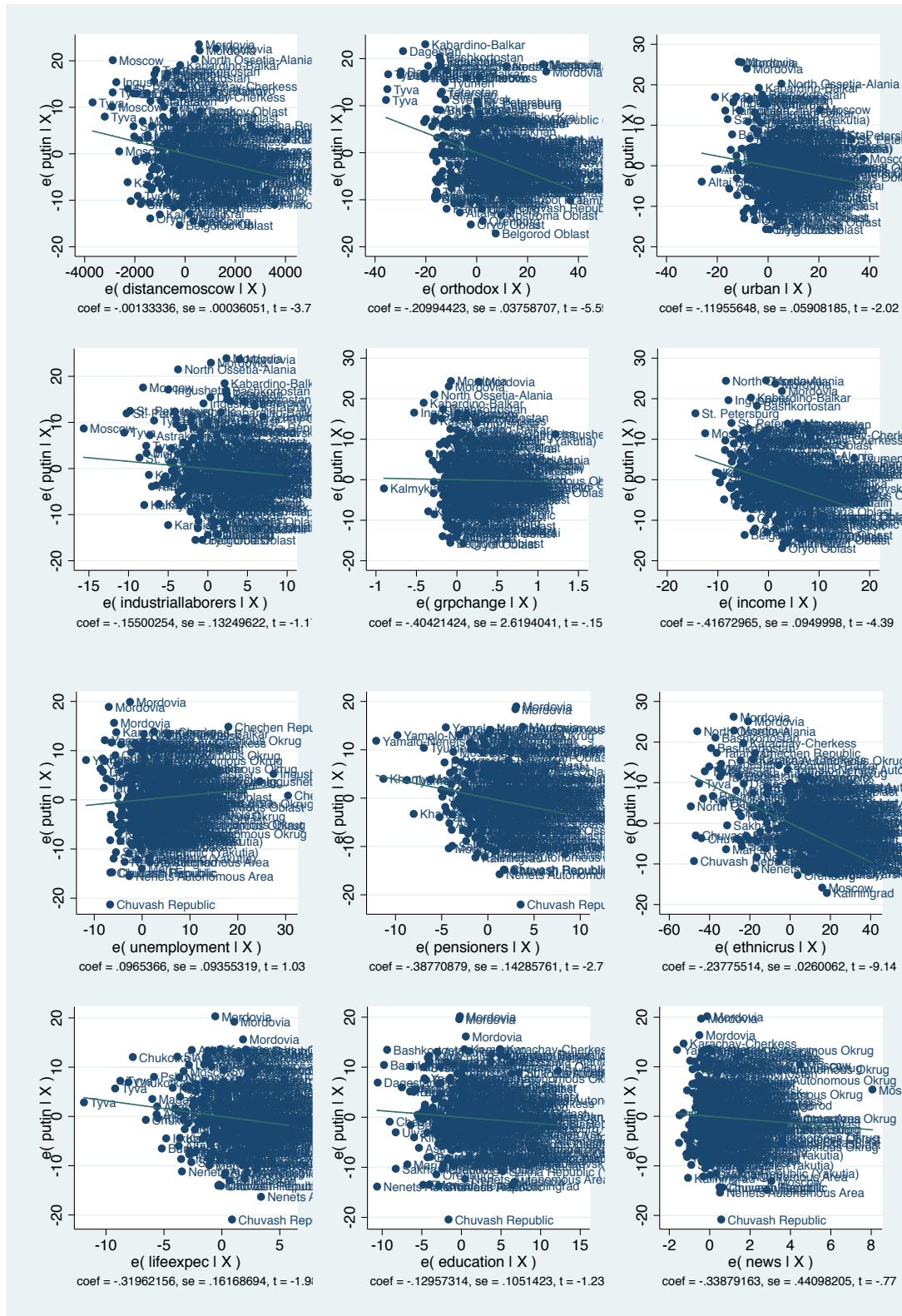
12. Migration rate	The difference between the number of arrivals to and departures from the region, per 10.000 people.	-6.7	-480	190	249
13. Life expectancy	Life expectancy at birth, in years.	66.7	54.3	79	249
14. Infant mortality rate	Deaths of children under one year of age, per 1000 born alive.	10.3	3.5	29.3	249
Cultural variables					
15. Published newspapers	Daily circulation of published newspapers (copies), per 1000 people.	864.8	19	10867	247
16. Religion – Orthodox	Percentage of the total regional population that identify with the Orthodox Church.	38.8%	1%	78%	240
17. Religion - Islam	Percentage of the total regional population that identify with Islam.	4.2%	0%	49%	237
18. Higher education	Percentage of the regional working population with higher education.	24.2%	12.4%	47.6%	248
19. Higher education among the unemployed	Percentage of the regional unemployed population with higher education.	12.3%	2.1%	46.3%	248
20. Peasantry	Percentage of the regional working population employed in agriculture.	12.3%	0.1%	31.9%	248
21. Industrial laborers	Percentage of the regional working population employed in industry	18.6%	3.7%	35.7%	248
Other variables					
22. Crime	Registered crime (theft, robbery, banditry) per 100,000 people.	1987.3	330	4464	249
23. Population per doctor	Total regional population divided by the number of physicians employed in the medical organizations.	222.3	114.7	439.2	248
24. Density of public roads	Kilometers of hard surface roads per 1000km. of territory (Moscow and St. Petersburg missing).	133 km.	0.8 km.	672 km.	243
25. Distance to Moscow	Measured in kilometers.	1753.8 km.	0 km.	6426 km.	249

Appendix C – Heteroscedasticity: plot of the resideuals versus the predicted values
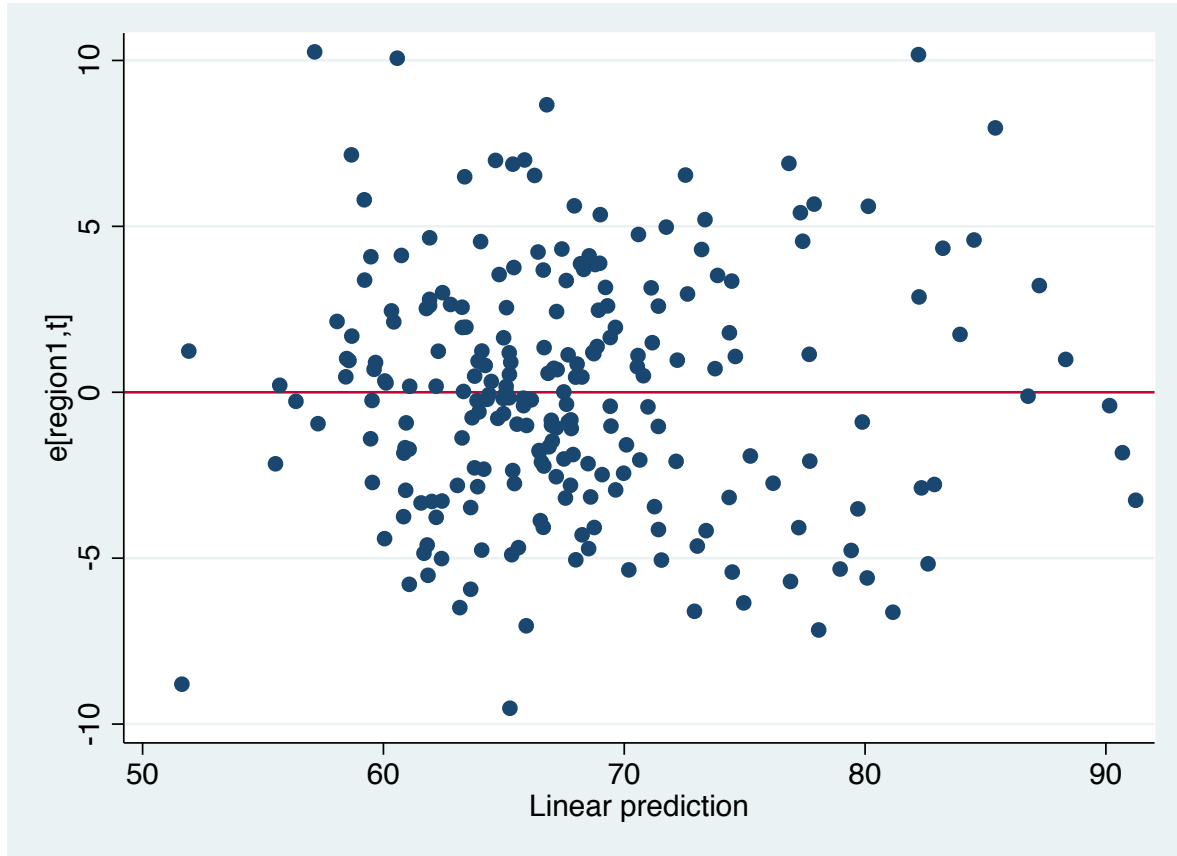
Fitted to panel data: Xtreg dv ids, re robust
predict double fitted, xb
predict double residual_e, e
scatter residual_e fit , yline(0)

Appendix D: Outliers[31]