

***ECONOMIC VOTING IN RUSSIA'S REGIONS: ARE GOVERNORS ACCOUNTABLE  
FOR REGIONAL PERFORMANCE?***

by

Andrew Konitzer-Smirnov

BA, Marquette University, 1995

MA, University of Pittsburgh, 1997

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FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

This dissertation was presented

by

Andrew Konitzer-Smirnov

It was defended on

June 10, 2002

and approved by

Dr. David Barker

Dr. Daniel Berkowitz

Dr. Ronald Linden

Dr. Jonathan Harris  
Dissertation Director

***ECONOMIC VOTING IN RUSSIA'S REGIONS: ARE GOVERNORS ACCOUNTABLE  
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This project examines the role of economic voting in Russian regional executive elections. Drawing upon the traditional economic voting literature and recent works dealing with electoral accountability, the author derives a set of hypotheses concerning the type of voting behavior necessary to hold regional executives accountable for economic performance outcomes and the patterns of election success expected across regional election cycles under conditions of perfect electoral accountability. These hypotheses are then tested at the individual level through analyses of pre-election surveys drawn from the Samara and Ul'yankovsk oblasts' 2000 elections and at the aggregate level through analyses of the entire population of oblast and krai elections that occurred during the 1996-1997 and 2000-2001 election cycles.

In marked contrast to the popular discourse surrounding Russia's regional executive elections, results of the survey and aggregate-level analyses suggest the evolution of the basic behavioral, institutional, and procedural requisites of regional executive accountability. Survey respondents demonstrated rather sophisticated calculi of incumbent support that focused upon the perceived conditions of their regions' economies relative to those of other regions. Furthermore, despite a number of highly publicized election scandals occurring during the 2000-2001 election cycle, cross sectional aggregate level analyses of these elections indicate a pattern of incumbent election success that varied with changes in the living standards of regional pensioners and wage-earners.

This study carries a number of important implications for both academic and policy-making circles. From a more academic perspective, it applies the traditional economic voting literature to a new set of election cases, provides the first survey-based analysis of attitudes toward Russian regional executives, and tests critical assumptions regarding executives' accountability for their policy-making decisions. Furthermore, it assesses the effectiveness of regional executive elections as a means to drive economic development and improve regional living standards. Finally, it also provides insights into the causes and justifications for the current re-centralization of federal power under Russian President Vladimir Putin and contributes to contemporary scholarly and policy-related discussions regarding the desirability of elected, as opposed to appointed, regional executives.

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## Chapter 1 Introduction

The end of the first decade of post-Soviet Russia brought renewed attempts by its federal government to reverse the creeping process of largely uncontrolled decentralization that had characterized much of the period following the collapse of the Soviet Union. In a series of reforms beginning with the May 13<sup>th</sup> 2000 decree establishing seven federal districts under the tutelage of a new institution of district-level presidential representatives, the president and federal legislature have forced regions to bring existing regional laws into accordance with federal legislature, given the president the power to both remove regional executives and disband legislatures, and limited regional executives to two consecutive terms in office.<sup>1</sup> This list of changes includes only those pieces of legislation and presidential decrees that passed into law. Other reforms – including the elimination of executive elections and a return to a system of appointed governors – were debated, but have thus far stalled at various levels in the policy-making process.<sup>2</sup>

Much of the justification for the effort to re-centralize the federation lay with the argument that the current system of federal relations had been at least partially responsible for the stalled economic and political reforms that plagued Russia during the latter half of the 1990s. Devolution of control to the regions had resulted in the construction of what academics had come to see as regional “fiefdoms” and “regionalized autocracies.”<sup>3</sup> The addition of popular elections only served to legitimize the role of leaders who - through a combination of dirty tricks and pro-incumbent election laws passed through submissive regional legislative branches - largely controlled election outcomes. Amidst another major election round (2000-2001) marked by scandals and the “unprecedented” use of so-called “administrative resources,” a wide consensus



arose that regional executives were effectively accountable to no one. The question remained only as to how the existing system might be reformed.

Nonetheless, aside from ample anecdotal evidence from the 2000-2001 provincial elections that once again demonstrated the fundamental crookedness of Russia's regional executive elections, there were few attempts to systematically examine whether the high profile scandals, and executives' structural control over regional election processes had indeed eliminated all elements of accountability. Were these elections so corrupted that they had ceased to perform their function as means to hold executives accountable for their policies?

This study attempts to tap into this question by examining the relationship between a fundamental human interest – one's material well-being – and support for Russian regional executives. The choice of this particular indicator allows me to draw inferences not only about the degree to which elections serve their function as accountability mechanisms, but also to explore fundamental questions about regional-level voting behavior in transition states, and the role of economics in determining electoral outcomes (i.e. "economic voting").

Through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, I provide an analysis of Russian regional executive voting behavior and election outcomes. The cornerstones of this analysis are two chapters that present both individual-level analyses of regional citizens' popularity functions, and an aggregate level analysis of the relationship between regional-level economic indicators and election outcomes for both the 1996-1997 and 2000-2001 election rounds. The studies result in two intriguing conclusions. First, comparative socio-tropic assessments of regional performance are prominent in citizens' decisions to support or not support their given incumbent. Second, comparing the 1996-1997 elections to those in the 2000-2001 round, it appears that these individual level decisions are increasingly translated into

aggregate regional level outcomes indicating a pattern of support partially dependent upon performance on certain standard of living indicators.

These results suggest three important points. First, contrary to much of the literature which applies economic voting theses to the cases of Russia and other former socialist countries, there is evidence of retrospective economic voting at the *sub-national* level. Second, the particular manner in which economic factors impact election outcomes indicates that it is exactly *policies* that matter. Executives in historically or geographically well-endowed regions are not automatically guaranteed reelection. Finally, while incumbents in poorly performing regions possessed a range of instruments to essentially shield themselves from a disgruntled electorate, poor performance was still “punished” at the polls – elections in the Russian context are not fundamentally flawed, but institutions leave much room for manipulation.

### ***Accountability, Elections, and Economic Voting***

A recent work by Bernard Manin, Adam Przeworski, and Susan Stokes,<sup>4</sup> attempts to define and operationalize the concept of accountability. According to the authors:

“Governments are “accountable” if voters can discern whether governments are acting in their interest and sanction them appropriately, so that those incumbents who act in the best interest of citizens win reelection and those who do not lose them [sic]. Accountability representation occurs when (1) voters vote to retain the incumbent only when the incumbent acts in their best interest, and (2) the incumbent chooses policies necessary to get reelected.”<sup>5</sup>

Of course, the task of defining what is in the “best interest” of citizens and determining how incumbents should act in order to satisfy these interests presents a challenge to any social scientist attempting to operationalize this concept. For the purposes of this study, I choose to

explore the accountability question by looking specifically at accountability for citizens' *material welfare* or, in broader terms – regional economic performance. A number of considerations warrant this choice of measures. First, economic concerns are consistently salient amongst a majority of Russia's citizens. One survey conducted in January of 2001 by VTsIOM asked respondents "which of the problems existing in today's Russian society makes you most anxious?" Issues related to the economy dominated with 79% answering "price increases", 43% "unemployment", and 40% "crisis in the economy" (respondents could choose more than one category). With such responses occurring even against the backdrop of the Russian economy's 1999-2001 economic rebound (record GDP growth rates of 5.4% and 8.3%, respectively)<sup>6</sup> it is clear that economic issues continue to occupy the minds of most Russians. Second, as will be further discussed below in the section on governors, regional economic performance constitutes one of the primary areas of responsibility for regional governments. The popular Russian idea of the governor as "khozyain"<sup>7</sup> offers a suitable indication of the popular conception of governors' role as the administrator of the regional economy. Third, an investigation of accountability for economic outcomes is a worthy pursuit in and of itself, opening the way for contributions into a much wider set of literature in economics, federal studies, and policy making. As will be discussed further in Chapter Two, whether or not regional executives are accountable for economic outcomes has important implications for the shape of reforms in Russia as a whole. Finally, economic performance constitutes one of the more easily *measurable* indicators. Voters naturally have other important issues to consider like the incumbent's personal reputation, policies towards minority populations, and the building of hospitals, churches, and schools, but economic indicators are both universal and more or less standardized across units. Hence,

economic performance can offer a useful first step into more detailed and sophisticated examinations of elections and accountability.

Having said this, the rich lineage of the economic voting literature demonstrates that the relationship between economic performance and incumbent support exhibits complexities of its own. In simple terms, the economic voting thesis indicates that economic performance, in a variety of different forms, impacts voters' and citizens' assessments of their political leaders. However, as is the case with most social science literature, proponents of economic voting remain divided along a number of theoretical and methodological lines. One of the broader methodological divides involves the use of aggregate as opposed to survey-based individual level studies. With regard to the first camp, Kramer's work stands both as one of the first attempts to rigidly analyze the economic voting issue<sup>8</sup> and as the flagship analysis for all subsequent aggregate-level studies. Kramer's voter was essentially retrospective, focused on his or her "pocketbook", and symmetrically punished and awarded the U.S. president and congress members for the recent failings of the economy.<sup>9</sup> The framework of this analysis guided a whole series of similar aggregate level analyses for the remainder of the 1970s.<sup>10</sup>

Later analyses exposed a number of problems within the aggregate-level research. First, with reference to so-called "ecological inference" issues,<sup>11</sup> the extrapolation of aggregate results upon individual decision-making calculi was potentially problematic. One could measure variation in economic conditions and find correlations with election outcomes, but the actual dynamics occurring between economic factors, the voter, and the elected official remained open to speculation. Had the results of the aggregate analyses proven more consistent, this issue might have been left aside. However, the indeterminacy of the aggregate studies in terms of the

magnitude and very existence<sup>12</sup> of economic voting forced researchers to focus more directly on individuals' decision-making calculi.

If Kramer's research stands as the seminal work for aggregate level studies, then Kinder and Kiewiet's economic voting study provided the foundation for a series of survey-based individual level analyses.<sup>13</sup> Recognizing some of the problems inherent in the aggregate-level studies, scholars turned to survey data in order to better understand what types of economic fluctuations most influenced individuals and how strongly these factors impacted incumbent assessments when compared to other "non-economic" factors.<sup>14</sup> In the course of their seminal work, Kinder and Kiewiet made perhaps one of the individual-level analysis camp's most important contributions to the general economic voting literature when they drew a distinction between sociotropic and pocketbook voting finding that their respondents took their societies' overall economic performance into account (sociotropic considerations) more than their own personal (pocketbook) economic fortunes. Such a distinction found lasting resonance in subsequent research and the pocketbook vs. sociotropic voting debate continues unabated to this day.<sup>15</sup> The importance of these debates for the economic voting thesis lies with the fact that they seek to determine whether voters will simply lash out in reaction to *any* personal economic misfortune (whether or not the incumbent's policies had any role to play) or whether they will assess the incumbent based upon results for which he or she is allegedly accountable for.

At this point the reader may have noted that all of the above-mentioned studies of economic voting in the advanced industrial countries focused exclusively on national-level elections. While scholars only later became interested in sub-national issues, a number of studies, particularly after the late 1980's, brought the economic voting thesis to states, provinces, and municipalities.

What additional issues arise when economic voting is applied to sub-national elections? As indicated in the introductory chapter, sub-national studies generally differ from their federal-level counterparts due to the presence of what I refer to as “jurisdictional issues” - in other words, whether voters recognize the limited jurisdiction of their regional executives and representatives and “punish or reward” incumbents for only those outcomes for which they are (at least conceivably) responsible.<sup>16</sup> When voting for a regional executive, a jurisdictionally minded, sociotropic voter, will give salience to considerations of the overall economic performance of his or her State (in the US case) as feasibly determined by that executive’s policy-making jurisdiction. As a simplified illustration, such a voter, seeing that businesses have been driven away by state taxation policies and that the economy has suffered accordingly, will punish his or her governor in the coming election. However, should the state, in conjunction with the rest of the country, be suffering from high rates of inflation (over which state governors have no control), the voter will likely save his or her outrage for the next presidential election.

While the logic of jurisdictional voting may border on the pedantic, early work in the United States provided little evidence of jurisdictional considerations.<sup>17</sup> Scholars at the time attributed this absence to the historical weakness of regional executives wrought by institutional (the constitution) and market factors (particularly a regional governments’ inability to bloc factor flows across their jurisdiction). States were felt to have little control over their respective economic fates, making voters unlikely to place the blame for an economic downturn on their governors. However, later studies, employing survey analyses and focusing on more recent elections, demonstrated that voters and survey respondents were far more “jurisdiction-oriented” than earlier studies had indicated.<sup>18</sup> Given the generally accepted contention that US State power had increased throughout the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, these outcomes suggested that the

attribution of blame across jurisdictional boundaries was also a function of the perceived distribution of power across those boundaries.<sup>19</sup> For instance, both Atkeson and Partin's analyses of the 1986 and 1990 elections, and Niemi, Stanley and Vogel's study of the 1986 elections found that "referendum voting"—essentially utilizing the gubernatorial election as a means to "punish or reward" the president—was less important in determining support for governors than voters' assessments of their state's economic performance.

### *Economics and Popular Support in Contemporary Russia*

In contrast to the plentiful studies of advanced industrial democracies, efforts at examining economic voting and popularity functions in Russia remain hampered by a dearth of survey data, the relatively recent nature of Russia's electoral system (curtailing the number of cases relative to that of older advanced industrial democracies), and disagreements regarding basic economic and political indicators whose meaning is simply taken for granted in the West.<sup>20</sup> Nonetheless, thanks to the efforts of a number of scholars, this situation is being slowly remedied. Along with more passing treatments of the topic embedded within broader voting studies,<sup>21</sup> three recent works have focused explicitly on the topic of economic voting in Russia.<sup>22</sup> As with the advanced industrial democracies, the works in their entirety indicate that the relationship between economic performance and popular support in Russia is far more complex than popular wisdom ("it's the economy, stupid!") might have us believe.

At the federal level, Timothy Colton's analysis of Russia's 1995 parliamentary elections found that, "economic causes...merit a respectable but unsensational niche in our understanding of how Russian voters have behaved to date."<sup>23</sup> Through a series of logistic regressions using survey data gathered from respondents prior to and just after the 1995 elections, Colton indicated that economic factors—both sociotropic and pocketbook—played only a weak role in

determining respondents' party choice, and that other factors like party preferences and an opinion scale regarding key political, and socio-economic issues essentially "washed out" the effects of economic performance factors. While Colton does not go so far as to argue that economic factors play no role whatsoever in Russian's vote calculus, his findings challenge researchers to question the less-rigorously tested assumptions of other scholars working in the region<sup>24</sup> and apparently place the blame for the weakness of economic voting in Russia upon the shoulders of the electorate itself.

Clem and Craumer's (2000) examination of the regional patterns of electoral behavior in the 1999 parliamentary elections offers one of the few positive findings concerning economic voting and popularity functions in Russia. Using simple correlation analyses between aggregate regional economic measures and the percentage of the vote cast for major parties in each region, the researchers found strong relationships between a number of their measures and party preference. Relatively more prosperous regions tended to return larger percentages for liberal parties while the Communist Party (CPRF) was more successful in relatively poorly performing regions.

Nonetheless, Clem and Craumer's results should be viewed with a certain amount of skepticism. The authors used only simple correlation analysis that did not control for other factors, thus denying them the means to measure the relative strength of these indicators when other non-economic factors are present and to control for spurious results. However, as a first attempt to uncover regional patterns of economic voting for Russian parliamentary deputies, the authors nonetheless make a significant contribution to the study of economic voting in Russian that sets the stage for future, more in-depth and methodologically rigorous studies.



Another recent study brings more sophisticated analyses to the study of economics and regime support in post-Socialist states. Denise Powers and James Cox demonstrated how respondents' understandings of the past mediated the effect of their assessments of personal and societal economic performance on support for parties in the 1993 Polish parliamentary elections.<sup>25</sup> The authors concluded that, while economic performance had an impact on party support, the direction and strength of the relationship depended in part upon whether respondents assigned blame for the current conditions to the early reformers or 45 years of communist rule. By essentially complicating the relationship between economic assessments and political support Powers and Cox were able to partially account for the weakness of standard economic voting theses in transition states and the seemingly contradictory instances in which certain segments of society supported reforms despite their belief that the economic situation was actually deteriorating.

### *Economic Voting for Russian Regional Executives*

As in the case of economic voting studies in advanced industrial democracies, the majority of economic voting analyses in post-socialist countries focus on federal level elections. While this tendency is at least in part the result of what Atkeson and Partin referred to as political scientists' "understandable" fascination with elections to those positions at the "top" of any particular nation's political structure,<sup>26</sup> one could also add to this the relative ease with which foreign scholars can access federal level data. An additional factor limiting interest in sub-national elections amongst scholars of political and economic transitions is the fact that, amongst the former socialist states, only Russia, Yugoslavia, and Bosnia Herzegovina have federal structures.<sup>27</sup>

Nonetheless, the scarcity of sub-national economic voting studies in Russia certainly provides no indication of the unimportance of the so-called jurisdictional issue for the Russian Federation. In some respects, such issues are of even greater salience in such nascent federations. “Actual” federalism – in the sense of sub-national governments with substantive decision-making power - is a relatively recent concept for many Russians. The Soviet “Union” was largely a pretense for the tightly centralized party rule that accounted for most of the actual decision-making in the union’s subunits. While local political figures were nominally charged with making and carrying out policies for their regions, citizens generally understood that the last word ultimately came from Moscow. However, following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russian federalism suddenly became a reality.<sup>28</sup> Executives and legislative bodies at the regional and municipal level gained real power (even bordering on quasi-autonomy, at the regional level) over the affairs within their regions<sup>29</sup> and began pursuing a very wide range of economic, political and social programs.

Diverse policies resulted in similarly diverse economic performance, and by the end of the 1990’s, regional “winners” and “losers” began to emerge. According to official statistics from the State Statistics Committee (Goskomstat) in 1998, the mean of the average wage in Russia’s regions (even excluding outliers like Moscow and Chechnya) was 9768 rubles with a standard deviation of 5750 rubles – 59% of the mean.<sup>30</sup> At the same time in the United States, the mean average wage across all states was \$39,078 with a Standard Deviation of \$5668 – only 15% of the mean. In less abstract terms, if the 1998 average monthly wage in Tyumen was 410% of the cost of a “basket” of essential goods (in essence a measure of the poverty level), in Penza it was only 123%. At the same time, while only 15% of the population of Tyumen was living

below the poverty level (as measured by a basket of essentially goods), 55% of Penza's citizens could not purchase a full basket with their officially declared wages.<sup>31</sup>

In response to such developments, new debates arose regarding the economic effects of federalism in Russia. While flexibility and diversity are generally viewed as positive attributes of federalism,<sup>32</sup> Russia's particular brand of federalism was seen by many as "too diverse," exhibiting a "flexibility" that at times bordered on chaos.<sup>33</sup> While there were ample causes for the woes of Russia's federal system within the structure of intergovernmental relations, and legacies of the Soviet past (including the political geography of the federation itself), there was also an increasing tendency to point to the regional "fiefdoms" as another culprit. The inadequacy of central government oversight, and inter-budgetary relations that failed to create the incentives necessary to discourage regional and municipal governments from rent-seeking behavior, allegedly gave regional ruling cliques carte blanche to prey on their own regions. As for elections as a means to control executive appetites, many felt that the 1996-1997 elections had done little more than legitimize the quasi-autocratic and parasitic rule of regional administrations.<sup>34</sup> Blanchard and Shleifer carried this line of argument to its logical end in a working paper arguing that the roots of Russian federalism's failure to produce "market preserving" outcomes lay with the system of elected governors itself. The authors suggested that China's path of "economic without political" reforms yielded years of growth precisely because regional governments were accountable only to the Center. Democratic elections for regional executives in Russia had created a situation in which governors were accountable to no one.<sup>35</sup>

Unfortunately, while analysts and other critics were quick to debunk regional executive elections based on evidence from single case studies and a seemingly endless flow of anecdotal evidence, there were precious few systematic and comparative studies focused upon cross-

regional election dynamics and trends. Stephen Solnick's study of the 37 elections that occurred between September 1996 and March 1997 provides one of the few exceptions.<sup>36</sup> Solnick set forth three goals for his analysis, seeking to determine whether regional executive election results could be treated as a proxy of support for then-president Boris Yeltsin (something akin to Niemi, Stanley, and Vogel's "referendum voting"), whether there were indications of party identity formation in the regions, and whether economic conditions played a major role in determining outcomes (the goal most closely linked to the accountability issue). With regard to the latter question, Solnick suggested that *no* significant relationship existed between regional economic conditions and gubernatorial election outcomes. Correlation analyses for various economic indicators like unemployment, percentage of the population living below the poverty line, real wage levels, and others, indicated that only measures of regional poverty levels and levels of investment had even a weak relationship with the percentage of the vote captured by the incumbent. In fact, of all the variables included in Solnick's regression analysis, only the percentage of voters casting their votes for nationalist and socialist parties in the 1995 Duma elections exhibited any relationship to incumbent success. If Solnick's results regarding the economic voting question are truly representative, they supported the contention that regional executives are politically unaccountable for the economic performance of their regions – a truly discouraging prospect for advocates of sub-national elections.

However, the results of Solnick's otherwise insightful analysis must be assessed with an eye towards certain idiosyncrasies of this first round of elections. First, eleven of the thirty-seven cases featured executives who were appointed only one year or less prior to the elections. Hence, even though Solnick makes some provisions for these later appointments, the fact remains that in only 26 of the 37 cases were the incumbents in power long enough to have conceivably

influenced the economic outcome at the time of their first election. Furthermore, the very fact that the majority of the governors facing elections were Yeltsin appointees injects a number of additional potentially influencing factors into the equation. As Solnick's article explicitly indicates, incumbents may have been punished or rewarded not for their performance, but as representatives of the current "party of power" – i.e. the already much maligned Boris Yeltsin. Hence, while economic factors made a weak impact in the 1996-1997 round, this arguably reflects a one-time residual effect of the preponderance of Yeltsin appointees amongst the population of incumbents. After the "parceling out" of the 1996-1997 elections,<sup>37</sup> this factor would arguably have been removed. Regional voters would have selected those leaders which better conformed to the local political and ideological milieu, and the stage would be essentially "cleared" of other competing factors (like attitudes towards President Yeltsin), allowing for future assessments based upon incumbent *performance*.

While Solnick's analysis certainly provided a much needed and well-executed glimpse into regional executive election dynamics, it could not be treated as the "last word" on the executive election accountability issue (and in all fairness, this was not Solnick's intent). Unfortunately, until now, no subsequent attempts were made to build or improve upon this work.

### ***A Second Look at Elections and Regional Executive Accountability***

This study essentially reopens the debate regarding the role of elections in holding governors accountable for regional economic performance by applying both updated and entirely new types of data to the question. Looking back to the discussion on the evolution of the economic voting studies in advanced industrial democracies, it overcomes the aggregate vs. individual-level methodological divide in that literature by offering analyses on both levels. In the process I present the first analysis of regional-level survey data focusing on the relationship

between respondents' evaluations of regional and personal economic evaluations and their assessments of acting incumbents. This new approach to the regional-level economic voting question allows me to not only determine whether economic factors play *any* role in incumbent support, but to examine which types of factors are most important (i.e. socio-tropic vs. "pocketbook" issues, relative vs. absolute socio-tropic evaluations), and how these factors weigh against other more "non-economic" issues. The results of such an analysis have especially important implications for the regional-level accountability issue. In order to hold incumbents responsible for the outcomes within their various policy jurisdictions, not only must voters take economic issues into account, but they must consider and give salience to the *correct types* of economic issues.

However, individual voting behavior in two representative regions fails to capture the broader patterns of executive fortunes that ultimately interest the majority of regional election observers. Furthermore, examining only two cases naturally increases the risk of drawing spurious conclusions influenced in part by the specificities of those cases. Hence, taking a lead from Steven Solnick's earlier analyses, I also provide aggregate-level examinations of both the 1996-1997 and the 2000-2001 elections. For this purpose, I developed a database that includes 100+ socio-economic and political variables that cover various aspects of regional socio-economic development, regional political behavior, and candidate characteristics.<sup>38</sup> This data source provides the raw materials for a series of OLS regression analyses examining the relationship between socio-economic conditions and various forms of incumbent and candidate electoral fortunes (raw percentage of the vote, win-loss measures) and the relative explanatory leverage of these indicators vs. other "non-economic" factors.

### *Data*

In terms of the empirical raw material for these analyses, electoral, political and candidate characteristic data for the quantitative analyses are drawn from a number of sources including the official website of the Russian Central Election Commission,<sup>39</sup> Grigoryi Belonuchkin's "Politika" website,<sup>40</sup> and the website "*Regionii Rossii: Politika i Kadry.*"<sup>41</sup> Additional data about individual regions' elections was drawn from numerous on-line central and regional-level news pieces and analyses. Economic data, performance assessments, and economic policy information are drawn from the State statistical agency (Goskomstat and its regional affiliates), Ministry of Finance materials, and official documents of various regional administrations. Of particular use were regional economic yearbooks, Goskomstat's annual "Regions of Russia" economic data collection, and budgetary data provided by Aleksei Lavrov of Russia's Ministry of Finance. Regional budgetary data employed in the regional survey/case analyses, were drawn from official regional documents and federal level figures (oftentimes providing wildly different assessments). Official documents and economic policy assessments from Russian and Western scholars, regional administrations, federal state servants, and media-based policy commentators helped define dynamics in regional economic performance and federal fiscal relations, identify which organs were responsible for which outcomes, and determine how various policies influenced these dynamics. Works by TACIS,<sup>42</sup> regional and federal level newspapers, broadcast media, The Laboratory for Regional Analysis and Political Geography at Moscow State University, The "Expert" Institute,<sup>43</sup> a number of publications from regional administrations (both print and internet based) and the Middle Volga Science Center-UI'yanovsk, are just some of the more frequently consulted sources.

Along with accessing data sources for the quantitative analyses, this project also involved a great amount of fieldwork in order to become familiar with elections, economic, and financial

issues at the regional level. Extensive interviewing with regional political figures, bureaucrats, businesspeople and academics from Samara, Ul'yankovsk, Perm, Kazan, Saratov, Moscow, and other areas of Russia provided critical insights into the working of election systems, inter-budgetary finance, and economic trends. Many hours were spent pouring over legislation and decrees to determine how the electoral and fiscal institutions had evolved in the course of the 1990s. Thanks to the ever-growing amount of information on the Internet, I was able to monitor elections in regions of all parts of Russia by accessing electronic versions of national and regional newspapers. Election analyses, electronic and otherwise, provided general background information for both the 1996-1997 and 2000-2001 election rounds. Together with the national and regional media sources, these helped color the statistical data, pointed out potential sources of anomalies in the results, and indicated causes for unexplained variance in the models. As with any theory-driven quantitative analysis, the models presented in the later chapters contain substantial error terms, and the included predictors only account for a portion of the variation in the dependent variable. Having become well acquainted with the situation "on the ground" and glimpsing the many essentially non-quantifiable idiosyncrasies of some of my cases, I at least gained a respectable grasp of what the models do *not* (and perhaps *could* not) explain.<sup>44</sup>

### ***Chapter Structure***

Including this introduction, the dissertation consists of six chapters. Chapter Two expands upon the literature briefly discussed above, examining both the issue of accountability and previous work on economic voting in the advanced industrial democracies, former eastern bloc countries, and Russia's regions. In the process of this review I note that while the literature has a rich history, it is still marked by heretofore-unresolved divisions, inconsistent results, and a paltry treatment of former socialist cases – especially at the regional level. Greater attention is



given to the handful of regional-level studies with an eye towards identifying the main weaknesses of these analyses. The chapter concludes with an application of key elements from the previously discussed literature to the issue of economic voting in Russia's regions at the end of the first post-Soviet decade, essentially presenting the arguments to be tested in the later quantitative chapters.

Chapter Three acts as an introduction to the following, more quantitatively-oriented, chapters. I start by offering a brief history of the development of the institution of elected governors in Russia. Following this, I provide a detailed comparison between the 1996-1997 and 2000-2001 round elections. Special attention is given to differences in the legal, federal level political, and economic backgrounds of each given election. Furthermore, basic descriptive statistics are presented for incumbent tenure, party participation, regional economic measures, and candidate and victor characteristics. The information from this chapter thereby provides a background against which to assess the results of the following two quantitative chapters.

Chapter Four presents the first of the two quantitative studies with analyses of pre-election survey data drawn from Samara and Ul'yankovsk oblasts. It begins with a survey of political and economic processes and events in each case over the past decade of post-socialist development. Following this, I offer a series of regional-level survey data analyses (the first such study), using bi-nomial logistic regression models to predict support for incumbents on a simple "support/non-support" dichotomous dependent variable. The results of these analyses indicate that for these two representative cases, respondents going into the election were very conscious of economic factors when assessing their incumbents. Moreover, respondents appeared to make use of sophisticated evaluation methods with comparative socio-tropic considerations strongly related to incumbent assessments. These results, drawing on heretofore unexploited data and

methods (for the Russian case), present remarkable new evidence regarding economic voting in Russia indicating that, contrary to previous studies at the federal level, Russian citizens do in fact employ relatively complex economic popularity functions.

Chapter Five builds upon the results of the survey analyses to determine whether these outcomes translate into aggregate-level patterns for all of the thirty-two krai and oblast elections in 2000-2001 and to compare the results of these aggregate level analyses to the results of similar analyses from the 1996-1997 cycle. Using data drawn from the election database mentioned above, I run a series of OLS regressions to determine whether and how economic factors influenced the outcomes of these elections. Again, the results challenge the conclusions of previous studies, especially Solnick's analysis of the 1996-1997 cycle. Real wage and pension levels are statistically significant predictors for a substantial amount of the variation in incumbent vote shares, while factors like regional ideological preferences play very little role in predicting said outcomes. Taking the analysis of incumbent vote shares a step further, I then test models using a similar set of variables as predictors for the odds that incumbents win or lose elections. Surprisingly, real wages and pensions once again provide significant leverage in determining whether incumbents maintain their posts.

Chapter Six reviews the previous results, describes a number of lingering obstacles to regional executive accountability, and presents future paths of inquiry. With regard to the obstacles to executive accountability, I discuss a number of election tactics employed by candidates and incumbents during the 2000-2001 regional elections in order to demonstrate that certain conditions allow otherwise unpopular incumbents to retain office despite weak popular support. Moving from these procedural "tricks" to institutional issues, I also point to challenges presented by the biased nature of regional mass media and indicate how underdeveloped party

structures continue to deprive regional voters of the “information shortcuts” and incentives for candidates that might enhance the role of elections as accountability mechanisms. Hence, while the quantitative analyses demonstrate broad patterns of regional executive accountability via elections during the 2000-2001 cycle, these lingering barriers still allow some incumbents to insulate themselves from popular discontent.

The study provides a rich breeding ground for future studies of regional executive election dynamics. In the remainder of Chapter Six, I point out a number of areas which demand further investigation and draw out a number of new research questions from the previous analyses. Most attention is focused on the design of a future public-opinion research projects which will sample a broader set of regions, focus more closely on jurisdictional voting issues, expand the set of existing controls, and include informational measures to allow me to better examine the role of regional media in shaping public opinion. The existing results offer a rich starting point from which to continue examining these issues during coming election cycles and the diversity and complexity of Russia’s sub-national political development promises to provide a rich research laboratory for years to come.

Hence, this study ends on a positive, but cautionary note. Despite the dire portraits of regional-level democracy based largely on anecdotal evidence from a handful of particularly *groznyi* elections, the quantitative analyses present positive results at both the level of individual voter behavior and aggregate level election results. Governors are accountable for the outcomes of their policies. Nonetheless, as would any wise analyst examining this unpredictable political milieu, I also acknowledge that Russia’s regional-level democratic institutions continue to hang in the balance and that incumbents and challengers alike retain the means to undermine the free and competitive nature of regional executive elections. In light of Moscow’s apparent desire to

exert greater control over the regions, the willingness of candidates to exploit these levers may well determine the future of democracy in Russia's regions.

## **Chapter 2 Economic Voting and Accountability: East and West**

The first section of the chapter offers a survey of the economic voting literature drawn from the advanced industrial democracies and identifies currently under-examined areas – particularly the issue of economic voting as it relates to regional executives. I identify general tendencies in the literature from the advanced industrial democracies and focus on those aspects of the literature of greatest import to the study of Russian regional elections. The next section looks at the much smaller collection of works dealing with economic voting in Russia. Of particular importance is the discussion of Solnick’s 1997 piece as it represents one of the only cases in which a scholar dealt exclusively with the issue of gubernatorial elections in Russia. Finally, the last section places this study within the framework defined by the just-described literature, restating that this research provides the first, multi-level, comprehensive analysis of a crucial factor in the political and economic development of Russia’s regions – economic voting and executive accountability for economic performance.

### ***A Few Words Regarding the “Portability of Concepts”***

At the end of the first decade of post-soviet governance in the former Soviet Union, one sees a divide between what are commonly known as “area specialists” and “comparativists”. In the crudest of terms the former are generally portrayed as those with a detailed yet unstructured knowledge of the post-Soviet milieu and a weaker grasp of the methodologies and theories guiding the various disciplines with which they are associated. A stereotypical comparativist descends upon a region about which he or she knows very little and blithely applies theories and concepts drawn from his or her respective fields. The former type (again speaking in hyperbole) produces reams of detailed description about cases and events that are of little interest to anyone

outside of the scholar's immediate circle. A comparativist "type" improperly operationalizes hypotheses (which themselves are often inappropriate to the case at hand) and then misinterprets the results of generally quantitative analyses because of his or her ignorance of the region's specificities.

While the intellectual conflicts surrounding this issue have essentially reified these falsely polarized types (see the debates surrounding Cohen's recent work, *Failed Crusade*) one should bear two points in mind. First, most scholars fall somewhere between these two extremes. Few stereotypical "comparativists" could even present (let alone publish) analyses bereft of any knowledge of the region's various idiosyncrasies without experiencing the ire and even ridicule of their area-knowledgeable colleagues. On the other hand, the strictest area specialist, in an era where Russia *qua* Russia is no longer of great interest, would be simply relegated to ignominy.<sup>45</sup>

Second, while certain scholars participate in the debate as a means to protect their particular intellectual turf, one should not lose sight of the fact that the real question at hand is the "portability of concepts" – i.e. the ability to transport concepts and theories developed and tested in one geographical and cultural space to another. In this respect, scholars are perhaps best to place themselves somewhere near the middle of the "area specialist versus comparativist" continuum, combining knowledge of the region with a grasp of concepts and theories relevant to their respective academic disciplines.

Transporting concepts from one region to another is not an academic heresy. In fact such activities provide the very *raison d'être* for all social sciences. Having said this, the process should be conducted as rigidly and methodically as possible. The dangers exist both that "foreign" concepts will be rejected too readily following a simple appraisal by a regionally-

knowledgeable observer, or that said concepts will be too readily accepted based on an uncritically examined, yet statistically significant result.

I take this brief digression as means to essentially shield myself from premature criticism of the discussion which follows. This study draws upon concepts conceived and developed in the advanced industrial democracies – regions which the author, drawing on his own extensive knowledge of Russia, recognizes as being far removed from the realities of the former socialist countries. Many of these concepts have already been rejected out of hand by scholars whose conclusions were legitimated by their deep understanding of the region rather than a combination of this understanding and methodical hypothesis testing.

Nonetheless, two assertions underlie this study. First, no reasonable, “transported” concept should be accepted or rejected without rigid testing informed by knowledge of the region. This is almost a social scientific axiom, but one that is nonetheless oftentimes ignored in practice. Second, Russian gubernatorial elections, like sub-national elections throughout the world, are understudied and under-theorized. Hence, if one chooses to approach the topic within the normative conventions of social science, one must necessarily start with tools conceived of and developed in other regions of the world. At the beginning of this study it appears unlikely that these tools will provide comprehensive and valid “solutions” to questions regarding gubernatorial election outcomes in Russia, but they promise to provide a first step in what I hope to be a longer path of inquiry. To use another “borrower’s” words, “as a point of departure – as a guide to pressing *questions* to be posed and to how research into them might be fruitfully designed – the accumulate social science merits attention. The answers to the questions are an empirical matter, not to be prejudged.”<sup>46</sup>

### *Accountability*

According to Manin, Przeworski, and Stokes, “the claim connecting democracy and representation is that under democracy governments are representative because they are elected: if participation is widespread, and if citizens enjoy political liberties, then governments will act in the best interest of the people”.<sup>47</sup> However, the authors point out that the representation achieved through elections can take at least two forms, with important implications for both voter behavior and incumbent’s incentives.

The first of these is what the authors call “mandate representation”. This requires that voters choose candidates and parties based upon policy proposals put forth by the competing individuals or organizations in the course of the election campaign. In order for mandate representation to function, citizens must choose those policies which they want implemented, have an understanding of which party or individual will be most likely to implement them, and upon election, the chosen party or individual must go on to implement said policies.

An alternative to the “mandate” approach is what the three authors refer to as “accountability representation”. According to this view, elections make for representation because they hold incumbents responsible for their performance in the previous term. Elections take on the air of a trial in which the jury/voters pass judgment on the incumbent’s past deeds. If the jury is pleased (or at least finds not fault with) the incumbent, then he or she will be rewarded with another term in office.

As the authors point out, both approaches feature their own weaknesses. Mandate representation places very high informational, and trust demands on both voters and incumbents. Two basic questions arise when confronted with a pure form of this approach; first, whether incumbents implement the same policies which they promised to implement in the course of the



campaign, and second, whether at the time of the elections voters knew what policies were indeed best for them. In light of these questions, Manin, Przeworski and Stokes present three circumstances under which mandate representation could occur; when politicians and voters have the same interests, when politicians both seek reelection and believe that maintaining their promises will help guarantee this outcome, and when politicians want their promises to be believed in future circumstances.

These three criteria raise serious problems for mandate views of representation. First, with regard to the coincidence of voters and politicians interests, one must confront the fact that, especially in the case of executives, it is very difficult for any politician's interests to truly coincide with that of "the majority". Furthermore, even if such a candidate could be found, there is no guarantee that his or her interests would not change upon entering office. Both interest structures and information change when individuals make the transformation from citizen to political office-holder.

The second criterion poses additional problems. For this criteria to hold, voters must actually know what is good for them, politicians must recognize this, match their promises with the interests of the "decisive voter" (that hypothetical voter whose interests closely coincide with some winning majority), these policies must yield the citizens expected outcomes, and citizens must faithfully reciprocate by rewarding the candidate for essentially fulfilling his or her side of the contract.

Finally criterion three essentially imposes a straight jacket on incumbents, forcing them to abide by their promises under any circumstances based on the understanding that they will be punished by *any* deviation from their campaign platform.

In sum, the authors indicate that, not only is mandate representation impractical, but it is also undesirable. Voters do not have the resources available to gather the information necessary to know what is best for them in the present or future. Furthermore, promises made during a campaign cannot account for future events. If during a world recession, voters and a candidate conclude a hypothetical “contract” for 1% GNP growth over the next four years, should voters be satisfied with such a figure during the economic boom at the end of the candidate’s term? During elections, both voters and candidates are operating under information constraints. For voters, some of these restraints will be removed as the term unfolds. However, for candidates, the moment of taking office amounts to a virtual flood of new information and interests. Maintaining the pact between the voter and office taker would clearly be very difficult, and in fact, the maximizing voter might actually prefer the incumbent to take whatever course of action is necessary to achieve the *best* outcome rather than the one agreed upon during the course of a campaign.

“Accountability representation” essentially eliminates many of the problems posed by the mandate approach. The two necessary conditions for accountability representation are that voters reelect incumbents who act in their best interest and that these incumbents choose those policies which are most likely to result in their reelection. Here, the fact that voters make assessments of incumbent performance at the end of a term eliminates many of the high information and trust requirements of the mandate approach.

Manin, Przeworski, and Stokes pose the accountability issue in game theoretic terms. Office seekers may have a wide variety of reasons for seeking office, but once in power they are faced with a rather simple choice. The office holder can attempt to maximize the well being of the voters under the understanding that this will yield a fixed payoff in the form of reelection.

On the other hand, he or she could “shirk”, extracting rents (embezzling funds, enriching one’s clique, creating and outfitting a “golden parachute”) in the current term with the understanding that he or she will lose the next election. Further complicating the picture for the officeholder is the fact that he or she will be evaluated based on past events under conditions which will be known by the voter. Hence, simply conforming to campaign promises made under conditions of mutual ignorance about future conditions will not suffice to win reelection. The reelection-seeking officeholder must pursue the best policies for the given conditions, thus maximizing the return for the electorate.

Through a simple game, the authors indicate how accountability representation plays out across different external conditions. Given two types of conditions (“good” and “bad”) the politician chooses between two policies. Policy A provides better results for voters under good conditions and policy B provides better outcomes under bad. Voters will reelect the candidate that pursues that policy which maximizes the well-being of the voters under whichever conditions held for the term in question.

**Figure 1 The Accountability Game**

	Policy A	Policy B
Good conditions	1+e, 5	3,3
Bad conditions	3,1	1+e, 3

Which policy an incumbent chooses will depend on the payoff as indicated by the first of the two numbers in each cell. The shaded cells indicate incumbents’ reelection payoff which consists of their salaries and the perks of office ( $r^*=1+e$ , where  $e$  is some small but positive number) plus the incumbent’s personal evaluation of holding office ( $V=2$ ). Incumbents are guaranteed this payoff if they pursue the optimal policies for voters. The numbers in the un-

shaded cells indicate the incumbents' payoff by implementing the voter's least preferred policies, extracting rents for themselves, and losing the next election. Accountability is thus enforced under "good conditions" as follows. The incumbent's payoff for choosing the voters' preferred policy A is  $r^* = (1+e) + 2$ . This is greater than the "shirkers payoff" of 3 which the incumbent would have received had he or she chosen the voter's suboptimal policy B, pocketed the rents, and lost the election.

The equilibrium for the above-described game conforms to a perfect state of accountability through retrospective voting. Voters want to maximize their well being, incumbents want to hold office, and all parties possess the information necessary to make their respective choices. However, a number of factors may prevent parties from reaching this equilibrium. Despite the fact that they are drawing upon past events, voters may not possess as much information as incumbents. While the authors refer only to factors like negotiations with foreign governments, and demand for exports as things that citizens cannot "observe", I argue that even theoretically observable factors like a small town's economy are the subject of some speculation. Not only may citizens not have the time, resources, or know how to uncover otherwise observable factors, but they may have no idea who is responsible for the outcomes that they may observe.

Manin, Przeworski, and Stokes also indicate that voters are not as "myopic" as some formulations of this approach may suggest. To borrow their apt example, "if the economy grows because the government cuts all the trees in the country, the voter will live on champagne during the term, but there will be no trees left to cut." <sup>48</sup> Hence, some voters may interpret the "successes" of the previous term with varying understandings of the legacies of these policies in the future. The information problem again arises with the voter once more at a disadvantage. In

the final analyses the efficacy of accountability as a means to promote representation is also highly dependent upon the information available to individual voters.

Even so, when juxtaposed against the “mandate” alternative, an accountability approach to representation offers clear advantages in normative, methodological, and operational terms. It better recognizes the information and enforcement costs facing both candidates and voters, and takes into account fluctuations in policies and conditions over time. Accountability may be an even highly imperfect means for evaluating incumbents, but given the constraints, it is arguably the most viable means by which the majority of voters assess competing candidates.

Nonetheless, certain institutional factors in any democracy may enhance or diminish the viability of elections as accountability mechanisms. In the final stages of their discussion, the authors lay out the institutional and procedural requirements necessary to induce incumbent accountability. These provide a useful set of conditions for evaluating the potential for accountability representation in any setting and provide the main criteria for accountability in the remainder of this study.

First, voters possess the ability to assign responsibility for policy and policy outcomes. Manin, Przeworski, and Stokes indicate that responsibility may be obfuscated by such factors as coalition governments, executive and legislative branches controlled by different parties, or cabinet executives. However, once one begins to examine sub-national elections, the list of institutions and actors expands to include branches of government and agencies from any number of levels. Undefined jurisdictional responsibilities can become a matter for speculation by both opponents and incumbents seeking to pass the blame, or claim responsibility for policy outcomes.

Second, voters must be able to vote incumbents out of office and replace them with the candidates of their choice. To illustrate this standard, Manin, Przeworski, and Stokes offer such cases as Mexico's PRI, Japan's LDP, and Bolivia's entire election system. Here, despite the trappings of democracy, the electorate apparently cannot vote the incumbent party out of office. However, such circumstances might result from other decidedly "non-institutional" factors. Incumbents in any given election may put forth a bogus challenger, existing challengers could exit from the race, or the alternative could be so weak that no "real" challenger exists. In any event, a lack of any viable alternative prevents voters from holding incumbents accountable.

Third, politicians need the correct incentives to seek reelection. This requirement speaks to ephemeral party systems in which parties appear to contest the election and then disintegrate by the time the next election rolls around (arguably similar to the Russian case), instances in which incumbents face term limits, or situations where the rewards of office are so low that the only incentive to run is to plunder the office for a term and then exit. Accountability is an iterative game. If the incumbent plays only once, then there are fewer incentives preventing him or her from shirking and extracting rents.

Fourth, an opposition must be present to monitor politicians and inform citizens. This speaks to the all important issue of information. If an opposing or at least neutral party is not present to "blow the whistle" on the incumbent, then the public lacks sources of information beyond those provided by the incumbent rulers themselves. Having said this, I collapse Manin, Przeworski, and Stokes' fifth category -the media -into this category as well. In terms of accountability, an opposition essentially presents the reverse side of the incumbent's pronouncements. Oftentimes, both sides are poor representations of the "true" circumstances.

Hence, an independent media (itself a contentious concept) is critical for the provision of more objective, or at least more diverse, interpretations of events.<sup>49</sup>

Certainly any democracy's compliance with these four criteria will vary to some degree or another. However, these conditions provide guideposts for the remainder of this study. Their more exact relation to the arguments put forth in this analysis will be discussed in further detail in the section of this chapter entitled, "Why Reopen the Debate in 2000-2001?"

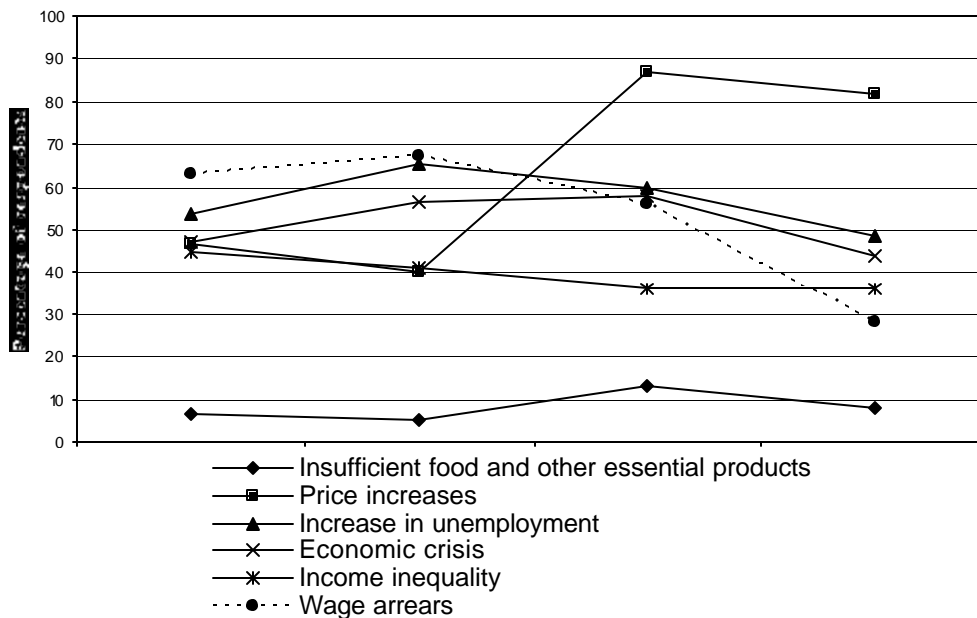
### *Accountability for What?*

Having established some criteria for "accountability", the next issue for a primarily quantitative study is to determine how one might tap into the accountability issue in a multi-N study. There are countless potential campaign issues, varying across time and geographical space. Gun control may feature prominently in any given American presidential election, but would hardly rate a mention in Russia. The Russian Spring thaw's effect on local streets might provide ample attack-campaign fodder for an April mayoral election, but would be a harder sell in July. How does one approach the accountability issue without resorting to single cases studies?

One approach, utilized here, is to attempt to define some universal interest that would arguably play a role in almost any election campaign. The first such interest which is likely to come to mind is economics. This choice of indicators is guided by a number of considerations, the foremost of which is the salience of material conditions amongst voters' other concerns. As Abraham Maslow argued, physiological considerations constitute the most basic interest of nearly all human beings.<sup>50</sup> Especially under conditions of scarcity, considerations of material well being generally hold salience over, or at least feature prominently amidst, other needs. As indicated in the survey data cited in Chapter One, the Russian electorate is no exception. At the

end of 1999, the average wage in Russia was only 77% higher than the official poverty level. 29% of the population's income placed it below the poverty level, and 42.3% of all households' total available resources placed them below the minimal cost of living standard for their given categories.<sup>51</sup> Looking at trends over the past four years of surveys conducted by VTsIOM, one can clearly see the salience of economic issues in Russian life. Table 1 shows trends in responses to the question, "Which of the following problems of our society most alarm you?"<sup>52</sup>

**Figure 2 Which of the Following Problems Concern you Most?**



The large percentage of respondents choosing economic factors suggests that these particular issues continue to have a strong hold on the average Russian's psyche. Particularly after the economic crisis in the autumn of 1998, prices increased in salience, being noted by as many as 81.6% of respondents in January of 2000. With such figures in mind, and given the marked gap between concern for these issues and concern for other "non-economic" factors,<sup>53</sup>



one can confidently state that economic well being is a strong and consistent concern amongst Russians.

An additional advantage of focusing on economic issues is that such indicators are some of the more universal and readily available types of data for the cases under consideration. While Russia's state statistical services have been the subject of some criticism, they still constitute the most homogenous and reliable set of socio-economic measures across regions. Such factors like real wages, arrears, and regional poverty levels are measured in basically the same fashion across regions and thus provide objective indicators of the type of economic conditions facing each region's population.

Finally, the choice of economic issues links this study to the abundant economic voting literature, allowing me to draw upon extensive work by other scholars and providing me with the opportunity to make a contribution to the broader voting studies tradition. It is thus my intention not only to examine the effectiveness of elections as an accountability mechanism for Russian governors, but also to provide insights into the working of economic vote and popularity functions at the sub-national level of states undergoing post-communist economic and political transitions. To my knowledge, this is the first instance of such an application and it promises to make a significant contribution to our understanding of regional political-economic processes.

### *Economic voting*

Having made the transition from accountability to economic voting, one should immediately note the history and complexities of the economic voting literatures. While the argument that economics in various forms effects peoples' support for their leaders spans centuries,<sup>54</sup> it is perhaps best to begin a discussion of the economic voting literature with Kramer's *Short Term Fluctuations in U.S. Voting Behavior*. Scholars generally consider this

article, published in 1971, to be the seminal work in the economic voting literature. Proceeding studies employed vaguely defined indicators, unsophisticated methodology in the form of simple correlations and cross-tabulations, and single-variate tests lacking any means to draw out the individual effects of variables when introduced in conjunction with others. Explicitly drawing hypotheses based on the theories of Downs and Key,<sup>55</sup> Kramer's work provided one of the first methodologically sophisticated and explicitly specified attempts to measure the relative role of various economic indicators in determining the electoral success of democratic and republican congressional election candidates.

Seeing the voters' decision as a choice between two competing "teams" (the incumbent and opposition, or in the American case, Democrats vs. Republicans) Kramer indicated that the next step in any analysis would be to determine the voter's decision rule. Considerations of expendable time and effort, along with evidence from prior studies, suggested that the "typical" voter could not make an informed and rationally self-interested decision based on the gathering of "party platforms and policy pronouncements, legislative voting records, and perhaps expert or authoritative opinions..."<sup>56</sup> Instead, Kramer opted for what Fiorina (1981) would later call a "retrospective voter". This voter based his or her decision on "readily available information", using the incumbent party's past performance as an indicator of its future prospects. Kramer states:

"...if the performance of the incumbent party is "satisfactory" according to some principle standard, the voter votes to retain the incumbent governing party in office to enable it to continue its present policies; while if the incumbent's performance is not

“satisfactory,” the voter votes against the incumbent, to give the opposition party a chance to rule”.<sup>57</sup>

Kramer then presented an equation which depicted party success as a function of incumbency (which embodied certain institutional advantages and disadvantages of incumbency), the “normal” long term average support for the given party, the difference between a measure of actual incumbent performance and “expected performance” at the beginning of the currently ending term, and finally, an error term which would account for essentially random variance like campaign strategies, foreign events, and the idiosyncrasies of various regional political cultures.

With regard to the “performance” indicator, Kramer was faced with a number of decisions. First, what type of “performance” would be measured? With the focus on economic factors, Kramer chose to examine the relative impact of monetary income, real income, price changes, and unemployment. Each of these would help determine not only if certain types of economic indicators would feature more or less strongly in voters support for a given party but how these variables ranked in importance relative to one another. The second decision was how to measure beginning of term expectations. Naturally, aggregate level data precluded the direct measure of such an indicator, so Kramer, assuming that voters would at least expect indicators to remain constant (or in the case of real income, grow at a constant rate) over this period, simply resorted to the percent change in each indicator from the beginning to the end of the term.

Through regression analyses, Kramer demonstrated that “election outcomes are in substantial part responsive to objective changes occurring under the incumbent party; they are not “irrational,” or random, or solely the product of past loyalties and habits, or of campaign

rhetoric and merchandising”.<sup>58</sup> Economic factors featured prominently, with incumbent party success rising and falling with economic performance. Real personal income was of most importance with a 10% decrease in per capita real personal income resulting in a 4% to 5% drop in the incumbent party’s congressional vote (holding other variables constant). Other factors like inflation and unemployment proved largely insignificant. Finally, the “incumbent advantage” only worked in instances where the economy prospered under the current administration. Being an incumbent during an economic downturn essentially cancelled out the incumbent advantage.

Kramer’s analytical framework set the stage for a whole series of similar aggregate level analyses from the 1970’s through the 1980’s. Studies like those of Bloom and Price, Tufte, Fair, and Hibbing and Alford all employed similar aggregate level analyses (Bloom and Price using state-level data) to consistently demonstrate that economic factors provided a significant amount of explanatory power for mid-term and on-year congressional, and even presidential elections.<sup>59</sup>

Nonetheless, these later pieces also raised a number of problematic issues for the aggregate level study of economic voting. First, few of the scholars dealt directly with the ecological inference issue. The extrapolation of aggregate results upon individual decision-making calculi was potentially problematic.<sup>60</sup> One could measure variation in economic conditions and find correlations with election outcomes, but the actual dynamics occurring between economic factors, the voter, and the elected official remained open to speculation. As Tufte and Kinder and Kiewiet demonstrated, “the aggregate level evidence is necessarily compatible with any number of individual-level models”.<sup>61</sup> Had the results of the aggregate analyses proven more consistent, this issue might have been left aside. However, the indeterminacy of the aggregate studies in terms of which types of economic factors most influenced voters,<sup>62</sup> and the magnitude or very existence<sup>63</sup> of economic voting relationships

implored researchers like Kinder and Kiewiet to focus more directly on individual-level analyses.

If Kramer's research stands as the seminal work for aggregate level studies, then Kinder and Kiewiet's (1979) economic voting study provided the foundation for a series of survey analyses.<sup>64</sup> Recognizing that the aggregate level studies had in fact demonstrated very little in terms of "economic voters'" decision making calculi, scholars turned to survey data in order to better understand what types of economic fluctuations most influenced individuals and how strongly these factors impacted incumbent assessments when compared to other "non-economic" factors.<sup>65</sup>

Noting that previous survey-based studies by Logan and Fiorina had indicated that "pocketbook" (based upon an individual's personal economic fortunes) interests played very little role in congressional voting,<sup>66</sup> Kinder and Kiewiet questioned whether economic factors played a role through individuals' assessments of the state of the overall economy, rather than assessments of their own personal economic fortunes.<sup>67</sup> They describe "sociotropic" voters as those who, "...vote according to the country's pocketbook, not their own..." and who, "...support candidates that appear to have furthered the nation's economic well-being and oppose candidates and parties that seem to threaten it."<sup>68</sup>

The authors turned to survey analyses to test their assertions initially running two separate regression equations; one with survey based indicators of party affiliation, personal income and personal experience with unemployment as predictors, and a second with the same set of indicators plus an additional indicator of the respondents overall assessment of current business conditions as compared to the following year. The results indicated that "pocketbook" interests played a very minor role in determining the respondent's congressional vote choice

falling far behind party affiliation in terms of explanatory leverage. The inclusion of the overall “sociotropic” assessments indicated that such factors, while still playing a secondary role to party affiliation, made a much stronger impact on congressional vote choice with poor assessments of overall business conditions significantly and negatively effecting incumbent party support in 4 of the 5 elections considered. More detailed investigations of the 1974 and 1976 elections using path analysis offered further evidence against the role of pocketbook issues and in favor of sociotropic interests.

Regardless of Kinder and Kiewiet’s findings and the later studies which further support their results, the relative validity of pocketbook versus sociotropic voting as well as the use of survey based analyses as opposed to aggregate level studies continues to be debated. Other studies preceding and following upon Kinder and Kiewiet’s study indicated that pocketbook voting offered a significant predictor for election outcomes in England and France.<sup>69</sup> Sniderman and Brody attributed cross-regional variation to a peculiarly American “ethic of self-reliance.”<sup>70</sup> This led Feldman to state that, “political evaluations should be affected only when changes in personal well-being are perceived to be a consequence of government policy.”<sup>71</sup> Hence, one can expect variation on the relative weight of socio-tropic and pocketbook effects depending upon individual country’s cultural, institutional, and historical milieu. With this in mind, any application of economic voting theory to a new setting necessarily demands that the researcher examine both types of considerations during initial hypotheses testing.

By this point, the reader may have noted that each of the studies utilizing cases from the advanced industrial countries were restricted to national-level elections. Attempts to apply the economic voting thesis to sub-national elections become more popular during the later half of the 1980’s, as American scholars recognized the growing authority of state governors within the

American federal system. These initial works laid the groundwork for a series of articles that specifically focused on how economics influenced the outcomes of both gubernatorial and state legislative elections.

What specific economic voting issues are raised by the shift to the sub-federal level? Generally speaking, analyses of sub-federal level elections allow researchers to examine what I refer to as *jurisdictional issues* - in other words, whether voters recognize the limited jurisdiction of their regional executives and representatives and “punish or reward” incumbents only for those outcomes for which they are (at least conceivably) responsible.<sup>72</sup> As Stein puts it:

“The level of government at which an election is held defines the content of the voter evaluations. Historical circumstances as well as constitutional and statutory provisions define the scope of responsibilities for each level of government. Issues associated with responsibilities withheld from a particular level of government, or which are not historically associated with that level of government, are not employed by voters in their evaluations of competing candidates or parties.”<sup>73</sup>

Common sense would indicate that jurisdictional issues would naturally play a role in sub-national elections. One would not expect a state governor to be “punished” for an unpopular war or the national rate of inflation. Furthermore, as Tidmarch, Hyman, and Sorkin have indicated, press coverage of gubernatorial campaigns tends to focus on issues like taxation, labor, education, crime, and public works that fall within the purview of governors.<sup>74</sup> The case for jurisdictional economic voting would in theory be even stronger if media coverage focuses primarily on those functions for which the governor is responsible

Nevertheless, early work in the United States found little evidence of cross-level jurisdictional considerations.<sup>75</sup> Analyzing the then popular supposition that American

gubernatorial incumbents were becoming “more vulnerable”, Turret indicated that, at least for the period from 1900-1969, this was not in fact the case. More importantly little relationship appeared to exist between variation on a number of economic indicators and four separate measure of gubernatorial incumbent election success. John Chubb, examining elections from 1940-1982, also indicated that, despite an increase in state governments’ responsibility for their state’s economic well being, governors were more susceptible to changes in the national economy than those in their states. State economic conditions made a small but significant impact on election outcomes, but such issues as regional party affiliation, the functioning of the national economy under a same-party president, and individual candidate characteristics featured more prominently. The authors indicated that this last factor, evidenced by a large error term, indicates that candidate characteristics figure more strongly in gubernatorial elections than in elections for other offices. Chubb neatly summarized his findings saying, “...gubernatorial elections remain contests of party and personality and not of performance – at least not that of the governor and the state.”<sup>76</sup>

In addition to findings unique to each of these studies, a persistent theme amongst studies which found little evidence of jurisdictionally-oriented economic voting functions was that, despite reforms placing more decision-making power into the hands of state governments, governors were still constrained in their abilities to influence the course of state economic development. Even looking at the constraints imposed by the constitution and statutory precedent, market forces themselves, in the absence of barriers to factor movements, restricted the means by which governors could alter the economic fortunes of their state. Peterson (1981), drawing from models developed earlier by Teibout and Oates, indicated that the freedom of factor flows narrowed the range of taxation policy choices available to each executive.<sup>77</sup>



Deviation from the mean would yield a flight of factors to states with more favorable business conditions.<sup>78</sup> Hence, while economic conditions varied from state to state due to any number of geographical, environmental, and historical factors, the fact that governors could do little about both such fixed and other theoretically manipulable factors effectively freed them of responsibility for their state's economic fortunes.

However, more recent studies employing survey analyses indicated that voters and survey respondents were in fact far more "jurisdiction-oriented" than earlier studies of voter behavior suggested.<sup>79</sup> Stein indicates that voters in US states tended to treat gubernatorial elections as a means to register their dissatisfaction with their personal economic fortunes by punishing the president's co-party gubernatorial incumbents (what Atkeson and Partin later termed "national referendum" voting.)<sup>80</sup> However, general evaluations of state economic performance were significantly related to respondents' decision to support incumbent governors. This suggested that, "voters are aware of the functional responsibilities that differentiate national and state-local governments."<sup>81</sup>

Making an even stronger case for the role of jurisdictional economic voting, studies by Atkeson and Partin, and Niemi, Stanley and Vogel later indicated that even "referendum voting" was less important for gubernatorial candidates than voters' assessments of their state's economic performance. Once again, survey-based data returned results that contrasted with previous aggregate-level studies, and authors again raised the ecological inference issue as one probable explanation for the contradictory results. Niemi, Stanley, and Vogel even echoed Kinder and Kiewiet's general evaluation of all aggregate-level voting studies, indicating that the results of Stein's analysis might concur with any number of individual level inductive conclusions.

Given the fact that the studies by Atkeson and Partin, and Niemi, Stanley and Vogel constitute the “latest word” on economic voting in gubernatorial elections one may conclude the following. First, the presence of jurisdictional economic voting appears to increase as scholars’ analyses include a greater proportion of more contemporary cases. This may be an indication of the steadily increasing institutional and jurisdictional strength of US state executives. Second, the case for sub-national economic voting appears stronger in studies that employ individual level analyses. This may indicate that aggregate level studies are either improperly specified, scholars are drawing spurious conclusions from the results of their quantitative analyses, survey questions are “guiding” the respondents to the authors’ own conclusions, or election processes and institutions are somehow blocking or filtering the manifestation of individual support calculi in election outcomes (something that US scholars, looking at their own election system, are reluctant to consider). Finally, as in the surveys of national elections, even those studies which reach the same general conclusions demonstrate that the role of economic voting in elections varies greatly across data sets and studies. Idiosyncratic factors like candidate personalities, regional election “cultures” (aside from simple party affiliation), and campaign strategies, poorly captured in large-N quantitative analyses appear to play a great role, manifesting themselves in rather large error terms. Despite this list of caveats, recent studies generally agree on one point – jurisdictionally oriented economic voting plays *some* significant role in the outcomes of gubernatorial elections.

### ***Economic Voting in Russia and Eastern Europe***

As indicated in the introduction a lack of survey data, disagreement over reliable indicators, the recent nature of Russia’s electoral system and simple issues like the dearth of English language materials regarding elections and economic development has conspired to

limit the number of economic voting surveys undertaken in Russia and other former socialist countries. At the same time, taking just the Russian case as an example, regional elections would seem to provide a very interesting “proving ground” for the economic voting thesis. In addition to a wealth of cases featuring a very wide range of conceivable conditions, the fact that these are essentially nascent democratic institutions provides researchers with the opportunity to more closely examine these dynamics in their infancy. As Kiewiet and Rivers wrote when discussing the future of economic voting studies, “further progress is unlikely to come by continued mining of the same types of data in traditional ways. More promising, in our view, will be efforts to identify new sources and types of data that are potentially informative about outstanding theoretical issues.”<sup>82</sup>

As indicated in the introduction, one can identify a handful of works which took up Kiewiet and River’s challenge using data drawn from cases in both Eastern Europe and Russia. Along with more passing treatments of the topic embedded within broader voting studies (White, Rose and McAllister, 1996; Colton and Hough, 1997), three recent works have focused explicitly on the topic of economic voting in *Russia*. As with the studies in advanced industrial countries, the works in their entirety employ a variety of methods and draw data from different case elections. As a whole, and again echoing the western case studies, they indicate that the relationship between economic performance and popular support in Russia is far more complex than popular wisdom might have us believe.

In his periodic analyses of federal elections in Russian, Timothy Colton provides a number of tests for the role of socio-economic factors in determining election outcomes.<sup>83</sup> However, as the title suggests, his article “Economics and Voting in Russia” provides one of the first intensive examinations of the economic voting issue in contemporary Russia. Drawing upon

the Kinder and Kiewiet's survey based methodology Colton runs a series of logistic regressions using survey data gathered from respondents prior to and just after the 1995 elections. The survey data included questions that tapped into a number of both sociotropic and pocketbook measures of voter interest, issues like attitudes toward various aspects of reform, party affiliation, geographical location, and standard cleavage-based indicators like education, age ethnicity and sex.

Six economic variables plus an age indicator were regressed upon voter preferences (support/non-support) for each of the five major party categories which contested the election. By themselves this yielded significant coefficients in eighteen of the thirty economic indicator-related cells. However, with the introduction of nine other "non-economic" variables (1995 party affinity, 1993 Duma party vote, opinion scales regarding various political and socio-economic reforms), only ten of these eighteen variables maintained their significance. From this, Colton concluded that economic issues constitute a significant but moderate factor in determining respondents' vote choices and were to a large extent "washed out" by the inclusion of other non-economic variables.

Nonetheless, Colton makes it clear that these tepid results should not be viewed as the "final word" for economic voting in Russia and may partially result from the economic conditions specific to the 1995 election. In a final section of the paper he suggests that the uniformly low assessments of the Russian economy may have effected the results and indicates how, by essentially introducing greater variance into the economic response measures (increasing the number of individuals giving positive responses on the economic variables), the apparently weak economic variable coefficients can yield significant changes in each parties percentage of the vote. From this observation, he speculates that an improvement in Russia's

economic performance could result in a significant reduction in the number of seats occupied by the communist party and its allies.

To summarize Colton's contribution, while he offered no definitive conclusion to the economic voting issue in Russia, he essentially achieved his stated goal of introducing the issue for further examination.<sup>84</sup> Furthermore, his work helped expose some of the assumptions about economic voting that were beginning to seep into both quantitative and qualitative studies of contemporary Russia.<sup>85</sup>

While their study deals with the economic voting issue only in passing, Clem and Craumer's examination of the regional patterns of electoral behavior in the 1999 parliamentary elections is nonetheless interesting in that it provides one of the only positive findings concerning economic voting and popularity functions at the regional level in Russia.

In addition to correlation analyses which examine the relationship between party list voter percentages and factors like urbanization, education, age, percentage of the population employed in agricultural and industrial jobs and percentage of Russians in each region's population, Clem and Craumer run similar analyses using as independent variables raw and real wages, unemployment, industrial production and change in industrial production, consumption, and percentage of privatized regional housing. Based upon their Pearson correlation coefficients the authors find that regions with higher levels of industrial production, consumption, and raw and real wages tended to vote more for the reform parties and less for the communists.

Though they could indicate some support for the economic voting theses as a predictor of parties' legislative election success, Clem and Craumer's results are subject to a certain amount of criticism. First the authors used only simple correlation analysis that denies them the means to measure the relative strength of these indicators when other non-economic factors are present.

Second, they provide no readily apparent criteria for determining which relationships support their hypotheses. According to standard statistical procedures, “significant” (at the .01 level) relationships are evident only between raw and real wages and votes for the CPRF, Yabloko, and “Bloc Zhirinovskiy”; unemployment and votes for “Fatherland – All Russia”; Industrial production and Yabloko; and housing privatization and votes for the CPRF, “Bloc Zhirinovskiy” and “Union of Right Forces”. In their discussion of these results, their choice of relevant relationships appears somewhat random, mentioning some relationships that failed to achieve statistical significance and ignoring others that did. While such an approach is certainly not unheard of (especially in the less institutionalized cases of the former soviet union), there should at least be some discussion as to how the authors decided which results were “significant enough” to warrant mention.

Furthermore, the authors offer little by way of explaining both why certain factors were more significant than others and how these factors might conceivably relate to one another. Why might raw wages exhibit a stronger negative relation to CPRF votes than the seemingly more relevant wage as a percentage of an essential goods basket? What might account for the surprising positive relationship between levels of housing privatization and support for the communists? What do the significant figures for the “liberal”/nationalist/opposition “Bloc Zhironovskiy” tell us in relation to similar results for the more “traditionally liberal” Yabloko? These are just some of the questions which Clem and Craumer’s simple presentation of the correlation matrix results leaves unanswered.

Finally, as the authors themselves admit, their reliance on aggregate level data restricts them from making anything more than speculative statements about individual voting behavior. For example, by itself the fact that regions with relatively lower wage levels returned higher

votes for communist candidates says nothing definitive about whether or not it was actually the poorer voters within these regions who were casting votes for the CPRF. Hypothetically speaking, perhaps combinations of certain sectors of the poor and wealthy managers in old soviet agricultural and industrial enterprises (or almost any other conceivable amalgamation) are responsible. Speculation aside, Robinson's work on the problem of ecological inference indicates that such findings are subject to a wide range of both methodological and empirical criticism.<sup>86</sup> Nevertheless, as a first attempt to uncover regional patterns of economic voting for Russian parliamentary deputies, the authors make a significant contribution to the study of economic voting in Russian using the only data available at the time.

Moving on to the work most relevant to the study at hand, Steven Solnick's "Gubernatorial Elections in Russia, 1996-1997" (1998) examined three critical questions: 1) whether results could be treated as a proxy of support for then-president Boris Yeltsin 2) whether there were indications of party identity formation in the regions, and 3) whether economic conditions played a major role in determining outcomes. Focusing only on the latter question, Solnick's results indicated that *no* significant relationship existed between regional economic conditions and gubernatorial election outcomes. Correlation analyses for various economic indicators like unemployment, percentage of the population living below the poverty line, real wage levels, and others, indicated that only measures of regional poverty levels and levels of investment had even a weak relationship with the percentage of the vote captured by the incumbent. In fact, of all the variables included in Solnick's regression analysis, only the percentage of voters casting their votes for nationalist and socialist parties in the 1995 Duma elections had any relationship to incumbent success. If Solnick's results regarding the economic voting question are truly representative, they suggest that regional executives are politically

unaccountable for the economic performance of their regions – a truly discouraging prospect for advocates of democratic federalism.

As suggested in the introduction, Solnick's otherwise excellent analysis is nonetheless hobbled by a number of unavoidable consequences of both the cases examined and the methods examined. A major factor is the issue of presidential appointments. Every incumbent in each of the 37 cases under examination was appointed by Boris Yeltsin between 1992 and 1996. As Solnick's article explicitly indicates, with executives so strongly identified with the federal executive and his reforms, the 1996-1997 elections were subject to "referendum" voting whereby incumbents in sub-federal positions are assessed not by their own performance or other personal characteristics, but upon the basis of the voters' assessment of federal organs and programs. Given president Yeltsin's poor showings at the polls during this period, one might expect incumbents to have fared as poorly as they did. To further complicate matters, many of the incumbents had been appointed to their positions just prior to the election in question (in all fairness, Solnick makes this very explicit in his article). With eleven of 37 instances in which incumbents held office for less than a year, it is difficult to understand how voters could logically hold the executive accountable for the given region's performance.

Secondly, as is the case with Clem and Craumer's piece, the exclusive use of aggregate level data restricts the range of explanations open to exploration.<sup>87</sup> Particularly, while Solnick may demonstrate that no relationship exists between incumbent outcomes and aggregate level economic performance, the use of aggregate level data prevents him from making convincing statements about micro-decisions which implicitly result in his macro-level outcomes. Furthermore, aside from the ecological inference issue, aggregate level data proscribes the examination of key questions within the economic voting literature which focus on exactly how



economic conditions influence support for incumbents. Specifically, one can not determine from aggregate data either whether citizens are guided by pocketbook versus sociotropic issues, or whether they compare economic conditions across regions instead of simply responding to general federal level economic indicators.

### ***Why Reopen the Debate in 2000-2001?***

The above discussion indicated some of the problems wrought upon Solnick's analyses by the unique conditions which characterized his election cases. Therefore in order to justify returning to the economic voting issue in 2000-2001 it is incumbent upon me to demonstrate how these conditions changed between 1997 and 2000, and why the 2000-2001 elections provide a "better laboratory" for economic voting hypothesis testing.

Increasing variation on the independent variables (economic indicators) between the 1996-1997 and 2000-2001 election cycles provides one justification. One might expect that, as variation increased, voters could more readily evaluate their leaders' performance and have a stronger justification to "punish or reward" incumbents based upon these variations. Whereas in 1996, economic differences between regions were already significantly higher than those witnessed in many other federations, by the end of 1999 these differences were even greater. Descriptive statistics for the 1996 and 1999 per capita gross regional product measures offer some indication of the increasing divergence amongst levels of regional performance. If in 1996 the coefficient of variation (a standardized measure of variation in which the population standard deviation is divided by the population mean) of per capita gross regional product was .63, by 1999 this number had grown to 1.17. Hence, variance in per capita regional national product was close to doubling between the first years of each respective election round. Variation in real wages, while much more subdued, also indicated an upward trend with coefficients of variation

increasing from .25 in 1996 to .29 in 1999. This would indicate that a number of regions were breaking ahead or falling behind the “pack”, and that regional “winners and losers” were becoming further defined as the decade continued.

Second, the absence of “emergency” appointments prior to the 2000-2001 elections strengthened the case for holding regional executives accountable for the state of their regions. As further elaborated in Chapter Three, of the 32 races, 23 featured incumbents who had held office for at 4-5 years, 5 featured initial Yeltsin appointments who, after being reelected in the 1996-1997 round were now in their 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> years, and four featured “successors to governors who had either been in office for four (two cases) or eight (two cases) years. Hence, races were contested either by incumbents or “heirs” to incumbents who had at least served out one full term. This factor eliminates the potentially obfuscating factor in the 1996-1997 round of governors who had served for little more than a year in office prior to their reelection campaign. If voters were unhappy with the regional economic situation in 2000-2001, governors would be hard pressed to argue that they had not served in office long enough to affect the situation. Taking this logic a step further, one would expect this to especially factor into elections where governors had held their posts for 7+ years.

Finally, while scholars studying the case of American governors debate whether state executives possess enough control over their states’ economic fortunes to be held accountable for economic conditions this appears to be a consistently less contentious issue for the regions of the Russian Federation during the period between 1991 and 2000.<sup>88</sup> Prior to the reforms implemented by Vladimir Putin starting in the summer of 2000, the political situation in the regions had even come to be characterized by “local authoritarianism” with the governor’s clique controlling most of the political and economic activities in the region.<sup>89</sup>

In financial terms, as of 1998, regional governments were responsible for the following portions of the consolidated budget:<sup>90</sup>

- Government administration and Municipal self-administration
- Law enforcement and security
- Research and development
- Industry, energy and construction
- Agriculture and fishing
- Environmental protection and resource preservation
- Transport, roads, communications, and information
- Development of market infrastructure
- Housing and city development
- Early warning systems and disaster relief
- Education
- Cultural affairs
- Mass media
- Health care and physical fitness
- Social policy
- Debt servicing
- Other expenses
- Targeted budgetary funds

In order to finance these budget items, governors accumulated a large proportion of the taxes collected in their regions. According to Aleksei Lavrov, oblasts and krai received 61% of the taxes collected on their territory in 1996. Throughout the 1990s this official figure changed very little placing Russia well ahead other federations in terms of the financial resources officially concentrated in the hands of regional authorities.<sup>91</sup>

However, as a number of studies on inter-budgetary transfers have demonstrated, the normative division of responsibilities and finance offers only a partial picture of budgetary federalism during this period. Bilateral treaties between the Center and individual regions created a patchwork of budgetary relations. First republics and then oblasts and krai received exemptions on certain taxes, increased regional power over the use of natural resources, and increased federal funding through higher budgetary transfers or extensive federal projects and

programs. As aptly demonstrated by Treisman this created a situation in which Center-periphery relations, rather than being characterized by top-down administration, increasingly took on the manner of negotiations between more or less equal parties. With the threat of secession growing in the Caucasus, and the precedent of early bilateral treaties, regions throughout the federation sought to essentially blackmail the Center into extending privileges.<sup>92</sup>

Even ignoring the role that the bilateral treaties played in this process, the disorder which followed Yeltsin's pronouncement to "grab as much sovereignty as you need", coupled with Moscow's financial and institutional weakness essentially shifted much of the economic policy decision making onto the regions. As Darrell Slider states, "while there was no legal or constitutional basis for regions to control the local economies, the lack of central control over regional policymaking and implementation has provided de facto authority in this sphere to regional governments" (1997, 449). In addition to the large number of social and economic functions that were officially transferred to the regions the Center's inability to fully finance those responsibilities that it retained placed even more prerogatives in the hands of regional authorities. Tax offices, military installations, even the regional federal tax authorities found themselves receiving funds either directly from regional budgets or indirectly from the federal budget *via* the regional budget by 1995.<sup>93</sup> Lack of federal funds also impacted Moscow's ability to even monitor regional-federal organ relations in the regions and prosecute infractions by regional authorities. Even seemingly banal issues like the provision of office space, purchase of equipment, and utilities could play into the hands of regional authorities in their struggle with the federal organs (series of interviews with Yuri Lebedev and Vladimir Kazantsev, October 2000).

Regional authorities also took it upon themselves to finance their increased responsibilities by levying new taxes or, in cooperation with regional tax authorities, “skimming off” larger proportions of tax revenues than warranted by federal law.<sup>94</sup> Once again, the partial cooptation of federal authorities located in the regions made it extremely difficult for the Center to recognize and prosecute infractions. Very often, regions did very little to hide violations, publishing oftentimes blatantly controversial legislation in their official periodicals with very little fear of retribution.

The crisis of August 1998 along with increasing sclerosis in the center only exacerbated this situation. In August, inter-budgetary relations were largely shattered with the federal government unable to meet its financial obligations to the regions. The results was even greater autonomy for regional governments who were forced to essentially “go it alone” covering both their own area of responsibility (albeit with reduced help from the Center) plus an even larger portion of those budgetary sectors which where at least in normative terms the responsibility of the federal governments. During this time period, regional governments resorted to a number of “emergency measures” which resulted in them taking on more and more of the trappings of quasi-independent political entities – “border” restrictions,<sup>95</sup> price fixing, and the levying of more taxes and fees that lay beyond their legal prerogative. The effect of the crisis was only exacerbated by the fact that, between April 24, 1998 and August 9, 1999 the federal government was crippled by the “parade of prime ministers” – 4 newly appointed prime ministers in only 18 months. With no government lasting for more than 8 months, federal power was cast into a permanent state of reorganization for nearly two years. During this time, regional governments retained and even expended the de facto autonomy that they had gained immediately following the August crisis.

However, despite this selection of evidence, it should be recognized that a combination of undocumented financial flows, disagreements over indicators, constant flux, and the very difficulty of defining concepts of “power” have prevented any scholars from presenting a truly convincing and entirely accurate “last word” on the degree of decentralization in 1990s Russia.<sup>96</sup> Nonetheless, Slider echoes the general agreement amongst scholars studying this issue stating that, “the regions have shown considerable ability to shape the local economic system in ways that deviate from national reform policies” and that, “any statistical analysis of almost any indicator of the implementation or impact of economic reforms in Russia will show extreme variation across regions.”<sup>97</sup> In any case, a precise measure of the *degree* of decentralization is not necessary to justify a reapplication of the economic voting thesis to the 2000-2001 elections. Having argued that Solnick’s results from the previous election round was partially impacted by referendum voting issues, it logically suffices to demonstrate that; 1) governors *at least* maintained the same level of control over their regional economies as in 1996-1997 and 2) that the basis for referendum voting decreased. The very fact that the decentralization versus centralization debate raged throughout the 1990s and that one of the first priorities of Putin’s administration was to “rein in” in the regions provides evidence enough for the first contention - the next paragraph deals with the second.

As a whole, the gubernatorial elections which took place in the 2000-2001 round were characterized by weakening bases for “referendum voting”. In the 1996-1997 cycle, every incumbent facing election was a Yeltsin appointee and was thus a potential target for any voters anxious to express their dissatisfaction with the Russian president. The poor showing of these incumbents guaranteed that such a factor would play a negligible role in the 2000-2001 elections. By the time the later elections arrived, original Yeltsin appointees held office in only

12 of the 32 cases under examination. Each of these “appointees” now all held office, at least in theory, according to the popular will of the electorate that had turned out for the 1996-1997 elections.

Furthermore, the object of the 1996-1997 referendum voting, Boris Yeltsin, had resigned from his post almost four months prior to the first elections. The new president, Vladimir Putin, did not clearly elucidate his relations with any of the incumbents at hand until perhaps the Kursk election of October 2000 (and even this is debatable). Even in this case, and a handful of other instances that followed, the presidential administration made it clear only that they did *not* support certain candidates. While many candidates, understood the potential electoral gains provided by a presidential endorsement, and claimed to have the backing of the president, Putin did not provide clear backing for a candidate in any of the cases under examination.

But what if one type of referendum voting were simply replaced by another? The American voting literature generally approaches the “referendum” issue by examining whether gubernatorial candidates affiliated with the president’s party are punished and rewarded according to voters’ assessments of the national economy. For those unfamiliar with the region, this might suggest that referendum issues would operate in a similar fashion in Russia – i.e. incumbents who share party affiliations with Vladimir Putin may be subject to referendum effects. However, a number of lasting features of the contemporary Russian political scene, as well as the policies of Vladimir Putin himself preclude such approaches.

First, while the party “Unity” (Yedinstvo) ran in the 1999 Federal Duma elections as the officially endorsed “party of power” (under Yeltsin and then-prime minister Putin), the subsequent connection between this party and *President* Putin is not nearly so clear cut. Certainly, in comparative terms, Unity continued to be considered the party to which Putin was

politically and ideologically closest. However, in keeping with Yeltsin's custom, Putin was officially a non-party President. This was an apparent nod to his predecessor's contention that party affiliations threatened the executive with immersion in inter-factional squabbles and that only an "independent" president could adequately perform his duties as the nation's executive.

Even had Putin openly associated with Unity's federal apparatus following the 1999 Duma elections, there still is arguably little basis for referendum voting based on party affiliation because the *governors themselves* were generally independent of both federal and regional party apparatuses. Up until the 2000-2001 elections, Russian political parties continued to be characterized either as largely dormant organizations that were activated only to contest elections, coming into being and then disappearing in the time period immediately preceding and following each election. In such a situation, executives had little need to affiliate with parties until the election campaign itself. Furthermore, by avoiding close affiliations to any party, executives essentially retained the option of courting social groups targeted by any of the party organizations. As a result, in most situations the incumbent either failed to actively seek out party endorsements, or party endorsements were made so late (or so quietly) that the average voter had little time or information to make an association between candidates and political organizations.

Further complicating the situation, party discipline across levels of government was weak at best. Instances occurred in which the three organizational levels (federal, regional, municipal) of the same party split and supported two or even three different candidates. This was largely the result of the poor institutionalization of the Russian party structure, combined with periodic efforts by regional political groups to establish their own version of various federal parties in the attempt to essentially "head off" the intrusion of potentially hostile federal level



party structures. When combined with the above described “non-affiliation” practices of incumbents, it is therefore clear that voters found it difficult to parse out party endorsements. Indeed, in the case of Ul’yanovsk, a discussion with the staff of a reputable newspaper on the very night of the election revealed that the editors themselves were initially hard pressed to determine exactly which factions within the local and regional party “organizations” supported which candidate. If such well informed individuals were perplexed by this issue, than one can expect that the average voter had an even poorer grasp of the situation.

### *Methodological Decisions*

Given the small number of Russian election analyses, this study necessarily draws upon the experiences of previous American case studies. As indicated in the discussion of the literature above, the economic voting literature at the federal and sub-federal level is split along a methodological divide between individual-level and aggregate-level approaches. Interwoven with this debate is the ecological inference issue whereby scholars must opt between making oftentimes unsupported inferences from more widely available aggregate level data or limiting their selection of cases and undertaking the expense of survey analyses.<sup>98</sup> In the course of my work in Russia’s regions, I was fortunate enough to acquire the means to pursue both approaches, gaining the advantages inherent to both methods and allowing me to offer a more comprehensive picture of the economic voting in Russia’s regions.

Survey based data offers a means to test hypotheses regarding the information that citizens use in their evaluations of their regional executives. In the same vein as Kinder and Kiewiet’s survey analyses, I construct models to determine whether socio-tropic or pocket book issues figure more prominently in voters’ decision making calculi. Furthermore, with regards to the jurisdictional issue which I argued was key to the sub-national economic voting issue,

surveys allow us to determine whether voters differentiate between the economic performance in their particular regions and those of others (what I refer to as *relative* sociotropic voting). Barring a significant indication of such decision making, it would be difficult to argue that incumbent governors are being punished and rewarded for their *own* performance rather than being punished for nationwide economic fortunes and other factors beyond their control. Surveys also allow us to examine the relationship to a number of “non-economic” issues both common to all regions and specific to a subset – like the entrance of candidates from security organs in 2000-2001.

Nonetheless, while surveys can provide insights into attitudes and opinions, they alone fail to provide an adequate and full picture of regional voting behavior. First, one must bear in mind that these are *not* exit polls. Exit polls have just recently been undertaken in Russia and usually only in the course of federal-level elections. For the most part, the scarcity of such polls is likely explainable in terms of cost and demand. Russian law prohibits the publication of exit poll results until the day after the election – the same day on which the official result is generally officially announced or “leaked out”. Hence, the most conceivable practical role that exit polls can play is as means to assess the validity of official results – something that few actors or agencies are willing to pay for and for which, given the questionable track record of exit polls in other countries, the polls themselves are barely adequate. In the instances where exit polls were undertaken in the course of a regional executive election, voters were generally asked for little more than to indicate for whom they voted. Such polls obviously have limited value for a study of this sort. Therefore, aside from undertaking the expense, and effort (including legal entanglements with local authorities) to conduct exit polls, researchers are left with the option of opinion polls gathered prior to the election. In terms of drawing conclusions about *voter*

*behavior* (as opposed to incumbent popularity), this choice places certain limitations on the validity of the analyses. Not only is the usual risk of misreporting present, but also respondents can always change their minds by the time the election occurs.

Second, these surveys tell us little about the broader patterns of incumbent success throughout the entire federation. First, representative surveys from each region in which an election occurred during this most recent round are simply unattainable. Quality varies depending upon the local agency conducting the survey (and the restrictions under which local authorities place said organizations), the expense of obtaining survey results varies from a nominal fee (if the studies were undertaken as part of an order from other individuals or agencies) to more than \$1000.00+ per survey, and in some instances, no reliable pre-election surveys were conducted at all.

As a result, researchers are again left with the choice of either organizing and conducting their own pre-election surveys (a very costly, time-consuming, and risky project in the absence of an initial pilot study such as this) or choosing a select number of “representative” surveys. The latter choice brings a number of costs, the most important of which is that while one may be able to make certain generalizations about voting behavior, the fact remains that the data was drawn from a limited set of regions. This raises the possibility that any results are in part determined by the idiosyncrasies of these cases. For instance, in the cases examined in this study, both the survey results and the outcomes of the subsequent elections provided textbook examples of the economic voting thesis in practice. However, looking across the range of other elections in 2000-2001, this relationship was not so readily apparent. If economic factors play such a decisive role, why did the governor of Tyumen oblast (a region where the average worker’s wage is 3.3 times as high as the poverty level) lose his reelection bid, while the governor of

Bryanskaya oblast (where the average workers wage is only .19 times higher than the poverty level) won?

Furthermore, the typical survey questions offer little leverage in determining precisely what types of economic performance play the greatest role in determining outcomes. With a nod towards the average respondent's poor grasp of macroeconomics, surveys ask very general questions about whether the respondent feels that his or her personal or society's economic situation has "improved/gotten worse" over the past x period. Available surveys did not include questions concerning the respondents' assessments of other factors like inflation, unemployment, wages, pensions, or wage arrears. At base, these surveys can only assess whether economic factors - broadly speaking - affect respondent's evaluations of the incumbent, whether these factors are mainly "pocketbook" or "sociotropic", and whether the respondent takes jurisdictional factors into account.

The inclusion of aggregate-level analyses similar to that of Solnick's offsets some of the weaknesses in the survey data. First such analyses allow me to determine whether objective changes in regional economic conditions as opposed to subjective evaluations by survey respondents (who are at least partially influenced by campaign and pre-campaign rhetoric), impact incumbent success in elections. Second, by examining variation across a number of economic indicators one can gain some insights into which particular kinds of economic performance (unemployment levels, percentage of the population living in poverty, real wages, real pensions, etc.) most impact incumbent success. Finally, in light of the survey data problems outlined above (particularly the fact that they only suggest who the respondent will vote for in the future elections), aggregate-level analyses provide the only available means to address election *outcomes*. Using this technique, one examines relationships between variations in a

number of economic indicators and incumbent success in terms of both the percentage of votes gained and whether the candidate won or lost.

More specific treatment of the choice of indicators, hypotheses, and cases will be presented in those chapters dealing with the survey and aggregate-level analyses. These discussions will be couched in terms of the above-discussed literature, and the reader is encouraged to refer back to this discussion as often as necessary.

### *Looking Ahead*

The above discussion both examined the literature upon which this study was built and indicated how this literature impacted some of the general methodological decisions contained within the study. I addressed the development of key concepts like sociotropic, pocketbook, and relative sociotropic voting, and pointed out additional issues like referendum voting and jurisdictional considerations. Each of these concepts will appear again in later chapters as I develop hypotheses and tests at the individual and aggregate level. In the next chapter I take the reader through an initial examination of both the system of elections and the elections themselves from which the cases under examination were drawn. The chapter outlines the legal structure within which regional executive elections occur and hopefully offers a broad-spectrum of the conditions and events of the 2000-2001 elections that will assist the reader as he or she navigates the more abstract quantitative analyses of Chapters Four and Five.

### **Chapter 3 *Sploshnie Vybory*: A Guide to Russian Regional Executive Elections**<sup>99</sup>

Before delving into the quantitative analyses of Chapters Four and Five, it is first necessary to present an overview of the legal bases, processes, and institutions in which make up Russia's gubernatorial elections. To this author's knowledge, while scholars and other observers have given varying degrees of attention to regional executive elections, none have presented a detailed discussion of these elections' normative bases. A clear and concise presentation of this material will ground the reader in the basic processes and institutions of regional elections and save the author from digressing into discussions of the legal aspects of Russian regional elections in the course of later arguments. This chapter also provides the reader with an overview of events in both the 1996-1997 and 2000-2001 elections that will help ground the later analyses within a more tangible framework of Russian regional election history.

The first section explains the federal laws and other documents that constitute the legal bases for Russia's gubernatorial elections, discussing critical changes in the regional and federal institutions which occurred during the period between the 1996-1997 and 2000-2001 election rounds. It also addresses some of the disjunctures between the normative-legal aspects of Russian gubernatorial elections and events "on the ground"- identifying key factors which contributed to this incongruence. While for some readers, a detailed discussion of the legal bases for these elections may seem tedious, I would like to emphasize that a number of the factors discussed will resurface in later chapters (particularly Chapter Six) during treatments of various election rule infringements and the role of institutions in determining outcomes. In any case, the discussion will also offer the reader a sense of the general fragility of regional executive election

processes and the means by which candidates can circumvent rules and thereby interject a further degree of uncertainty into any attempt to systematically study this topic-area.

In the second section, I take the reader through a brief history of the 1996-1997<sup>100</sup> and 2000-2001 election cycles. Particular emphasis is placed upon the distribution of election laws across the 32 elections, the types of incumbents in office, variations in these incumbents' success, and the role of certain factors specific to each set of elections like the preeminence of Yeltsin appointees in the 1996-1997 round and the effect of Putin's efforts to more strongly verticalize power within the federation prior to and throughout the 2000-2001 elections. The elements of this discussion relate to the later chapters in explaining how the potential role of economic voting fluctuated between election rounds (particularly longer incumbent terms in office, and the elimination of the appointee system after 1996-1997), and how effective "incumbent friendly" election laws might have been in securing unpopular incumbents.

### ***The Rules of the Game***<sup>101</sup>

A complex collection of laws, presidential orders, and portions of the constitution provide the legal basis for elections in the Russian Federation. In addition to laws focused exclusively on election procedures, other aspects of elections are governed by portions of legal documents dealing with issues in other spheres like the mass media (Russian Federal Law, "Of Mass Media" 31, June 1997), social organizations (Russian Federal Law, "Of Social Organizations" 19 May 1995), and others. The primary guidelines for elections to all organs at all levels of the Russian federation are laid out in the 1994 and 1997 (modified in 1999) versions of the federal laws, "Of basic Guarantees of Citizens Electoral Rights and Rights to Participate in Referendums" (16 October, 1994; 19 December 1997; 30 March 1999). These documents codify the principles of free, competitive, and periodic elections in which citizens older than 18 years and not subject to

imprisonment or other criminal proceedings are free to directly participate (or *not* participate) in the selection of their leaders to legislative and executive posts at the federal, regional, and municipal level. The laws also lay out the eligibility requirements for candidates at all levels of government. For regional executive posts, any citizen no younger than 30 years of age, currently living on the territory of said subject, and not currently imprisoned or undergoing criminal proceedings is eligible to run for office.<sup>102</sup>

The Basic Guarantees provide the following basic blueprint for each step of the election process. First, no less than 65 days prior to the end of the executive's term or no later than 14 days after an unscheduled termination of the executive's rule, the regional legislative body (In the absence of a sitting legislature, the date for the election is defined by the regional voting commission) meets to set a date for the elections. This election announcement must be made no earlier than 180 days and no later than 70 days prior to the chosen date. The election date must then be published in the official mass media no later than 5 days after the decision.

Following this announcement, borders of regional voting districts are defined, lists of eligible voters are compiled and verified, and electoral commissions are created for each district. One of the key players in this process is the regional election commission. As in many federations, Russian election law mandates the creation of electoral commissions at the federal, regional, and district levels with each level's commission responsible not only for carrying out and monitoring the election process in its jurisdiction, but also for monitoring the activities of those commissions at the next lower level.

Regional election commissions are directly subordinate to the Election Commission of the Russian Federation and are responsible for providing the basic institutional support for all elections within their given regions. They are created upon the principle of parity between the



regional executive and legislature, with each organ appointing one half of the commission's members. As a further restriction, both organs are required to name no less than one-third of the candidates drawn from recommendations of each political block having a fraction in both the Federal Duma and the regional legislature. Lower (territorial and district) level voting commissions are created either by the municipal legislative body under whose jurisdiction the territory or district falls or, in the absence of a legislative body (as in small cities and rural districts), by the regional-level election commission. At the territorial (raion, city) and then district level (below the raion and city level) the same guidelines regarding recommendation by political blocks apply. Federal and regional voting commissions exist on a permanent basis for a period of no more than 5 years (at which point, any or all of the members may be reappointed). District level commissions are shorter lived, being disbanded no later than 10 days following the election.

Regional election commissions are also responsible for districting. In cooperation with the local (raion, city) head of administration, the commissions must tally the number of voters in each geographical area and define voting district borders. By federal law, each district can include no more than 3,000 registered voters. Upon the establishment of these districts, the regional election commission and local executive create district-level election commissions according to the rules described above.

With election commissions now operating at the regional, territorial, and district level, the organizational infrastructure is in place to proceed with the next phases of the election process. Candidates have until 30 days prior to the election date to gather the necessary number of signatures and produce other documents necessary to officially register as candidates.<sup>103</sup> The number of signatures necessary to register is fixed by regional laws, but may not exceed 2% of

the total number of eligible voters within the region. Furthermore, federal law permits regional legislatures to require that candidates submit financial documents indicating their income and assets. Both financial statements and lists of signatures are verified by the regional election commission. With regard to the latter, candidates are permitted a certain percentage of non-verifiable signatures as determined by the regional legislature. However, this margin of error cannot be less than 10% or more than 20% of the total gathered signatures (candidates may gather up to 15% more signatures than required). Furthermore, if the number of verifiable signatures is less than the total required, the candidate is not allowed to register. Finally, financial documents are subject to verification and discrepancies may provide the basis for a rejection of the candidate's registration (as determined by regional laws).

Once candidates have registered, they may conduct "official" campaign agitation through the mass media, organized events, printed materials, and other sanctioned methods. Campaign advertisement (aside from placards, signs, and billboards) is permitted until 24 hours before the election date. Additional restrictions are placed on the publication of the results of opinion polls. These can only be published up to 72 hours prior to the election date. Aside from these temporal restrictions, federal election laws attempt to head off the use of so-called "administrative resources" by restricting candidates from using public office and other positions as bases from which to undertake campaign agitation. For instance, members of the election commissions, charitable and religious organizations, state and municipal officials, military and other state and municipal servants are not allowed to carry out campaign agitation *while performing their given duties or using the assets or property of their given organization.*

Federal and regional laws also govern the use of the mass media for campaigning purposes. The Basic Guarantees divides mass media outlets into two categories. The first

includes those organs that annually receive no less than 15% of their total financing from state and municipal organizations. These organs are obliged to provide free and equal airtime and print space for all registered candidates. The second group of media organs includes all those outlets that do not fall into the first category. These organs may provide airtime and printed space for candidates on a negotiated basis, subject only to the requirement that outlets charge equal amounts to all candidates (and that candidates pay for space out of their federally and regionally mandated campaign fund). For both types of media organizations, any candidate's campaign advertisement must clearly state either that it was paid from the candidate's campaign fund or that it constitutes the candidate's use of his or her allotted free advertisement space.

After the 1999 amendments to the Basic Guarantees, federal guidelines also regulate the dissemination of printed materials. Prior to the 1999 amendments, this process was largely unregulated, allowing for the unrestricted printing and dissemination of slanderous and extortive materials free of any accountability. Following the 1999 amendments, all printed agitation materials must contain contact information for the publishing organization, the number of copies printed and the printing date. Furthermore, prior to disseminating the materials, candidates must provide a copy to the regional election commission including a description of the area where the materials will be placed. Finally, materials can be displayed on buildings, and other public places only with the permission of the owner. No materials may be placed on monuments, historical and cultural buildings, or in or around voting commission offices.

As indicated earlier, candidates may also campaign through meetings with voters, debates, demonstrations, and parades. However all of these public activities are subject to the same restrictions as any other form of mass public meetings. In order to meet with voters, candidates must register with local authorities no less than 3 days prior to the meeting.

Demonstrations and parades are subject to the federal law, “Of the means for the organizing and carrying out of meetings, street parades, demonstrations and pickets” which requires that the organizer register with local authorities no less than 10 days prior to the planned event. In both the cases of demonstrations and mass meetings, candidates have free and equal access to public property suitable for the given activity.

Certain types of agitation are prohibited in any form. Candidates may not excite religious, national, racial, or social hatred, and may not agitate for the overthrow of the government, forced revision of the constitution, destruction of the state, war, or restrictions on freedom of speech or press. “Buying votes” is also restricted and includes the provision of free goods and services, money, benefits, or discounts in exchange for votes. Any individual working in connection with a candidate’s campaign is also restricted from engaging in any charitable work during the course of the campaign. Candidates or individuals who violate any of these restrictions may be subject, not only to removal from the campaign but also to criminal prosecution in accordance with federal and regional law.

On the day of the election, votes are collected and tallied by the district, territorial, and then regional election commissions. In the event either that participation fails to exceed the minimum requirement as defined in regional law or, the number of voters casting votes “against all” candidates exceeds those cast for any other candidate,<sup>104</sup> the election is suspended (*nesostoyanie*). If legal violations prevent the “establishment of the people’s will with certainty”, violations invalidate the results in no less than ¼ of the districts, or results are successfully contested in court, the election is declared invalid (*nedeisvitelnyi*). If neither of these conditions holds, then regional law determines the next stage in the election process. In regions with single-tour elections, the candidate who gains a simple plurality of the vote is declared the winner.

Regions with two-tour systems require that a candidate gain at least 50% of the vote in order to win in the first round. Failing that, the two candidates with the highest number of first round votes move into the second round in which the winner is determined by a simple plurality. Upon attaining a “final” result, the regional election commission is then bound to publish the official results of the election within one month of the “final” election date.

While the above discussion might indicate that Russia’s federal voting laws provided a comprehensive framework for regional election processes, regional governing bodies maintained a significant amount of discretion in determining the nature of their own elections. First, as indicated above, many of the remaining normative details regarding regional executive elections were left to the discretion of regional representative bodies. Amongst other aspects, legislatures can determine the required turnout level, whether governors were elected for 4 or 5 year terms, and whether elections were held in one tour (winner determined by simple plurality) or two (winner determined by 50.1% of vote in first or second term). The laws determining the number of allowable consecutive terms were also left open to interpretation, and it was not until the October 6, 1999 law, “Basic Principles for the Organization of Representative and Executive Organs in Subjects of the Russian Federation” that the federal government established a two-consecutive term limit (length of up to 5 years per term) on regional executives.<sup>105</sup> This change naturally raised some concerns amongst “veteran” executives facing their third term elections at the end of the 1990’s. In response to these concerns and as a concession by the Presidential administration to a few strategic regional executives (President Shaimiev of Tartarstan being the most frequently mentioned) the law was later (February 2000) reinterpreted to mean that governors could serve two consecutive terms starting from the year in which the law went into effect (that being 1999). Hence, a number of executives were offered the opportunity to hold

office for as many as *four* consecutive terms – 1992-1996, 1996-2000, 2000-2004, and 2004-2008.

In addition to the legally sanctioned delegation of election law-making powers, regions gained a further degree of independence from a combination of (oftentimes intentionally) ill-defined federal-center relations, neglect, and the simple physical incapacity of central organs to monitor election processes (especially during particularly intensive election rounds like in 1996-1997 and 2000-2001). This state of affairs resulted in regional election laws and practices that sometimes blatantly violated the guidelines set out in federal law. In 1996-1997, the primary federal “watchdog” in the regions was the regional presidential representative. However these figures, having been chosen from the same regional elite as the acting governor (another concession by Yeltsin to loyal executives in the regions), oftentimes actively colluded with regional authorities and could hardly be considered as independent and objective observers for the federal authorities.<sup>106</sup> Putin’s federal reforms in the summer of 1999, which included the creation of new federal districts under the control of federal okrug presidential representatives, created another institution for monitoring election outcomes. However, throughout the period under examination this institution remained in its formative stage. The number of instances in which these representatives intervened in elections belies any indication of their effectiveness and their impact on the 2000-2001 elections is difficult to assess.

Article 63 of the Basic Guarantees, provides for the right of individuals and organizations to raise infractions and challenge election outcomes in either an upper-level election commission or in court. Nonetheless, despite that fact that challenges to election outcomes were at least discussed in nearly every election, not a single one of the thirty-two 2000-2001 election decisions were reversed. This fact points to another natural “safeguard” for incumbents – the

seemingly endless litigation involved in challenging an election. Candidates, their representatives, or organizations who choose to challenge the validity of an election or to raise an infraction incurred in the course of a campaign may resort to either the election commission or a court of law.<sup>107</sup> According to the law, cases brought to court in the course of the election must be settled within five days or by the day prior to the election. Cases brought to court on or following the election day must be settled “quickly”. In instances in which the plaintiff seeks to contest an election result, a decision must be made no more than 2 months following the start of the case.

In practice, this system works rather poorly. From the very start of the “official” campaign season, regional courts are cast into an endless cycle of litigation by incumbents, challengers, and “independent” social organizations. The effect, whether intentional or not, is to effectively paralyze the regional legal institutions. Bringing one’s opponent to court becomes a form of election strategy itself – both discrediting him or her in the eyes of the electorate and exhausting the chance that one may eliminate the challenger on a legal technicality. Following the election, plaintiffs seeking to have the results declared invalid face a nearly insurmountable task. Citizens’ lack of interest and fatigue (partially wrought by the endless campaign-period litigation) removes post-election cases from the public eye, leaving courts to handle the case under less scrutiny. Plaintiffs are placed under nearly impossible demands being asked not only to prove that an infraction took place, but to “prove” the counterfactual that, had the infraction not occurred, the election result would have been different.

The case of gubernatorial candidate Victor Tarkhov’s post-election court case contesting the June 2<sup>th</sup> 2000 election in Samara is indicative of just some of the problems facing plaintiffs in post-election court hearings. Tarkhov sought to challenge the results of the July 2<sup>nd</sup> elections on

the grounds that the results were determined by an unusually large proportion of early votes,<sup>108</sup> and the incumbent had both made unfair use of “administrative resources” and had meddled in Tarkhov’s campaign activities. The case did not make it to court until late September – nearly 3 months after the election. In the first hearing the plaintiff’s lawyer was asked to indicate exactly when and where the incumbent made use of “administrative resources” and how many individuals these activities could have influenced. As there is no law limiting the number of ballots cast prior to the election there was little the lawyer could do but indicate that an exceptionally large number of early votes were cast for the incumbent. In his statement the lawyer stated that it was impossible to find an adequate number of individuals who would take the risk of testifying on Tarkhov’s behalf (these would naturally include individuals who were currently working for the administration which had already sat in office for three months after the election). As a result, the case was withdrawn from court by the second week of October.<sup>109</sup> Tarkhov’s case was not exceptional and offers some sense of the types of obstacles facing any candidate or organization that opts to challenge an election. Generally speaking, such practices have come to be seen as nothing more than face-saving measures.

The collision of federal law and historical events also compromised the effectiveness of federal normative acts in guaranteeing the competitiveness of regional elections. Of particular import was the initial creation of the regional election commissions that were responsible for the running and monitoring of elections for much of the remaining decade. According to every version of the Basic Guarantees, 50% of the members of regional election commissions are appointed by regional legislatures, and the other 50% by the acting regional executive. In theory, the separation of powers between these two governing bodies should provide the checks and balances necessary to prevent either from essentially “stacking the deck” in the regional election



commission. However, events conspired against such an arrangement. Following Yeltsin's "victory" against the parliamentary faction in October of 1993, he disbanded all regional legislatures and ordered that elections for new bodies occur prior to March of 1994. One of the more curious aspects of this decision is the fact that, as stated above, elections are to be implemented by regional election commissions staffed by equal proportions of regional legislature and regional executive appointees. With the legislatures disbanded, the executive was given nearly all the responsibility for the selection of election commission members, and thereby, the development of election rules. Under these circumstances, the regional legislative elections occurred under circumstances which overwhelmingly favored candidates representing regional executives and their cliques.<sup>110</sup> As a result, relations between regional executives and regional legislatures are oftentimes more collusive than desirable for a properly working system of checks and balances. Amongst other indicators, the low number of executive vetoes, and the success of governors in receiving the types of term extensions, low election turnout limits, and single-tour elections described above, offer some evidence of the actual independence of these two governing bodies in many of Russia's regions.<sup>111</sup> With this much collusion between the two branches, the two halves of the regional election commissions mostly represent the interests of the regional executive.<sup>112</sup>

Aside from the actual implementation of Russian election laws, a further threat to "free and fair" elections is what I call (for lack of a better term) Russia's "campaign culture". Simply put, a campaign culture is a set of institutionalized norms within a political system that guide the campaign behavior of individuals and organizations. In most advanced industrial democracies, this campaign culture includes unwritten norms that reflexively prevent the majority of political forces from pursuing the most unethical forms of campaigning. As an example, even in an

established advanced industrial democracy, no method of enforcement is available which might prevent the printing of a small number of anonymous pamphlets threatening citizens with terrorist bombings in the event of a given candidate's election (to borrow an example from the Ul'yanovsk case) - nonetheless, few candidates in said democracies would resort to such campaign tactics. For the Russian cases, practices like these are nearly routine, with vicious rumors, threats of individual and mass violence, and pure hooliganism marking nearly every single race of the 2000-2001 elections. Clearly certain elements within the Russian political milieu continue to lack the self-enforcing mechanism of their counterparts in other democracies and are willing to pursue any form of campaign agitation which they can get away with.

In summary, despite a legal framework that ostensibly guarantees fair and democratic elections in the regions, the reality as of 2000-2001 falls sufficiently short of the ideal. Nonetheless, although some elections teetered on the brink of absurdity (Tula's 2001 election, for instance), federal laws and monitoring probably deterred regional governments from the most blatant violations. Increased capacity at the federal level under the Putin administration (discussed in further detail below), likely added to this restraint, and for that reason, the voters role in the election was probably stronger than in 1996-1997 when Yeltsin essentially gave *carte blanche* to his sitting appointees.

Having outlined the "rules of the game" (both institutional and cultural) for Russian regional executive elections and discussed some of the potential problems with its implementation, the following sections go on to describe how the election system worked in practice by examining and comparing the 1996-97 and 2000-2001 election rounds.

### *1996-1997 Elections*

The decree “Of Elections to State Organs in Russian Federal Subjects and Municipal Organs” (18 September 1995), functioned primarily as Yeltsin’s effort to once and for all break the piecemeal cycle of pre-1995 regional executive elections and finally bring the institution of regional governments into line with the requirements of the Russian constitution – i.e. elected executives at each post. Prior to this decree, elections in Russia’s oblasts and krai had proceeded erratically, apparently driven by the fact that nearly every set of regions that held elections during this period returned dismal results for Yeltsin’s appointees. In 1993, elections were held in seven oblasts and krai, resulting in the defeat of five appointees. In the same year, a federally unsanctioned election was declared by the Chelyabinsk regional legislature which returned another defeat for a Yeltsin appointee (this was later annulled by the Yeltsin administration after the parliamentary crisis of October 1993, along with other elections in Bryanskaya and Amurskaya oblasts). Another “mini-round” of elections was held in 1995, with better, but by no means encouraging, results. According to Solnick,<sup>113</sup> nine out of twelve incumbents won, but many had based their campaigns on “distancing themselves from Yeltsin’s policies in Moscow” (51). Following this series of discouraging outcomes, the Yeltsin administration opted to forestall any further regional elections until after the upcoming 1996 Presidential campaign. Essentially the September 1995 decree did just this stating in point three that, “The President of the Russian Federation declares that elections for heads of administration in the subjects of the Russian federation will take place in December of 1996”.

As a result of this presidential order, between September 1, 1996 and March 23, 1997 executives were elected in thirty-two of Russia’s forty-nine oblasts and three of the federation’s six krai. In terms of regional election laws in the thirty-five regions, ten featured laws allowing

for elections to proceed in one tour with the winner collecting a plurality of the total votes cast. The remaining twenty featured the two-tour system described above. Minimum participation requirements ranged from 0 to 50%. In twenty-three of the thirty-five regions (65.7%) the minimum required level of participation was 25%. Six regions (17.1%) featured 50% limits.<sup>114</sup> Other limits included 1/3 of the registered electorate in Altaiskii Krai, and 35% limits in Ryazanskaya and Murmanskaya oblasts. In Leningradskaya and Sakhalinskaya oblasts as well as in Khabarovskii krai, no participation limit was specified in the regional election legislation.

Of the thirty-five incumbents who faced election during this period, all were Yeltsin appointees, again suggesting that this election round was as much a referendum for the Russian president and his reforms as a means to assess the performance of regional leaders. Accentuating this factor, two “proto-parties” (to borrow a term from Solnick) were created to contest the regional elections – the pro-Yeltsin “All Russian Coordinating Council” (OKS) and the communist’s “Popular-Patriotic Union of Russia” (NPSR). Both organizations endorsed candidates in each region, and kept an ongoing tally of “their” regions, as the elections progressed. Having lost to Yeltsin in the 1996 presidential elections, Zhuganov and the communists were especially keen to once again prove their strength by demonstrating their support in the provinces.

Nonetheless, one should be wary of casting the OKS/NPSR rivalry in terms of alternative political and ideological programs. As Solnick indicates, in three instances both OKS and NPSR endorsed the same candidate. Discipline amongst constituent parties within the OKS was oftentimes poor with parties “breaking ranks” to endorse other candidates. In some regions the OKS failed altogether to support the incumbent. NPSR actions sometimes indicated that the proto-party was more interested in maximizing “its” winners rather than supporting like-minded

candidates. As Solnick states, “(w)here possible the NPSR endorsed communist activists already registered as candidates; in general these candidates were not elected...In the remaining regions, the NPSR endorsed the candidate most likely to defeat the incumbent, regardless of ideological leanings” (65). In three regions, after the NPSR supported candidate was eliminated in the first round, the party shifted its endorsement for the second. No matter what the circumstances, the NPSR publicly claimed any supported victor as notch in its “red belt”.

The regional tally at the end of the 1996-1997 election round was as follows. Incumbents lost twenty-one of the thirty-five elections - an overall incumbent attrition rate of 60%.<sup>115</sup> In each of these cases, incumbents were defeated by NPSR challengers, indicating either that Zhuganov and the communists either still enjoyed a large amount of support in the regions, or that dissatisfaction with the Yeltsin regime was running quite high. Yeltsin’s appointees were especially vulnerable in the so-called “red-belt” regions, losing in eleven of sixteen (69% attrition rate) cases as opposed to ten of nineteen in non-“red-belt” regions (53% attrition rate).

Table 1 1996-1997 Case Election Characteristics

No.	Region	Tours	Outcome (1=win, 0=loss)	% Vote for Incumbent Regime	Incumbent Years in Office	"Final" Election Date
1	Saratov	2	1	80	1	09.01.1996
2	Leningrad	1	0	32	5	09.29.1996
3	Rostov	2	1	62	5	09.29.1996
4	Vologda	2	1	81	1	10.06.1996
5	Kursk	1	0	18	5	10.20.1996
6	Sakhalin	1	1	39	1	10.20.1996
7	Kaliningrad	2	0	40	5	10.20.1996
8	Kirov	2	0	18	5	10.20.1996
9	Chita	1	1	52	1	10.27.1996
10	Pskov	2	0	37	4	11.03.1996
11	Magadan	1	0	41	5	11.03.1996
12	Kaluga	2	0	30	1	11.09.1996
13	Stavropol	2	0	40	1	11.17.1996
14	Murmansk	2	0	41	5	12.01.1996
15	Ivanov	2	1	50	1	12.01.1996
16	Samara	2	1	63	5	12.01.1996
17	Altai	2	0	46	2	12.01.1996
18	Kamchatka	2	1	61	5	12.01.1996
19	Bryansk	2	0	26	1	12.08.1996
20	Vladimir	2	0	22	5	12.08.1996
21	Voronezh	1	0	41	1	12.08.1996
22	Astrakhan	2	1	52	5	12.08.1996
23	Kurgan	2	0	13	1	12.08.1996
24	Khabarovsk	1	1	77	5	12.08.1996
25	Arkhangel'sk	2	1	59	1	12.22.1996
26	Kostroma	2	0	31	5	12.22.1996
27	Ryazan	2	0	38	1	12.22.1996
28	Ul'yanovsk	1	1	42	5	12.22.1996
29	Krasnodar	2	0	5	1	12.22.1996
30	Perm	2	1	64	1	12.22.1996
31	Chelyabinsk	1	0	16	5*	12.22.1996
32	Volgograd	2	0	44	5	12.29.1996
33	Tyumen	2	1	59	3	01.12.1997
34	Amur	1	0	46	1	02.23.1997
35	Tula	2	0	5	5	03.23.1997

Nineteen of the thirty-five races were settled in one tour (the initial election in Krasnodarskii Krai was annulled due to low turnout, but was decided on the first tour of the

repeat election) with single tour election laws accounting for ten of these cases. Hence, candidates managed to exceed the necessary first-tour 50% barrier in nine of the twenty-five two-tour system regions. Despite the idea that single-tour systems somehow benefit existing governors, there was the same 60% incumbent attrition rate in both single-tour (six losses out of ten elections), and two-tour (fifteen losses out of twenty-five elections) regions.

Two points stand out from this brief summarization of the 1996-1997 election round. First, in both relative and absolute terms, incumbents proved quite unsuccessful in their attempts to get reelected. Despite – or perhaps, as a result of - the resources and political backing which the Yeltsin regime offered its appointees, more than half of the incumbents were defeated. Second, while victors in each of the cases in which incumbents lost were backed by the communist NPSR, these results more likely indicate a strong protest vote in the regions rather than support for communism *per se*. Many of the candidates backed by the NPSR were no more “communists” than their incumbent challengers, and subsequent events following the election indicated that the gubernatorial “red belt” was very loose indeed. These observations, along with other conclusions drawn from Solnick’s work provide evidence for the contention that “referendum voting” for or against the Yeltsin regime was a strong factor in this election round. The dominance of Yeltsin appointees, exacerbated by the federal level “race” between the pro-Yeltsin OKS and the “communist” (read: *anti-Yeltsin*) NPSR, went a long way towards removing regional considerations from the equation. As the next section indicates, the 2000-2001 round brought significant changes in each of the above-listed areas.

### ***2000-2001 Elections***

Election laws in most of the regions which underwent elections in the 1996-97 round allowed for four-five year executive terms – thereby paving the way for another “election

season” in 2000-2001. Between March 26 and April 8, thirty-two elections were held in Russia’s oblasts and krai. As suggested above, this round of elections differed in a number of ways from the 1996-1997 round. First, the incumbents facing reelection were previously elected officials rather than Yeltsin appointees. Second, each official had at least four years in office, with some candidates having sat at their posts for up to eight years. Third, the legal regulations at both the federal and regional level had undergone some significant changes. Of particular import, as noted further below, was the expansion in the number of single-tour, and generally “incumbent-friendly” regional election laws.

In addition to these considerations, one cannot ignore the fact that the 2000-2001 elections were the first to occur under Russia’s new President, Vladimir Putin. Amongst the other by-products of the “Putin factor”, one can list four key reforms introduced during the year 2000 that at least in theory were to tighten the restrictions on regional leaders.

First, in May of 2000, a presidential decree created an entirely new institution of federal governance by establishing seven “federal districts” with associated federal district representatives. With the introduction of this new institution, the federal government acknowledged the failure of the previous system of regional presidential representatives and created a new layer of oversight to control regional policy making and political processes.

A second reform in the sphere of federal relations was the law “of general principals for the organization of legislative and executive organs in the subjects of the Russian Federation”. This law sanctioned four forms of federal intervention. First, regional organs would be held responsible for violations of federal and constitutional laws. Second, regional legislatures could be dissolved by the federal government (with the consent of the Federal Duma). Third, the federal government gained the ability to remove regional executives who made normative acts



which contradict federal and constitutional laws. Fourth, regional executives could be temporarily removed from their posts in the instance in which they were under investigation by the federal procurator. Finally, regional governments were ordered to reconcile all regional normative acts with federal law within six months. During this time, regional legislatures met to make changes to any laws and other normative acts which did not coincide with federal law. The volume of work involved in this project ranged from as little as four normative acts in a place like Perm oblast, to hundreds in other regions (Busigna 2001,11-15).

Another major reform involved the restructuring of the Russian Federal Council. Between 1995 and 2000, this organ was staffed exclusively by both the regional executives and the chairs of regional legislatures- thereby providing a means for regional political elites to influence federal lawmaking and lobby for their interests in the Center. Recognizing this as another source of regional elite influence, the new presidential administration restructured the Council. After July of 2000, two representatives would staff the council: one chosen by the regional executive and another by the regional legislature from amongst its own ranks.

In summary, while a focused analysis of these reforms lies beyond the scope of the current research, the changes introduced under the new president left an overall impression that, for all the failures of the reforms to rapidly meet their intended goals, a “strongly vertical” form of governance was being introduced. The very fact that Putin made announcements to the effect of “reining in” the regional political elite, and then took concrete actions to realize this goal put regional executives on notice. Furthermore, rumors of the president’s gubernatorial “black list”, and the widespread conception that the federal government was sponsoring security organ-based candidates in the regions further added to the discomfort of incumbents accustomed to ruling their regions with less interference and monitoring by federal organs. In light of the case in

Kursk oblast where, ostensibly for omissions in his financial statement, the standing governor was disqualified from the race on the very eve of the elections, “problem governors” (i.e. those who were in conflict with the federal executive) needed to be very wary of how they carried out their campaigns. Any violations of federal election law, or conceivably unlawful use of “administrative resources” could be used as a means to remove an incumbent prior to the race. While, aside from the Kursk case this threat was not realized in other regions, it remained in the background as an arguably influential aspect in the 2000-2001 round.

The 2000-2001 elections also differed from the 1996-1997 round in that the federal government did not form a “proto-party of power” like the OKS to contest the elections. This factor concurred with Putin’s often-repeated official position that the federal government would not interfere in the regional elections. As for other political actors, the CPRF and NSPR followed a course very similar to their 1996-1997 strategy, supporting candidates in twenty-seven of the thirty-two elections under consideration (Regionii Rossii 5 Feb. 2001; CPRF web site). A little more than half of these candidates (fourteen in all) won in their region. Two other parties also made concerted efforts to support candidates in the regions. “Unity” supported candidates in twenty-eight of the thirty-two elections while “Fatherland”, in turn, supported candidates in twenty-nine of thirty-two regions. In both instances, the parties “won” eighteen of the elections (both being “center” parties, there was considerable overlap in the candidates that they supported). Nonetheless, while the positions of the parties in each election give a sense of a “left-right” contest in the regions, it should also be born in mind that, echoing the “competition” between the NPSR/CPRF and the OSK in 1996-1997, there were a number of instances in which candidates were endorsed by two or even all three parties. Hence, while an endorsement again generally constituted recognition of a candidate’s coincidence with a party’s ideology, there were

also clear instances in which parties supported “sure win” candidates for the simple purpose of increasing the tally of “their” leaders in the regions.

Moving on to the regional election tally itself, of the thirty-two incumbents in these regions, twenty-three had held office only since either their election, or appointment and reelection (the latter group refers to the last-minute appointments made by Yeltsin just prior to elections in 1996) in the 1996-1997 round. Two incumbents in Bryansk and Chelyabinsk had nearly five years in office – the four years following their election in 1996, plus a brief half-year of power from April to October 1993 - after which Yeltsin dismissed them.<sup>116</sup> A third incumbent in Sakhalinskaya Oblast also had five years in office due to his appointment in 1995 and subsequent reelection in 1996. Only five incumbents had held their position since their initial appointments in 1991-1993 and were now entering their seventh and eighth years in executive office (in some cases these executives had occupied various positions of executive authority in their regions prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union - resulting in total regional executive careers of up to thirteen to fourteen years).

However, the list of “veterans” changes slightly if one looks at incumbent regimes rather than individuals. There were four instances in which incumbents declined a bid for reelection, and instead appointed a “successor” (*preemnik*) to participate in the elections. These included Krasnodarskii Krai, as well as Kamchatskaya, Kaluzhkaya and Ivanovskaya Oblasts. In the cases of Kamchatskaya Oblast and Krasnodarskii Krai, initial Yeltsin appointees who had held office for 8 years chose successors. In Ivanovskaya and Kaluzhkaya Oblasts, incumbents who were elected in the 1996-1997 rounds chose “heirs to the throne”.

Of those twenty-one candidates who had held office for four to five years, five lost the 2000-2001 elections for a total attrition rate of 24%. Amongst the “veterans”, the attrition rate

was higher with three of the six, seven to eight - year candidates losing their elections (an attrition rate of 50%). Of the “successor” candidates, only two out of four (successor to an eight-year veteran in Krasnodarskii Krai and successor to a four-year incumbent in Kaluzhkaya Oblast) were victorious. Hence at the end of the 2000-2001 round, three “veteran regimes” (two actual eight-year incumbents plus one “successor” to an eight year incumbent) entered their third consecutive term in office while, seventeen four-year “regimes” entered their second term.

**Table 2 2000-2001 Case Election Characteristics**

No.	Region	Tours	Outcome (1=win, 0=loss)	% Vote for Incumbent Regime	Incumbent Years in Office	"Final" Election Date
1	Murmansk	1	1	87	4	3/14/2000
2	Kirov	1	1	58	4	3/14/2000
3	Saratov	2	1	67	8	3/14/2000
4	Altai	1	1	77	4	3/14/2000
5	Samara	2	1	53	8	7/2/2000
6	Sakhalinsk	1	1	56	5	10/22/2000
7	Chita	2	1	57	4	10/29/2000
8	Kursk	2	0	N/A	4	11/5/2000
9	Magadan	1	1	63	4	11/5/2000
10	Kaliningrad	2	0	22	4	11/5/2000
11	Pskov	1	1	28	4	11/12/2000
12	Kaluga	2	1	56	4	11/12/2000
13	Kurgan	2	1	50	4	11/26/2000
14	Arkhangelsk	2	1	59	4	12/3/2000
15	Ivanovsk	2	0	33	4	12/3/2000
16	Ryazansk	2	1	65	4	12/3/2000
17	Astrakhan	2	1	82	8	12/3/2000
18	Krasnodar	2	1	82	4	12/3/2000
19	Stavropol	2	1	57	4	12/3/2000
20	Perm	2	0	35	4	12/3/2000
21	Kamchatka	2	0	42	8	12/3/2000
22	Bryansk	1	1	29	5	12/10/2000
23	Vladimir	2	1	66	4	12/10/2000
24	Kostroma	2	1	63	4	12/10/2000
25	Khabarovsk	1	1	88	4	12/10/2000
26	Voronezh	1	0	15	4	12/24/2000
27	Volgograd	1	1	37	4	12/24/2000
28	Ul'yanovsk	1	0	24	8	12/24/2000
29	Chelyabinsk	1	1	59	5	12/24/2000
30	Tyumen	2	0	30	7	1/14/2001
31	Tula	2	1	71	4	4/8/2001
32	Amur	2	0	43	4	4/8/2001

In terms of “incumbent friendly” regional legislation, the 2000-2001 round featured a larger proportion of one-tour elections than the 1996-1997 round with twelve of the thirty-two cases (37.5% as opposed to 29% in 1996-1997) being determined in single-tour elections. Between the two election rounds, six regions (Altaiskii Krai and Murmanskaya, Pskovskaya, Branskaya, Kirovskaya, and Volgogradskaya, oblasts) changed from a two-tour to single-tour

systems, while Kurskaya, Amurskaya, and Chitinskaya oblasts changed from one to two tour elections. From this, one can conclude that, despite the poor showing of incumbents in single-tour districts in 1996-1997, the perception remained that single-tour elections would benefit incumbents. The results of the 2000-2001 round appear to have borne out this belief. Of the twelve single-tour systems, incumbents were reelected in ten cases (an attrition rate of only 17% as opposed to 60% for single tour elections in 1996-1997). In contrast, two-tour election governors proved more vulnerable than their single-tour counterparts, winning in only thirteen of nineteen cases (an attrition rate of 32% as opposed to 60% for two-tour elections in 1996-1997).

Low participation barriers not only provided a means to avoid repeating the abortive 1996 Krasnodarskii krai election but could also act as another means for incumbents to maintain their posts in potentially hostile regions. If in the 1996-1997 election round twenty-three of thirty-five regions (65.7%) featured 25% participation barriers (and three featured no participation barrier), in 2000-2001, this number was increased to twenty-eight of thirty-two (87.5%).<sup>117</sup> Regions with 50% participation barriers decreased from 6 (17.1%) in 1996-1997 to only 2 (6.3%) in 2000-2001<sup>118</sup>.

The miniscule number of 50% participation barrier cases precludes any relevant comparison of incumbent success rates across the 50% and 25% barrier cases. Furthermore, a perusal of data indicates that the generally accepted contention that single tour elections benefit the incumbent does not always hold. As indicated above, low turnout levels may protect an incumbent in a *hostile* region. In such instances, the incumbent can utilize various methods to demobilize those sectors of society that would likely support challengers and maximize participation by the sector of society from which the incumbent draws his or her greatest support. This is an especially prevalent option for conservative incumbents who, in the course of their

previous term(s), pursued gradualist approaches to economic reforms. Such policies generally preserved (or at least create the appearance of preserving) pensioner's standard of living but reduced opportunities for younger working age individuals as new business development was discouraged. Given the electoral discipline of Russian pensioners and the generally poor turnout of the working age population, low turnout requirements provide an advantage for such an incumbent.

However, a combination of personal, historical, and ideological factors specific to certain regions and incumbents may also create conditions where the incumbent's popularity makes higher participation rates more amenable. Kursk oblast, where the 25% participation barrier was actually raised to 50% after the 1996-1997 election, provides one example. The oblast is a staunch red belt region which, even in the "Unity"-dominated 1999 Duma elections cast 37% of its vote for the communist party. In 1996, Aleksandr Rutskoi, the former vice-president of Russia and adversary of Boris Yeltsin in the events leading up to the October 1993 parliamentary crisis, defeated the Yeltsin appointee with 77% of the vote compared to only 18 for the incumbent (with a respectable participation rate of 57%). The region's ideological characteristics combined with Rutskoi's leadership style and image as the ultimate rouge governor made Rutskoi a remarkably popular regional executive. Under such circumstances, the incumbent would benefit from both high participation requirements and a two tour election system which would minimize the possibility of defeat by a challenger with numerically small but disciplined supporters. Indeed, in 2000, Kursk oblast's two tour election system and 50% turnout requirement gave it one of the most exacting electoral requirements in the Federation.<sup>119</sup> In the event, Rutskoi was defeated not by a challenger, but by a legal infraction – disqualified by court order only hours before the election.

With these points in mind, the regional-specific nature of “incumbent friendly” election laws becomes a particularly difficult issue to quantify. Nonetheless, it cannot be ignored in any serious analysis of Russian regional executive elections. I will return to this issue again in the last chapter of the dissertation.

Although the link to the broader themes in this study may not be readily apparent to the reader, the prevalence of the so-called “wave of generals” thesis during the 2000-2001 elections necessitates the treatment of this issue in some detail. Observers and analysts in both Russian and abroad made frequent mention of a presidential conspiracy to use the 2000-2001 round of elections as a means to replace “problem governors” with loyal, and oftentimes security organ affiliated candidates. Instances of security-based candidates winning against incumbents were evident in Kaliningrad (Egorov), Ul’yanovsk (Shamanov), and Voronezh (Kulakov) oblasts. Generally speaking the three victories by security-based candidates shared a number of common features. First, they were considered to be “outsiders” in the region, having had no involvement in regional politics until just a year prior to the election. Second, each of the regions had undergone a significant economic decline since the prior 1996 elections. Finally, despite their deteriorating positions in the regions, the incumbents that the candidates faced were still considered to stand a good chance of maintaining their positions in the absence of a strong opponent.

When taken in context, these facts do not justify some of the more strident claims made by election observers. First, of *all* the elections occurring in 2000-2001 (including, in this case, republics and autonomous okrugs), ten security-based candidates ran for office. Of these ten, only the three candidates mentioned above managed to win their elections. Furthermore, while some individuals saw these victories as evidence of the “militarization” of the Russian voter, in



reality, the candidates' victories probably had more to do with the organizational resources and legitimacy that comes with service in either the military or security organs. For instance, survey data from Ul'yanovsk oblast offered little evidence that voters were seeking a candidate from the military. Polls taken prior to General Vladimir Shamanov's announcement that he would run for office indicated that a large portion of the respondents would vote for Boris Nemtsov in the case that the popular liberal-democrat would run for Governor. Finally, in those regions where security-based candidates challenged the election, it was not always clear that they enjoyed the undivided support of President Putin. Again, looking at the Ul'yanovsk case, Putin never made an official announcement supporting the candidate and even met with incumbent governor Yuri Goryachev just prior the December election. In summary, the "militarization of the provinces" thesis has little basis in the actual numbers of victories involved and no analyst has provided evidence of the "smoking gun" indicating Putin's consistent and undivided support for security-based candidates.<sup>120</sup>

To summarize and compare the most recent 2000-2001 election round to that of 1996-1997, one can identify three critical differences. First, in comparison to the earlier round, Moscow played a far less conspicuous partisan role in 2000-2001. Despite the political party "Unity's" association with President Vladimir Putin, the federal executive did not mobilize a political organization similar to Yeltsin's OKS to contest the elections and rarely made preferences for individual candidates known. Where the Center did come into play was in attempting to monitor the activities of regional election institutions and generally rein in the regional political elite as whole with the tightening and reform of legal restraints. In keeping with Putin's "dictatorship of the law", candidates and their supporters were put on notice that serious infractions might not be tolerated. Nonetheless, the word *might* demands emphasis as there was

also ample anecdotal evidence (Kursk Oblast, amongst others) indicating that the law would be applied with greater and lesser lenience depending upon the given incumbent's or challenger's relation to the Center. In other words, candidates with poor relations with the central government would have to "play by the rules" more than others. Nonetheless, the fact that the presidential administration rarely identified "its" candidate, marked a substantial difference from the prior elections and likely removed considerations of one's evaluation of the president from one's decision to support a given candidate. As a result, there were fewer bases in the 2000-2001 elections for the type of "referendum voting" that I argue marked the 1996-1997 election round.

Perhaps partly as a result of this change, and as the second critical difference from the earlier round, the 2000-2001 elections were also characterized by the overall success of incumbents. All incumbents held their office as a result of earlier elections and were not directly tied to an unpopular president. In addition to the removal of the "referendum voting" issue, the high rate of incumbent success also resulted from the increase in the number of regions with "incumbent friendly" election laws, as well as full four to eight year tenures in office which allowed incumbents to establish themselves in their regions. "Incumbent friendly" laws were both more abundant and (as success rates in "incumbent friendly" regions indicate) more effective at "protecting" sitting governors.

Length of tenure acted as more of a double edged sword. Candidates with four years in office had an adequate period to establish (if not "entrench") themselves in their regions, building cadre, strengthening their control over "administrative resources" like the media, and increasing their visibility in the public eye. However the high attrition rate for seven to eight year candidates indicates that diminishing returns come into effect after four years and undermines the argument that regions were essentially bound up by a regional political elite that was initially

entrenched during the years immediately following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Only ten initial regional “regimes” survived into the 2000-2001 round and of these only five won elections and went on to rule for another four to five years.

From the standpoint of this study the attrition amongst multi-term incumbents raises an interesting point to be included in the later economic voting analyses. Perhaps seven and eight year incumbents in poor performance regions were more vulnerable to fluctuations in economic performance than their four years counterparts simply because they had been in office for *too* long. If economic performance had continued to slump for the entire eight year period, the incumbent could no longer claim that these were temporary events and that another term was necessary for his or her policies to create a turnaround. As Valentina Shuvalova of Ul’yanovsk State Technical University’s “Perspektiv” sociology laboratory said of Ul’yanovsk’s eight-year incumbent, “He’d had eight years to make things work. The economy only got worse. He was out of ideas and no one believed he had anything else to offer”.

### **The Election Cycles Through the Scope of the Accountability Criteria**

In terms of the four accountability criteria, what does this discussion of Russia’s election institutions and the events of the 1996-1997 and 2000-2001 election cycles indicate? With regard to the second criteria (voters capable of replacing incumbents) the 1996-1997 and, to a lesser extent, 2000-2001 elections offer no conclusive evidence for the “entrenchment” of regional executive incumbents. High attrition rates amongst incumbents in the 1996-1997 round clearly indicated that governor’s fiefdoms were not unassailable and it is not until 2000-2001 that incumbent survival rates exceeded attrition. But does this new survivability suggest entrenchment? The numbers alone provide little indication. As indicated above, the 2000-2001

survival rate approximates that of governors in recent US elections. Any claim that the Russian figures represent entrenchment would thus have to apply to American governors as well.

However, the increase of “incumbent-friendly” legislation tells another story. By creating a set of election laws which - by themselves or combined with other forms of election chicanery - allow incumbents to win elections with miniscule portions of the popular vote, regional governments may have disenfranchised a large portion of the electorate. Orchestrating such elections and effectively shielding themselves from angry voters could significantly less incumbents’ accountability. Theoretically the electorate in such regions could still remove the incumbent, but only through an extremely strong show of opposition at the polls. This issue will again be addressed following the analyses of incumbent election success in Chapter Five and again in the conclusions of Chapter Six.

Nearly unanimous decisions to run for reelection in both election cycles satisfy the third criteria (incumbents have an incentive to run for reelection). In only a handful of cases did incumbents voluntarily opt out of elections. Furthermore, largely successful attempts to overcome existing but imperfect term limit laws indicate just how highly incumbents value their office. However, recent changes under the Putin administration may alter this picture. If in fact term limit laws stiffen and incumbents must actually surrender office without a campaign battle, will governors shirk their final terms? A number of different factors are involved in answering this question, but one should not quickly jump to the most negative conclusions. First, tighter federal control in the form of the Center’s ability to remove rouge governors might prevent final-term incumbents from plundering their regions. However, more subtle “internal” mechanism could render this more extreme measure unnecessary. The practice of choosing *premniki*<sup>121</sup> suggests that incumbents are concerned about life after office. Be this whether they seek

protection for the crimes of their incumbency, or because they have a desire to see their vision for the region carried out beyond their term in office, incumbents may nonetheless have an incentive to serve the electorate through their final term in office. One must keep in mind that, for better or worse, governors are often members of regional elites who will continue to exist in the region after elections. Ensuring that a friendly candidate follows a governor into office is a guarantee of at least a pleasant retirement and at best, future enrichment in the non-public sector.

### *The Next Step*

Having presented this guide to Russia's regional executive elections, I now shift the focus from general questions to more focused analyses of accountability for economic conditions. The next chapter presents the results of the first stage of analyses focusing on the role that economic factors played in the 2000-2001 election round. Looking at individual level support calculi on the eve of elections in Samara and Ul'yánovsk oblast, we start with the individual building blocs of elections – the voters - asking whether and how these individuals took assessments of economic conditions into account when deciding whether to support or reject their incumbents. Following the results of this analysis, we will then shift back to the “bigger picture” looking at the outcomes of elections across the Russian Federation.

## **Chapter 4 Gubernatorial Accountability for Economic Performance in Russia's Regions:**

### **Initial Results from Individual-level Analyses**

This chapter opens the quantitative portion of the study with an analysis of those factors which that influenced the decisions of citizens in two regions to support or oppose their incumbents prior to these regions' most recent (2000) elections. In terms of Manin, Przeworski, and Stokes' four institutional/procedural criteria for accountability, this analysis essentially focuses on criteria number one: i.e. whether or not citizens are able to assign responsibility for policy outcomes.<sup>122</sup> Here, once again, the focus is on accountability for economic issues – specifically, whether or not voters can discern between areas of jurisdictional responsibility and punish or reward governors only for those outcomes which fall within their policy-making jurisdiction.

The chapter begins with a discussion of the “ideal sub-national jurisdictional voter” – indicating the type of behavior that would be necessary to meet Manin, Przeworski, and Stokes' fourth criterion at the level of regional elections. Having laid out the criteria for the jurisdictional voter, I proceed to a plausibility probe to determine whether voters in Russia's region's exhibit behavior similar to this ideal type. The plausibility probe consists of an assortment of economic voting hypotheses tested against survey data drawn from the regions of Samara and Ul'yankovsk prior to their 2000 regional executive elections.<sup>123</sup> Results of the probe are encouraging, suggesting that respondents in the two regions closely approximated our ideal type, with their relative sociotropic considerations ranking amongst the most influential factors determining incumbent support.

### *The Ideal Sub-national Jurisdictional Voter*

From the perspective of voting behavior, what might the ideal “jurisdictional voter” look like? Generally speaking, such voters would recognize the limited jurisdiction of their regional executives and representatives and “punish or reward” incumbents only for those outcomes for which they are (at least conceivably) responsible.<sup>124</sup> Hence, incumbents would have an incentive to maximize the well being of their citizens because these incumbents understand that voters will assess their performance and choose to vote for them based solely (or at least primarily) on those outcomes for which they are perceived to be responsible.

This entails two things for the study of economic voting behavior at the regional level. First, one would expect voters to discern between the effects of external factors and the effects of incumbent’s policies. For example, if the entire nation is suffering an economic downturn, the jurisdictionally minded voter would not automatically go to the polls during a gubernatorial election to “turn the rascal” out. Instead, this ideal type would apply some method to assess whether or not the incumbent governor has done all in his or her power to reverse or at least soften the effect of the general downturn in the region under his or her policy jurisdiction. One of the simplest assessments mechanisms would be to compare the downturn in the voter’s region to the downturn in other regions. Seeing that conditions in the voter’s region are deteriorating faster than in other regions, the voter might reasonably conclude that the incumbent is shirking, and vote in favor of the incumbent’s opponent. If voters fail to apply any type of mechanism to discern between regional and external factors, then incumbents have little incentive to work for the voters’ welfare maximization - amidst a national economic upturn, all governors would win (and in a downturn, lose) regardless of the policies that they implemented in the course of their terms.

The second implication of the jurisdictional voter definition is that voters should give salience to sociotropic over pocketbook considerations. While pocketbook voting in the case of a broad upswing or downturn could yield a certain degree of accountability, such behavior is far less efficient than when sociotropic concerns dominate. Sociotropic assessments focus more closely on that issue for which incumbents are responsible – the general well being of the society within their policy jurisdictions. Voter's focused primarily on pocketbook issues introduce a great deal of noise into the accountability relationship. Not only would votes be responses to those personal fortunes resulting from incumbents' policies, but they would also be responses to personal mishaps, sudden windfalls – even the plunder from criminal activities! On a more speculative note, sociotropic concerns may also indicate a less “myopic” voter.<sup>125</sup> To continue with Manin, Przeworski, and Stokes' analogy, regional-level pocketbook voters may be perfectly happy sipping champagne as the incumbent cuts down all the trees. Sociotropic voters, by focusing on the society-level condition may be more discerning about the long term effects on societal welfare of such short-sighted policies as clear-cutting the oblast.

### ***A First Look at Jurisdictional Support in Russia's Regions***

Based as it is on cases from a limited number of regions, the following analysis is not an attempt to present the first and final word on economic voting behavior across all of Russia's regions. What it does offer is a plausibility probe asking whether voters in the two case regions exhibit behavior which approximates the ideal jurisdictional voter described above. Nonetheless, the results of the study are sufficiently intriguing to encourage scholars to further examine whether similar dynamics are present in a broader number of cases. As a first step in the examination of regional-level economic voting behavior, the “value added” of this study exceeds some of the methodological problems resulting from the small number of cases and the nature of



the survey data (more specific limitations of the study are discussed in the section “Measures and Data”).

### *The Case Regions*

The two regions from which this survey data were drawn provide an interesting contrast of both economic conditions and policies, allowing us to not only examine the effects of economic voting in general, but to see how these effects play out in two very diverse cases. Ul'yanovsk and Samara are neighboring regions situated along the Volga River in the southern European portion of Russia. According to the most recent data (1999), Samara has a population of 3,294,000 situated on 53.6 thousand square kilometers of territory. Approximately 80% of the region's population lives in urban settlements and manufacturing constitutes the largest economic sector - employing 27.5% of the working population. The region is historically known for its aerospace and weapons factories, the AvtoVAZ auto plant (largest auto producer in Russia, accounting for roughly 75% of all domestic auto production), chemical production, and oil and gas extraction and refinement. However, by 2000, the aerospace and weapons production industry was a mere shadow of its former self and machine production related to the AvtoVAZ plant remained the primary foundation of the economy.<sup>126</sup>

Though smaller in size and slightly less urbanized, Ul'yanovsk oblast nonetheless reflects many of the same characteristics as its neighbor. According to data from 1999, Ul'yanovsk has a population of 1,463,200 situated on 37.2 thousand square kilometers of territory. 73.1% of the population lives in urban settlements and, as in Samara, manufacturing provides the largest source of employment (employing 29.1% of the working population). Ul'yanovsk is also known for its aerospace and weapons production industries as well as automobile manufacturing. While both weapons and aircraft production have decreased in importance, Ul'yanovsk's Aviastar

aircraft production plant is still comparatively active (amongst other projects, this plant produces the gigantic “Ruslan” cargo plane). In terms of other types of production, Ul’yanovsk is less well endowed than its neighbor with regards to oil and gas production, but maintains some chemical production. Construction companies also play a large role in the local economy.<sup>127</sup>

Samara and Ul’yanovsk were the scenes of two very different economic and political “phenomena” during the 1990s. Primarily as a result of President Yeltsin’s oftentimes-arbitrary manner of selecting regional executives, the governors appointed to each oblast in 1992 went on to pursue markedly different economic and social policy trajectories. Samara’s Governor, Konstantin Titov, evolved into a sort of archetype for liberal reform-minded governors, implementing a comparatively radical set of market reforms including nearly total price deregulation, provisions for the sale of land, and the implementation of a variety of investment and small business development programs. Such policies attracted a comparatively large amount of outside investment to the region and led to the steady development of new forms of economic activity that gradually offset the worst effects of the declines in the regional military industrial complex. As just two concrete indicators of the region’s relative success, by 1996 Samara was an established “donor” region<sup>128</sup> and by 1998 had one of the few balanced regional budgets within the entire federation.

In contrast, Ul’yanovsk had enjoyed early notoriety as an “island of socialism” and a “Red Belt”<sup>129</sup> region that had somehow escaped the ravages of Yegor Gaidar’s shock therapy. In 1993, the region boasted the lowest cost of living of any region in Russia – a fact that caught the attention of scholars and other observers from Russia and the West alike. While the details of the programs which were undertaken in Ul’yanovsk remain murky to this day, it is generally understood that the region’s peculiar economic indicators were largely the result of collusion

between the oblast administration and nominally privatized local firms, food and communal service subsidies backed by a more gradual elimination of the Soviet coupon system, and regional support of floundering industries that secured – at least “on paper” - a consistent level of production and employment. Such programs required a great deal of financial support from the regional budget which in turn acquired funds diverted from targeted federal programs, loans drawn from local and federal level banks, excessive taxes on the remaining productive firms in the region (particularly, the auto and aircraft production facilities) and “other”, more ill-defined, sources. Unfortunately, while they wrought certain political dividends in the early 1990’s, such programs were intrinsically short-term. A combination of low transfers from the federal government (a byproduct of the governor’s ambivalent relationship with the presiding Yeltsin administration), debts on previous loans, and a gradually shrinking tax base (driven largely by a lack of investment and the hindered development of new forms of economic activity), led to contracting budgets and the inability to sustain the social programs upon which the local population now depended.

In comparative terms, if prior to 1995 citizens of Ul’yanovsk had consistently enjoyed a lower cost of living than in Samara (thanks mostly to price regulation in the former region), by 1996, steadily increasing wages in the latter region and deteriorating social guarantees in the former, tipped the balance and Samarans benefited from a steadily expanding standard of living margin over their neighbor for the remainder of the decade. Additionally, whereas in Samara tighter budget discipline and higher tax revenues freed more money for investment and at least slowed the infrastructural deterioration that characterized nearly all of late 1990s Russia, infrastructural collapse was in full swing in Ul’yanovsk by the fall of 2000. Roads, schools, hospitals, public services – nearly any oblast or municipal supervised service or institution -

showed the effects of nearly ten years of under-investment and deferred maintenance. At the time that the Ul'yanovsk survey was conducted there was already talk of a pending energy crisis similar to that eventually experienced in Primorskii krai during the winter of 2000-2001.<sup>130</sup> Finally, despite the fact that Ul'yanovsk's incumbent had traditionally built his reputation upon social issues, the oblast was increasingly plagued by a payment crisis for pensions, welfare, and budgetary workers' salaries. By contrast, budgetary surpluses allowed Samara's governor to augment pensions, compensate for delays in federal pension and welfare payments, and assure the timely payment of budget personnel.

Drawing on data from the surveys, Table 3 (below) indicates differences in attitudes towards the local economic situation in both oblasts as measured during the summer of 2000. While the questions are differently scaled (bear in mind that these surveys were conducted independently of one another) and in the case of the personal economic evaluation, tap into slightly different factors (recent change over absolute evaluation), the results nonetheless offer a clear picture of the differences across the two regions. Generally speaking, residents of Samara more positively evaluated their personal material situation and the relative standing of their region than those respondents in neighboring Ul'yanovsk. Well over half of the respondents in Ul'yanovsk evaluated their oblast's level of socio-economic development as "much lower than others" while in Samara, the majority were split between "about the same" and "a little better". These results would seem to reinforce evaluations by scholars and other observers (Hanson 1997) that, of the two middle-Volga economic "experiments", Samara's market-reform approach had yielded higher levels of development (and hence, levels of citizens' satisfaction) at the end of the Russian Federation's first decade.<sup>131</sup>

Table 3 Comparison of Responses to Economic Evaluation Questions in Ul'yanovsk and Samara

<i>Ul'yanovsk</i>	<i>Question</i>	<i>%</i>
How would you evaluate the level of socio-economic development and lives of the population in our oblast in comparison with other regions?	Much better than in Others	2.3
	About the Same as in Others	20.0
	Much lower than Others	65.3
	Difficult to Say	11.3
	Refused to Answer	0.1
How would you evaluate the level of your income?	Very High	0.1
	Higher than Average	0.4
	Average	24.8
	Lower than Average	30.9
	Very Low	42.9
	Difficult to Say	0.4
	Refused to Answer	0.1
<i>Samara</i>	<i>Question</i>	<i>%</i>
In your opinion, is the current economic situation in Samara and the oblast better, worse or about the same as in Russia as a whole?	A Little Better	47.7
	About the Same	38.4
	A Little Worse	7.6
	Much Worse	0.7
	Refused to Answer	5.6
What do you think, is your current material situation better, worse, or about the same as it was last Spring (last year)?	Much Better	2.8
	A Little Better	17.7
	About the Same	41.0
	A Little Worse	27.8
	Much Worse	10.7

### *Hypotheses*

I derive three hypotheses from the above discussion of the ideal jurisdictional voter. Hypothesis 1 (H1) states that *support for the incumbent is positively related to the respondent's evaluation of his or her personal economic situation (pocketbook effect)*. This hypothesis represents a classic pocketbook hypothesis, seeking to determine whether regional voters evaluate their regional executives based upon their *personal* economic fortunes over the most recent years. Within the framework of the existing study, a strong showing for the pocketbook hypotheses, would not necessarily indicate that a bases exists for jurisdictional economic voting in these regions. An individuals' economic situation is the result of a combination of both external and personal factors. Individuals may lose their job, or become fabulously rich regardless of the actions of governing officials. Hence, if respondents appear to be "punishing

and rewarding” incumbents based upon personal economic assessments, this may actually create a situation in which incumbents are all the same unaccountable for the results of those policies within their jurisdiction.

This observation leads to the inclusion of a second hypothesis. Hypothesis 2 (H2) states that, *support for the incumbent is positively related to the respondent’s evaluation of the regional economy*. This hypothesis deals with absolute sociotropic effects, seeking to determine whether the respondent focuses on the economic situation in his or her region *independently* of the situation in other regions. Support for this hypothesis would suggest that, while regional economic conditions have an impact on regional executive assessments, they are not consciously determined by comparisons to other regions. Should such absolute assessments take precedence, any regional executive is in danger of being punished under conditions of poor *national* performance.<sup>132</sup> As with the pocketbook hypothesis, salience of absolute sociotropic support calculi would effectively reduce the accountability of regional executive incumbents for those policies which lie within their jurisdiction.

In light of this argument, further refinement is necessary. Thus hypothesis 3 (H3) states that, *support for the incumbent is positively related to the respondent’s evaluation of his or her region’s performance relative to other regions*. This hypothesis seeks to determine whether respondents focus on the economic situation in their region *as compared to* the economic performance in other regions. Support for this hypothesis would indicate that it is *relative* regional performance that matters rather than *absolute* evaluations of national performance as a whole. Relative assessments prove particularly important within the context of a democratic federalism model because they imply that respondents recognize relative “winners and losers” amongst regions rather than merely projecting national assessments of the economy upon their

regional executives.<sup>133</sup> If relative economic assessments play an important role in assessing regional executives, then elections could act as a mechanism to compel administrations in low performing regions to imitate and hopefully converge upon the policies of more successful regions.<sup>134</sup>

### *Data and Measures*

As indicated previously, the surveys from which this data was drawn were conducted by order of gubernatorial candidates and conducted independently of one another by two different public opinion institutes. While I have already indicated why this is not grounds to question the validity of the data, there are a few additional weaknesses introduced by the use of these unrelated (and hence, un-standardized) survey instruments. First, while the Ul'yansovsk survey included the entire oblast, the Samara survey only drew a sample from the capital city of Samara. While the city of Samara accounts for over half of the population in the oblast, this sample still ignores the rural population that, in other studies, has often exhibited behavior markedly different from that in major urban areas. The importance of this may be partially offset by the fact that actual election results showed little difference in the level of support for the Samara incumbent across urban-rural boundaries. Furthermore, support calculi across urban/rural boundaries in the Ul'yansovsk case were not significant. As indicated below, an included "rural/urban" dummy variable failed to survive even the initial iterations of the Ul'yansovsk regression.

Second, the wording and precise meaning of a number of the survey measures differs slightly across the two studies. In particular, as indicated below, the pocketbook evaluation in Samara measures change in personal material conditions and in Ul'yansovsk the respondent is simply asked to evaluate the adequacy of his or her current income. In response to potential

criticism, I argue that, while it does restrict comparison across the regions, this incompatibility is not a critical for the questions being examined in this study. What I am primarily interested in, is how pocketbook considerations measure against the other variables in the equation. While it certainly would be preferable and more efficient to have the same measure, this is no reason to essentially shelve this entire analysis. For the time being this data is “good enough” until the implementation of more extensive and comprehensive studies.

This said I move on to the measures. In testing the above-indicated hypotheses, I employ a simple dichotomous dependent variable measuring support/non-support for the oblast’s current incumbent. This measure is recoded from the survey question, “If the gubernatorial election was held next Sunday for which candidate would you be most likely to vote for?” Respondents were given the option to choose from a list of all possible candidates, “against all”, not vote, or answer “difficult to say”. For the purposes of this measure all responses other than “Yuri Goryachev” for the Ul’yanovsk case and “Konstantin Titov” for the Samara case are coded as a vote “against the incumbent”.

Turning to the independent variables, ABSOLUTE measures the absolute sociotropic effect and is operationalized using those questions on each survey that tapped into the respondents’ assessment of his or her region’s current economic situation independently of performance in other regions. In the Ul’yanovsk questionnaire, the respondent was asked, “In your opinion, is the oblast social-economic situation currently moving in the right direction? Respondents were given a list of possible responses; 1) Yes, in the right direction; 2) Generally speaking, in the right direction; 3) No development at all; 4) Not in the entirely right direction; 5) In the completely wrong direction. For the purposes of this survey, the coding reversed the order of evaluations found on the questionnaire (so as to reflect movement from worse to better



evaluations) with “difficult to say” and non-responses coded as “missing”. The Samara survey contained a similar question asking, “In what direction has it (the economic situation) changed over the past year (gotten better, worse, or remained about the same.)”<sup>135</sup> Respondents were then given the option of responding 1) much worse; 2) somewhat worse; 3) about the same; 4) somewhat better; 5) much better. For the purposes of this comparison, responses were coded in the same order as on the questionnaire and non-responses were coded as missing.

RELATIVE measures the comparative sociotropic measure discussed in hypothesis H3. In the Ul’yanovsk survey, respondents were asked, “How do you evaluate the level of socio-economic development and life of the population in our region as compared to other regions?” Each respondent had the option of answering 1) Much higher than in others, 2) Same as in others, 3) Much worse than in others, 4) Difficult to Answer and 5) No answer. The order of options one to three was reversed in the coding process (creating a worse to better scale) and non-answers were coded as missing. In the Samara survey the respondent was asked, “In your opinion, is the current economic situation in Samara better, worse, or about the same as in the country as a whole?” Respondents had the option of answering 1) much worse, 2) worse, 3) about the same, 4) better, 5) much better. Answers were coded in the same order as in the questionnaire and non-answers were coded as missing.

POCKETBOOK measures the respondents’ evaluation of their personal “pocket-book” economic situations. For the Ul’yanovsk survey the respondent was asked, “How do you evaluate your current level of income?” The respondents were then given a list of possible responses; 1) High; 2) Higher than average; 3) Average; 4) Lower than average; 5) Low. For the purposes of this survey, the coding reversed the order of evaluations found on the questionnaire (so as to reflect movement from worse to better evaluations). “Difficult to say” and non-

responses were coded as “missing”. Samara respondents were posed with the question, “What do you think, is your current material situation (the material condition of your family) better, worse, or about the same as it was in the previous spring (a year ago)? Respondents were then given the option of responding 1) much worse; 2) somewhat worse; 3) about the same; 4) somewhat better; 5) much better. Responses on the Samara survey were coded in the same order as on the questionnaire with non-responses coded as missing.

Before moving on, I want to address any suspicions regarding high correlations between these three measures. Each measure is essentially differentiated by a particular nuance which might be overlooked by the respondent. One could easily imagine that many down on their luck respondents would simply provide negative assessments across all three measures. This would introduce a multicollinearity problem into the analysis and thus undermine the results. However, correlation matrixes indicated surprisingly weak relationships between the three measures. Of all the possible combinations, the highest correlation was between the comparative and absolute sociotropic evaluation in the Ul’yanovsk case. However, at  $-.226$ , this could hardly be considered a strong correlation and hence, the risk of multicollinearity is quite low. The remaining correlations are close to or lower than  $\pm .20$ . By itself, this is a significant find as it indicates that respondents make rather sophisticated decisions about the economic situation in their regions.

Moving on from the hypotheses-testing measures described above, I also control for a number of “non-economic” variables in each region, including measures for respondents’ age, ideological inclination, education, gender, employment status, and in the Ul’yanovsk test, the respondents’ attitude towards candidates from security organs and whether the candidate lives in a rural or urban setting.<sup>136</sup> The addition of the age, urbanization, employment status, gender,

party/ideological preference and education controls are more or less de rigueur for survey analyses and do not warrant a great deal of discussion within the bounds of this current work. Measures for employment status and party and ideological preference require at least short mention in order to assist in the interpretation of the logistic regression results. The employment variable indicates whether the respondent is employed, a pensioner, a student or unemployed and seeking work. In the logistic regressions below, “employed” is the baseline measure for this categorical variable. Party support and ideology indicates which major party the respondent supported in the previous election. For the purposes of this model, the responses are grouped into four categories: CPRF voters have their own category, voters for Unity and Fatherland are grouped into a “center” category, SPS and Yabloko votes are grouped into a “liberal” category, and supporters of “Bloc Zhirinovskiy” (a 1999 incarnation of the then-banned LDPR) constitute the final category. Introducing this into the model as a classification variable, I use the “center” group as the baseline.

As a somewhat unorthodox indicator (at least amongst economic voting studies), the security opponent measure requires further explanation. This measure taps into the respondents’ attitude towards candidates from security organs and is included in order to determine whether a particular preference for candidates from these organs played a role in citizens’ attitudes towards the Ul’yanovsk incumbent.<sup>137</sup> Following the election of a General (Vladimir Shamanov) to the governor’s post in December of 2000, a number of commentators attributed the incumbent’s loss to a particular type of conservatism in the region that had shifted preferences from old communist leaders to another traditional institution – the military.<sup>138</sup> Furthermore the idea that, under President Putin, the regional executives would be “overrun” by military and security candidates was popular amongst the Russian and western press at the time of the 2000-2001

round of gubernatorial elections. This variable helps us to assess whether there was any electoral basis for this contention.

### ***Model Specification and Results***

The fact that INCUMB is a dichotomous variable measuring support/non-support for the incumbent, and that each independent variable is measured on an ordinal scale, precludes the use of OLS regression and standard logit modeling. Hence, this analysis applies binomial logistic regression models to the data.<sup>139</sup> Like OLS regression models, logistic regression allows one to determine the net effects of a number of predictors on a dependent variable. However, whereas OLS regression indicates the linear relationship between a set of predictors and a continuous dependent variable, logistic regression allows us to measure the change in odds that a certain outcome will be achieved on a categorical variable given changes in a set of categorical, continuous or binomial predictors.

In order to better control for specificities in each oblast, models are estimated for each region. In both instances, the log  $O_i$  is the conditional odds that the respondent will support the incumbent (for Ul'yansovsk, Yuri Goryachev and for Samara, Konstantin Titov) given a specific combination of scores on the sociotropic and pocketbook economic evaluations, age variable, and (in the Ul'yansovsk case) security personnel evaluation.

UL'YANOVSK:  $\text{Log}O_i = a + \beta_1(\text{ABSOLUTE}_i) + \beta_2(\text{POCKETBOOK}_i) + \beta_3(\text{RELATIVE}) + \beta_4(\text{DUMA99}_i) + \beta_5(\text{EDUCATION}_i) + \beta_6(\text{EMPLOYMENT}_i)$

SAMARA:  $\text{Log}O_i = a + \beta_1(\text{ABSOLUTE}_i) + \beta_2(\text{POCKETBOOK}_i) + \beta_3(\text{RELATIVE}) + \beta_4(\text{DUMA99}_i) + \beta_5(\text{EMPLOYMENT}_i)$

**Table 4 Final Logit Results for Ul'yanovsk and Samara**

<i>UL'YANOVSK</i>			<i>SAMARA</i>		
<i>Variable</i>	<i>e<sup>β</sup></i> <sup>a</sup>	<i>s.e.</i>	<i>Variable</i>	<i>e<sup>β</sup></i> <sup>a</sup>	<i>s.e.</i>
<b>Pocketbook</b>	1.36**	0.12	<b>Pocketbook</b>	1.16*	0.07
<b>Absolute</b>	2.16**	0.11	<b>Absolute</b>	1.61**	0.08
<b>Relative</b>	2.20**	0.19	<b>Relative</b>	1.60**	0.09
<b>Duma99</b>			<b>Duma99</b>		
CPRF	2.10**	0.21	CPRF	0.41**	0.16
SPS, Yabloko	2.01	0.32	SPS, Yabloko	1.57**	0.15
Bloc Zhir.	1.21	0.45	Bloc Zhir.	0.85	0.32
<b>Employment</b>			<b>Employment</b>		
Pensioner	1.68*	0.22	Pensioner	1.67**	0.16
Student	1.11	0.81	Student	0.99	0.26
Unemployed	0.67	0.45	Unemployed	0.99	0.31
<b>Secure</b>	1.42**	0.08			
<b>Education</b>	0.84**				
<b>Model <math>\chi^2</math></b>	227.30**		<b>Model <math>\chi^2</math></b>	212.99**	
<b>Hosmer and Lemeshow Test</b>	11.56 <sup>c</sup>		<b>Hosmer and Lemeshow Test</b>	3.05 <sup>d</sup>	
<b>Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup></b>	0.37		<b>Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup></b>	0.21	
<b>N<sup>e</sup></b>	752.00		<b>N<sup>e</sup></b>	1236.00	

<sup>a</sup> Designates odds ratio. These are interpreted by subtracting 1 from the given value and interpreting the difference as the percent change in odds that the event (support for the candidate) will occur given a one unit increase in the indicator. Hence, for "pocketbook" a one unit shift from the most negative evaluation would yield a .36% increase in the odds that the respondent will support the candidate.

<sup>b</sup> .066 significance level

<sup>c</sup> .172 significance level

<sup>d</sup> .931 significance level

<sup>e</sup> Most of the missing cases resulted from lower response rates to the 1999 Duma vote measure. Results from separate logits with Duma99 removed exhibited no significant change in the relative magnitude and significance of the coefficients of interest.

Table 4 presents results for the final models. In terms of the model's significance and goodness of fit, the Chi-square is significant for both models, but as this merely indicates that at least one of the predictors in the model has a non-zero coefficient, I also provide measures using the Hosmer and Lemeshow test and the Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup> (a "pseudo- R<sup>2</sup>" measure). The Hosmer and

Lemeshow test assesses the null-hypothesis that there is no difference between the predicted and observed values of the dependent variable (i.e. the model offers little improvement over randomly guessing the outcome of the dependent) and hence, *non*-significant *p* scores are desirable (allowing us to reject the null hypothesis). In both cases, the models fall above the necessary .05 significance standard with the Samara model giving us the greatest degree of confidence in the model's fit. Results from the classification tables (excluded from this article) for each model indicate a marked improvement in the amount of variance explained using these models as opposed to randomly guessing the outcome. For the Ul'yankovsk case the model correctly predicted 77.8% of the responses – a 10% improvement. The model was more effective at predicting negative (90.2% correct) than positive (51.7%) outcomes. In relative terms, the Samara model was even more successful, correctly predicting 67.6% of the variance – an improvement of 17.4%.<sup>140</sup> Like the Ul'yankovsk model, the Samara model was more successful at predicting positive (70.6% correct) than negative (64.4%) outcomes.

In terms of the coefficients, Table 4 presents the more intuitive exponentiated odds ratios. Looking at the economic variables, the pocketbook evaluations, while still meeting .01 and .05 significance requirements, were less significant than the two socio-tropic measures in both models. Turning to the coefficients, a one unit improvement in a respondent's evaluation of their personal economic situation increased the probability that the respondent would support the incumbent by 16% in Samara and 36% in Ul'yankovsk. Moving on to the absolute socio-tropic measure, a one unit improvement yields a 61% increase in the probability of supporting the incumbent in Samara and 116% in Ul'yankovsk. Values for the final, relative measure indicates that a one unit improvement in respondents' assessments yield 60% and 120% respective increases in the probability of supporting the respective incumbents in Samara and Ul'yankovsk.

The fate of the control variables is also instructive. First the rural/urban control, included only in the Ul'yanovsk case, was eliminated from the final model after exhibiting a significance level of only .12. Urban respondents were less likely to support the incumbent, but not significantly enough to satisfy conventional standards. This alleviates some of the concern over the lack of a rural sample in the Samara case – the urban and rural populations' calculi seemed to differ only moderately in the Ul'yanovsk case. Controls for age and gender provided little predictive leverage and were therefore also eliminated from the final model.<sup>141</sup> Education figured prominently only in the Ul'yanovsk case, most likely because of the perceived split between the incumbent and regional intellectuals, businessmen, and students. The security variable, unique to the Ul'yanovsk test, survived into the final model, indicating that a one unit increase (in this case a more negative assessment of general – governors) in the respondent's assessments of a security based candidate increased the probability of supporting the incumbent governor by roughly 41%. Hence, a desire for a “man on horseback” in the governor's seat may have had an important impact on respondents' decisions to support Ul'yanovsk's incumbent.

Generally speaking, the economic variables, particularly the socio-tropic measures, performed very well relative to the non-economic controls. In the Ul'yanovsk case, significance measures for the controls were consistently weaker than for the economic measures (the one exception being the Duma99 measure which outpaced the pocketbook indicator – not a major problem in terms of incumbent accountability). The Samara case indicated a more mixed record. The socio-tropic measured outperformed all other variables with the exception of the Duma99 measure. However, considering the fact that Samara's governor played an instrumental role in Soyuz Pravii Sil's 1999 Duma campaign, this outcome is hardly surprising. Furthermore, unlike

the more myopic situation in Ul'yanovsk, there is little to obfuscate the sharp and long-term opposition between Titov and the local communist party organs in Samara.

### *Conclusions*

In terms of holding governors accountable for economic performance outcomes, the above results indicate that voters in the two regions under consideration exhibited elements of the type of voting behavior necessary to call governors to account for their economic policies. First, as indicated above, the economic test indicators returned strong coefficients relative to the other “non-economic” controls. This lessens the possibility that the economic assessment measures are in fact permutations of other excluded variables like employment status, education, place of residence (at least in the Ul'yanovsk case), gender, etc. Second, pocketbook measures performed worse than socio-tropic measures. This indicates that the incumbents were less likely to be punished for the more idiosyncratic turns in respondents' personal fortunes. Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, relative socio-tropic measures played a strongly significant role in each region. This indicates that respondents are in fact weighing their regions' performance against that of other regions, thus holding their incumbents responsible for those outcomes which fall within their jurisdiction. The importance of this last point should not be underestimated. Should the relative measure have been much weaker than the other two measure or had it been tightly correlated to the absolute measure, then one could argue that governors are “punished and rewarded” for factors external to their policy responsibilities. Only in situations in which such relative evaluations play a strong role, can one expect governors to have the incentive to work for changes in regional living standards in exchange for popular support.

On a closing note, I restate that these surveys were drawn from only two regions and problems of comparison across differently worded questions place certain limitations on the



results. Nonetheless, as a sort of plausibility probe, the analyses indicate that there may be strong economic voting dynamics occurring at the regional level and these demand more detailed and systematic investigation. A next logical step is to create a single survey instrument which can be applied to future elections – particularly the next concentrated set of elections in 2004-2005. The fact that 30+ regions undergo elections within roughly a four month period, holds a number of external factors constant, allowing researchers to focus explicitly on regional-specific dynamics. Depending on the support available, such a study could either apply the survey instrument to all or a selected subset of the elections. With a single survey, results from each region could then be pooled into a single set for testing across a variety of economic and political conditions. Results of such a study could make a lasting and important contribution to the economic voting literature as a whole, and significantly increase researchers' understandings of the dynamics of regional elections in post-socialist states and the Russian Federation.

## **Chapter 5 Russian Regional Executive Accountability for Regional Economic**

### **Performance: Evidence from Aggregate-level Analyses**

This chapter builds upon the survey analyses of Chapter Four by examining the nexus between incumbent success and aggregate level regional economic performance. In doing so, I investigate to what extent various measures of economic performance provide leverage for predicting both variations in incumbents' share of the final election round vote and whether the incumbent (or incumbent regime) maintained office. This two-stage approach to examining the issue of cross-regional aggregate level economic voting allows one to explore how fluctuations in various economic indicators affect incumbents' vote share, and to assess whether incumbents were nonetheless able to shield themselves from popular discontent through pro-incumbent election laws and other forms of manipulation.

The analysis begins with a series of OLS regressions using data from both the 1996-1997 and 2000-2001 rounds. I test hypotheses regarding the impact of a set of both economic indicators and "non-economic" controls on final round election results and compare the strength of these variables across the two sets of elections. Economic variables include both static levels and measures of change in unemployment, poverty, real wages, real pensions, investment, and wage arrears. I also experiment with lags of one and two years prior to the election in order to determine which measures during which time period exhibited the most marked effect on election outcomes.

Results from these analyses are quite intriguing. While economic measures essentially "fall out" of the 1996-1997 elections analyses, the 2000-2001 results suggest the emergence of real wage and pension measures as significant determinants of incumbent success.

Of the “non-economic” variables in the initial model, only the dummy variable indicating the presence of a security organ-based opponent, a control for the number of candidates in the final election round, and measures of incumbent support during the previous 1996-1997 election cycle provide sufficient predictive leverage – ideological and party identification drop out of the final model.

After investigating the determinants of incumbent vote shares, I go on to examine whether similar relationships are evident between the set of predictors in the previous model and the odds that incumbents retain their posts. Using logistic regression techniques to predict variation on a dichotomous incumbent win/loss variable, I demonstrate that the real wages and pension measures from the vote share model also provide significant leverage for predicting the odds that incumbent regimes maintain office. Given the host of potential intervening factors in election outcomes, this presents a rather startling find. Together, these analyses indicate that not only do incumbents’ shares of the vote fluctuate with regional living standards, but incumbents in low performance regions also face a real danger of losing office.

### *Incumbents’ Share of the Vote*

To begin, this section examines the relationship between economic voting and incumbents’ share of the vote during each case region’s “final” election round.<sup>142</sup> As illustrated in Chapter Two’s literature review, studies of cross national studies of economic voting in the advanced industrial democracies indicate that voters may react differently to various types of economic performance and to the timing of economic fluctuations relative to the election or survey. Voters in one country may exhibit sensitivity to changes in real wages while their counterparts in other states react to increases in unemployment or inflation. In terms of timing, an economic upturn two years prior to an election may well be forgotten by the time an election

roles around. Given the dearth of existing information regarding voting behavior in Russian regional elections, such considerations demand that one test a variety of potentially influential economic factors while drawing measurements from various periods prior to the election.

What type of aggregate-level economic indicators might impact support for incumbents in the Russian sub-national setting? Regional economic growth, as measured by gross regional product might seem an obvious option but it immediately raises a number of problems. Most importantly, as economic trends from 1999 to 2001 indicated, growth in such an indicator as gross regional product (GRP) does not automatically translate into improved living standards for the population. In fact, in the year spanning December 1998 to December 1999, measures of real wages and pensions as a percentage of regional poverty levels, continued to decline despite a broad upturn in many aggregate measures of productivity. Logically, voters within a setting in which macro-growth indicators improve but standard of living continues to deteriorate might give precedence to those issues closest to their own well-being such as real wages and pensions, unemployment rates, wage arrears, and regional poverty levels. Hence, while aggregate productivity measures like GRP must be included in the initial analyses, I expect these to exhibit weaker relationships to incumbent success than more direct measures of regional living standards.

Aside from asking which *type* of indicators might affect incumbents' election fortunes, another important issue concerns whether this effect is linked to static measures (say GRP in 1999) or measures of change for the given indicators (change in GRP from 1998-1999). A situation in which incumbents within regions exhibiting high static measures of any given indicator are more likely to win elections than their counterparts in regions exhibiting lower measures would not necessarily suggest accountability for regional performance. To take the

Tyumen example, the region's abundance of oil and other natural resources gives it an inherent economic advantage relative to other regions. However, the fact that the region had the highest real wage levels of any of the 2000-2001 election case regions provides little indication of the incumbent's effectiveness as an administrator. In fact, while the region exhibited the highest *static* real wage values, these wages were decreasing at a sharper rate than in any of the other case regions. Such a sharp decrease suggests changes in the regional economy that one might logically attribute to fluctuations in regional performance under the existing administration. Conversely, one could also conceive of a poorly endowed region with low static performance measures experiencing marked improvement in these measures under an able administrator. In either case, if voters focus on static measures, there is little incentive for incumbents in high performance regions to pursue policies that benefit their constituents, and incumbents in low performance regions are doomed to be punished by an electorate that is discontent with factors that lie beyond the administration's control. Hence, accountability for economic performance is best promoted if incumbent election success is related to those measures that most logically represent the fruits of the incumbent's policies – change in economic indicators at some point prior to the election.

Additionally, the timing of economic fluctuations may also play an important role in determining incumbent election success. Studies of Western election trends by Fair, Stigler, and others have demonstrated, that the ability to explain election outcomes with economic indicators differs according to the time frame in question.<sup>143</sup> Most studies indicate that measures of economic change across an entire term (perhaps the most logical means to assess the effects of an incumbent's policies) offer little or no leverage in explaining election outcomes and Stigler's analysis indicated that even two-year time lags eliminated economic factors. Voters appear to be

rather myopic, primarily “remembering” fluctuations in the economy that occur just prior to the election in question. Nonetheless, while most studies of the economic voting issue have employed measures drawn from the year prior to the election, enough discord remains around this issue to demand the inclusion of lagged measures.

With these issues in mind, I draw upon a variety of available, standardized economic indicators from the regions under examination, and test a set of hypotheses for both the 1996-1997 and 2000-2001 election rounds. Separate sets of models are run using both static measures and measures of change over one and two years (testing for time lags). Together, these tests allow me to determine whether, during both election cycles, any relationship exists between economic performance fluctuations and incumbent election success and which types of indicators over which time period were most strongly related to incumbent vote shares. The main test hypotheses are as follows:

**H1: Real Wages**

**Change hypothesis:** Incumbents’ percentage of the vote is positively related to the change in real wages during the year prior (1995-1996 for the 1996-1997 elections, and 1998-1999 for the 2000-2001 elections) to the election

**Levels hypothesis:** Percentage of the vote will be negatively related to the static level of regional unemployment at the time of the election.

**H2: Real Pensions**

**Change hypothesis:** Incumbents’ percentage of the vote is positively related to the change in real pensions during the year leading up to the election

**Levels hypothesis:** Percentage of the vote is negatively related to the static level of regional real wages.

**H3: Poverty Levels**

**Change hypothesis:** Incumbents' percentage of the vote is negatively related to the change in the number of individuals living below the poverty level during the year leading up to the election.

**Levels hypothesis:** Percentage of the vote is negatively related to the static level of regional poverty.

**H4: Regional Unemployment**

**Change hypothesis:** Incumbents' percentage of the vote is negatively related to the change in the level of regional unemployment during the year leading up to the election.

**Levels hypothesis:** Percentage of the vote is negatively related to the static level of regional unemployment.

**H5: Arrears**

**(2000-2001) Change hypothesis:** Incumbents' percentage of the vote is negatively related to change in the volume of regional wage arrears during the year leading up to the election.

**Levels hypothesis:** Percentage of the vote is negatively related to the static level of regional wage arrears.

**H6: Gross Regional Product**

**(2000-2001) Change hypothesis:** Incumbents' percentage of the vote is positively related to change in the region's gross regional product during the year leading up to the election.<sup>144</sup>

**Levels hypothesis:** Incumbent vote share is positively related to the static level of the region's gross regional product.

**H7: Investment**

**Change hypothesis:** Incumbent's percentage of the vote is positively related to change in regional per capita investment levels during the year prior to the election.

**Levels hypothesis:** Incumbent vote share is positively related to the static level of regional per capita investment during the year prior to the election

***Data and Variables***

The following analyses draw upon databases that I developed for the 1996-1997 and 2000-2001 elections. The databases contain 100+ political, economic, and institutional elections for both the 35 elections that occurred between September 1, 1996 and January 1997 and the 32 elections that took place between March 26 2000 and April 8, 2001. Economic measures are official data drawn from the Russian States Statistics Agency's (Goskomstat) annual "Regions of Russia" statistical collection. Internet sources provided the bulk of political variables like election statistics, number of candidates, party affiliations, and endorsements. These included the official Website of the Central Voting Commission, Grigoryi Belonuchkin's *Politika* site, the *Regions of Russia: Politics and Cadre* Website, and electronic versions of regional newspapers too numerous to list here. Institutional variables like election laws were drawn from official regional government sites, the "Panorama" Website (which contains regional election laws for each region through 1997), and once again, the official Website of the Central Voting Commission.

The following variables appear in the analyses:<sup>145</sup>

***Dependent:***

*INCUMVOTE:* Percentage of the vote received by the incumbent in the final round of the 2000 or 2001 election. In some instances incumbents declined to run for another election and instead



encouraged their supporters to vote for a particular candidate. The “successor” (*preemnik*) was always a member of the incumbent’s particular political or economic clique, so for the purposes of this study, the chosen candidate is coded as the incumbent. In effect, I am therefore testing for the political support of *regimes* rather than individual incumbents.

***Test variables and controls:***

A listing and brief description of each of the independent and control variables follows. In the interest of saving space, only the non-lagged measures are discussed. The process for lagging all the economic variables is noted later in the study.

*REAL WAGES (WAGBMIN)*: For the change hypotheses, the difference of the average worker’s wage divided by the workers’ official minimum living standard (a “basket” of essential goods) over the year prior to the election. For the levels hypothesis, I use the static level of the measure at the end of the year prior to the election. This system of measurement, along with a similar method used for pensioners, provides the best indicator of the resources available to citizens relative to the regional cost of living.

*REAL PENSIONS (PENSMIN)*: For the change hypothesis, the difference in the average pension divided by the pensioners’ official minimum living standard (a “basket” of essential goods) over the year prior to the election. For the levels hypothesis, I use the static level of the measure at the end of the year prior to the election.

*% BELOW POVERTY LEVEL (BELPOV)*: For the change hypothesis, the difference in the percentage of the population with income below that of the State-mandated minimum living standard over the year prior to the election. For the levels hypothesis, I use the static level of the measure at the end of the year prior to the election.

*WAGE ARREARS (ARREAR)*: For the change hypothesis, the difference in the percentage of wages owed in relation to the total regional wage fund over the year prior to the election. For the levels hypothesis, I use the static level of the measure at the end of the year prior to the election.

*UNEMPLOYMENT (UNEMP)*: For the change hypothesis, the difference in the estimated percentage of unemployed in the region over the year prior to the election.<sup>146</sup> For the levels hypothesis, I use the static level of the measure at the end of the year prior to the election.

*INVESTMENT (INVEST)*: For the change hypothesis, the difference in the level of per capita investment in the region over the year prior to the election. For the levels hypothesis, the static measure for the year prior to the election.

*GROSS REGIONAL PRODUCT (VVP)*: For the change hypothesis, the difference in the region's gross regional product over the year prior to the election cycle. For the levels hypothesis, the static measure of said measure for the year prior to the election.

*NUMBER OF CANDIDATES (NUMCAND)*: This variable controls for the number of candidates seeking election in each case.

*SECURITY OPPONENT (SECCOP) [2000-2001 round only]*: Dummy Variable indicating whether one of the candidates in the election was a current or former member of a security organ. This is included only in the 2000-2001 election cycle, because this issue did not figure prominently in the previous cycle.

*RED VOTE IN 99 (RED99)*: Percentage of the party list vote cast for the CPRF in the 1999 Duma elections

*RED/BROWN95 (RDBRN95)* Percentage of the party list vote cast for the CPRF and LDPR in the 1995 Duma elections.

*TOURS (TOURS)*: Number of tours in which the election is held according to regional laws.

*1996-1997 VOTE (VOTE96)*: This variable taps into an incumbent's "base-line" popularity, measuring the incumbent's share of the vote in the 1996 elections.<sup>147</sup> Naturally, this is only included in the 2000-2001 model as I do not have the luxury of a prior election for 1996-1997.

*APPOINTED AFTER JAN. 1996 (JAN96) [1996-1997 round only]*: Indicates whether the candidate was appointed after January 1996.

The reader may have already noted that while the "year prior to the elections" is treated as 1995-1996 for the first election round it is treated as 1998-1999 for the second. This approach was chosen for both practical and methodological reasons. With regard to the first, comprehensive data for 1999-2000 was not available at the time of writing. As regards the second, I note that a much greater proportion of the cases in the 2000-2001 round featured elections during the first half of 2000 while all elections in the 1996-1997 round occurred during the fall and winter of 1996-1997. Given the fact that economic measures for each year were drawn in December, the choice of the 1998-1999 measures avoids any temporal overlap between independent and dependent measures while still drawing measures of the independent variable from a period relatively close to the majority of the elections. With regard to the 1996-1997 data, the fact that measures were taken on December 1996 poses only a small overlap problem. It is highly unlikely that even a candidate elected in September of 1996 could have significantly affected economic measures by December of that year.

The Red/Brown95, Red99, number of candidates, tours, and security opponent controls require further explanation. With regard to the first, a measure of the percentage of the party list vote cast for "red" and "brown" parties in the 1995 Duma elections is included in the 1996-1997 analyses so as to duplicate as closely as possible Solnick's previous analyses. As indicated briefly above, Solnick's study suggested that only the red/brown vote for the 1995 Duma

elections provided any leverage in predicting variations in incumbent vote share. Solnick treats this variable primarily as a measure of opposition to the federal regime and hence he combines votes for both left and extreme right parties. Given my arguments about the role of presidential referendum voting in essentially “masking” other factors that might influence voters’ decisions, confirming the strength of this variable in the 1996-1997 round provides a basis for contrast with the 2000-2001 election cycle.<sup>148</sup>

However, in this respect, the comparison between the 1996-1997 and 2000-2001 election rounds is necessarily imperfect. As indicated in Chapter Three, given the attrition amongst Yeltsin appointees in the 1996-1997 round, many incumbents going into the 2000-2001 election cycles were not original Yeltsin appointees. Furthermore, even those who originally held office by appointment now held these posts through an election victory during the previous cycle. These factors weaken the bases for combining the extreme right and left vote in the 2000-2001 round because the two shades of the political spectrum in each region are no longer ensured a common enemy in the form of a Yeltsin appointee. Hence, for the 2000-2001 round, I include only the vote for the CPRF during the 1999 Duma elections. To a large extent this is included as a means to maintain some consistency with Solnick’s original analyses and also to explore the rather unlikely possibility that regions supporting the communist party would vote against their incumbent as a referendum against the political system in contemporary Russia as a whole.<sup>149</sup>

The number of candidates control addresses the logical expectation that more candidates will lead to smaller shares of the overall vote for the incumbent. Including this factor also partly controls for those elections which were resolved in a run-off. One might expect that an incumbent facing one opponent would gather a higher percentage of the vote than an incumbent facing twelve opponents (as in Pskov’s 2000 election) in a race decided by a simple plurality.

A control for the number of tours allows me to account for variations in incumbent vote shares based upon whether an election was decided in one or two tours. Going into the regression analysis, the predicted relationship between this variable and incumbent success proves difficult to assess. On one hand, one might expect that, on average, two tour campaigns would return a higher incumbent vote share. Incumbents in two tour elections are vying for vote shares against only one opponent, while incumbents in simple plurality elections face off against as many as 12. However, this assumes that the majority of the incumbents in plurality regions are scraping by with a bare plurality. If there are a sufficient number of simple plurality elections in which incumbents win by overwhelming margins, then two tour races may on average yield a smaller share.

With regard to the security opponent control, this is included because one of the more salient characteristics of the 2000-2001 elections was the increased participation of security organ-based candidates. Indeed, some analysts argued that this round of elections, taking place during the first year of a former KGB operative's presidency would be marked by a "wave of generals" sweeping the regional elections. In the event, this was an overstatement. There was little substantial evidence of a coordinated federal election strategy between the president and the various security based candidates in the regions. In the Ul'yanovsk campaign for instance, the federal organs even acted in ways that appeared to support the incumbent governor *against* his opponent – General Vladimir Shamanov. A "smoking gun" was conspicuously absent in other cases as well.

Nonetheless, the presence of a security-based opponent could have an adverse effect on incumbent election fortunes for a number of reasons. First, in contemporary Russia, a great deal of legitimacy comes with a security-based biography. Especially in light of the popular war

underway at the time in Chechnya, generals and other security personnel enjoyed high esteem amongst the Russians during the late 1990's. Second, security-based personnel often had greater name recognition than other opponents. General Vladimir Shamanov in Ul'yanovsk was a decorated war hero well known (or perhaps, infamous) for his exploits in both Chechyan wars. In Kaliningrad, challenger Vladimir Yegorov was commander of the Baltic Fleet. Third, such high profile security personnel were generally capable of organizing a high quality, well organized, campaign team – often drawing upon portions of their former organizations' operational structures. Finally, despite the fact that there was little actual evidence to support such a contention, there remained the public perception that a security biography would bring close relations with Moscow. Hence, security based personnel would be expected to present a greater challenge to incumbents simply because they had a number of comparative advantages to other civilian candidates. The fact that such candidates, especially those placed higher in their particular organization's hierarchy, enjoyed such consistent success in those elections in which they participated, reinforces the choice to include this variable.

### ***Tests and Final Model***

Because incumbent vote percentages are continuous measures, I use OLS regression techniques to assess the relative strength of the economic performance indicators as predictors for

incumbent vote share. The initial equations for incumbent vote percentages are as follows:

- $INCUMSHARE96 = a + \beta_1(Real\ Wages) + \beta_2(Real\ Pensions) - \beta_3(\% \text{ Below Poverty Line}) - \beta_4 (UNEMPLOYMENT) - \beta_5(NUMBER\ CAND.) - \beta_6(REL/BROWN95) - \beta_7(TOURS) + e$
- $INCUMSHARE00 = a + \beta_1(Real\ Wages) + \beta_2(Real\ Pensions) - \beta_3(\% \text{ Below Poverty Line}) - \beta_4(WAGE\ ARREAR) - \beta_5(UNEMPLOYMENT) - \beta_6(NUMBER\ CAND.) - \beta_7(TOURS) + \beta_8(1996SHARE) - \beta_9(SECDUMMY) + \beta_{10}(RED99) + e$

Models were tested in four iterations. The first iteration used measures of change over the year prior to the election for each of the economic indicators. Lagged measures were used for the

second iteration drawing measures of change from 1995-1995 for 1996-1997 elections and 1997-1998 for the 2000-2001 elections. In the third iteration, static measures drawn from the year of the elections (December 1996 and December 1999, respectively) were used for each economic indicator. As with the “change” iteration, the fourth iteration introduced a lagged static levels measure drawing data from 1995 and 1998.

As the reader may already have noted, the quantity of predictors presented above is quite large in relation to the number of cases under examination, leaving few degrees of freedom and introducing a greater degree of inaccuracy into the initial OLS model. Therefore, I use Hendry’s (2000) technique of eliminating insignificant variables through backwards step-wise regression. Subsequent subsets of the original equation are tested until all weak indicators are dropped from the equation and maximum predictive leverage (as measured by adjusted  $R^2$  statistics) is achieved. For those readers who are wary of automated, backwards step-wise regression techniques, I note that the variables included in each of the iterations were not determined simply by pressing the return key on my computer - theoretical considerations and the results of “eyeballing” the database spreadsheet (a quite reliable technique considering the small number of cases) also aided in my decisions to exclude predictors.

Table 5 presents the results of the models containing measures for change in each predictor prior to the election year in question. Generally speaking, the static models provided consistently poor predictors for incumbent vote shares, and hence, these are excluded from the table. This finding by itself has important implications for the economic voting theses in that it suggests that policies, and not comparative regional advantages, are the driving economic consideration that impacts incumbent vote shares – this will be taken up in greater detail below.

The table presents slope coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Variables excluded entirely from the tables never met the significance criteria and thus failed to survive into any of the final models.

**Table 5 Results for 1996-1997 and 2000-2001 OLS Regression Models**

	<i>1996-1997</i> <i>N=35</i>		<i>2000-2001</i> <i>N=31</i>	
	$\beta$	$\beta_{LAG}$	$\beta$	$\beta_{LAG}$
<b>Red/Brown 1995</b>	-0.71* (0.32) <sup>a</sup>	-0.79** (0.30)	N/A <sup>b</sup>	N/A
<b>App. after Jan. 1996</b>	-	12.92* (6.22)	N/A	N/A
<b>No. of Candidates</b>	-2.72* (1.27)	-2.65* (1.19)	-4.58** (0.97)	-5.65** (1.01)
<b>Real Wages</b>	-	-0.23 <sup>c</sup> (0.12)	0.33* (0.15)	-
<b>Real Pensions</b>	-	-	0.50 <sup>d</sup> (0.18)	-
<b>Red 1999</b>	N/A	N/A	-	-
<b>Security-based Opponent</b>	N/A	N/A	-31.78** (5.64)	-38.31** (5.82)
<b>Tours</b>	-	-	-14.00** (5.25)	-16.12** (5.41)
<b>1996-1997 Incumbent Share</b>	N/A	N/A	.41* (0.18)	-
<b>Intercept</b>	89.58** (17.56)	75.91** (17.79)	94.76** (13.75)	110.52** (12.37)
<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	0.18	0.28	0.74	0.66
<b>F-score</b>	4.79*	4.26**	14.96**	20.60**
* $p = .05$ , ** $p = .01$				
<sup>a</sup> Beta coefficients from OLS regressions. Numbers in parenthesis denote standard errors				
<sup>b</sup> Cells marked "N/A" indicate that the variable was not included for the given model.				
<sup>c</sup> .068 significance level				
<sup>d</sup> .082 significance level				

As a whole, the results of the analyses are quite impressive. With regard to the role of economic factors in the 1996-1997 round, the results mostly support Solnick's earlier findings. In nearly all the models, the red/brown 95, number of tours, and number of candidates variables are the only ones to survive into the final iteration. This further validates Solnick's findings as



the results hold up even with the inclusion of the number of tours and number of candidates measures omitted from his models.

In terms of the 2000-2001 election round, the non-lagged change in indicators model presents the most interesting outcomes. This model proved very efficient in determining incumbent vote shares with an  $R^2$  of .74 leaving only 26% of the variance to other effects. While this is a respectable result by any standard, it is especially impressive given the small number of cases under examination. Of greater interest, two economic variables survive into the final model, one is statistically significant beyond the .05 level and both exhibit signs that coincide with economic voting theses. In terms of raw slope coefficients, all other factors equal, a one-percent increase in real wages as a percentage of the minimum living standard yields a .33% increase in the incumbents' expected share of the vote. A similar one percent increase for pensions as a percentage of the regional pensioner living standard yields a .50% increase. Given the fact that only a weakly significant lagged real wage measure survived into the 1996-1997 model and bearing in mind the sizeable literature indicating the absence of retrospective economic voting in most post-Soviet countries, this constitutes a significant discovery.

Looking more closely at the 2000-2001 cycle results, standardized coefficients, derived by transforming all the raw variable scores to zscores prior to running the regression, offer a better sense of each variables' relative impact on the predicted incumbent vote share (See Appendix D for the 2000-2001 election cycle results using standardized coefficients). The security opponent dummy, number of candidate, and tours control provide the three strongest indicators strongest indicators. Interpretations of the standardized coefficients for the dichotomous security candidate and tours variables are rather unintuitive (a one standard deviation shift from no security based candidate to one), but the direction and strength of the

relationship provides some indication of these factors' importance. The significance and direction of the security variable's coefficient indicates that the presence of a security organ-based candidate was negatively related to incumbent election success. However, as will be discussed in further detail in the section preceding the analysis of incumbent wins and losses below, one should not draw any hasty conclusions regarding any *causal* relationship.

Results for the tours variable are somewhat surprising. Overall, incumbents in regions with majority election laws tended to gather a smaller portion of the vote than those in regions with simple plurality election laws. This suggests that regions with simple plurality laws did not necessarily feature elections in which incumbents squeaked by with a minimal amount of electoral support. In fact the two regions in which the incumbent regime gathered the highest share of the regional vote (88% in Khabarovsk Krai and 87% in Murmansk Oblast) both exhibited simple plurality election rules. In an analysis with so few cases, such extremes likely made a major impact on the regression results, especially considering that incumbents in run off elections are very unlikely to achieve such impressive outcomes against their opponents. Nonetheless, these results do warn against overly general statements regarding the role and impact of plurality rule elections in the regions – many incumbents in plurality rule regions win by margins well in excess of the barrier set down by majority election rules.

Moving on to the more easily interpreted outcomes, the number of candidates control indicates that, all other effects held equal, a one standard deviation shift in the number of candidates yields a -.62 standard deviation decrease in the expected incumbent vote share. In real terms, this is a 12.3% decrease in the incumbent's share of the vote for roughly every three (2.7) opponents added to a ballot. The incumbent's share of the 1996-1997 vote also had a marked impact with a one standard deviation increase in this measure yielding a .23 standard deviation

increase in the incumbent's share of the 2000-2001 election cycle vote. In real terms, an 11.6% increase in the vote gathered during in the 1996-1997 cycle resulted in a 4.6% predicted increase in incumbent's share of the 2000-2001 vote.

In terms of the economic factors, wages, despite the lower un-standardized slope coefficient, actually have a greater impact on the predicted incumbent vote share than pensions (this should also not be surprising considering the higher significance levels for the wage measure). All other effects held equal, one standard deviation increases in wages and pensions result in respective outcomes of .24 and .18 standard deviation increases in incumbent vote shares. In more practical terms a one standard deviation increase (14.3%) in real wages yields a 4.8% increase in the incumbent's expected vote share, while a similar increase in real pensions yields an incumbent vote share increase of 3.6%. Real wage levels have a stronger impact on election outcomes than real pension levels.

### ***An Alternative Explanation: Party and Ideological Preferences***

As previously indicated, Solnick's analyses of the 1996-1997 election round found that only party and ideological preferences, as measured by the percentage of the vote cast in each region for "red/brown" parties in the 1995 Duma elections, provided any leverage in predicting incumbent fortunes.<sup>150</sup> Furthermore, I argued that this is likely attributable to the presence of a strong basis for so-called "referendum voting". All incumbents were Yeltsin appointees, and hence a vote for or against an incumbent was a vote for or against the president and his ostensibly free market and democratic reforms.<sup>151</sup> However, the fact that the 2000-2001 elections featured no Yeltsin appointees and every incumbent held his post as a result of previous elections does not necessarily eliminate all bases for ideological and party preference voting. Furthermore, as the irrelevance of the "Red99" variable in the 2000-2001 cycle analysis indicates, it

significantly complicates any aggregate level test of party and ideological preference voting. A single party support measure, applied across all cases tells us very little without taking into account the type of incumbent facing election in each region.

With no single ideology or party identification unifying all incumbents, one must resort to different measures from those employed by Solnick. The test must examine the relationship between regional ideological and party preferences and support for incumbents identified with particular ideologies and parties. Unfortunately, the latter is rather difficult to quantify over thirty-two different case regions. Some higher profile (and decidedly more “ideological”) executives like Bryansk’s Yuri Lodkin and Samara’s Konstantin Titov are easier to categorize (at least in terms of the incumbents’ “image”), but what of less-known figures like Chita’s Ravil’ Genyatulin or ideologically “obscure” types like Saratov’s Dmitriy Ayatskov? Some alternative means of classifying candidates must be identified in order to conduct a plausible analysis of the role that ideology and partisanship played in the 2000-2001 cycle.

In the absence of comprehensive analyses of the last four years of policy making in each of the thirty-two regions, I propose that party endorsements provide an albeit imperfect measure for incumbent’s ideological and party allegiance. This choice of indicators presents its own problems as parties sometimes endorsed candidates with very different ideological leanings, support for candidates often split across federal, regional and local level party organizations, and first round endorsements were often changed for the final election round after the elimination of a party’s first candidate choice. Nonetheless, parties generally supported those candidates that would most likely promote that party’s program. Furthermore, in order to overcome the problems introduced by variation in support across federal, regional, and local levels of party organizations, I referred almost exclusively to federal level party endorsements. For instance,

while Vladimir Shamanov was supported by the regional branch of the CPRF, he did not merit an endorsement with the federal-level CPRF organs.<sup>152</sup> The Ul'yanovsk race was therefore coded as a race in which the CPRF did not support *any* candidates.

The fact that the CPRF-affiliated NPSR was again active in the 2000-2001 elections and kept a national tally of “its” candidates and winners, made coding for communist backed candidates significantly easier than for those supported by “Unity” or “Fatherland”. Endorsements from the latter parties were extracted from news reports and other second-party analyses. Hence, for the sake of this study, I present the results from tests based upon the most reliable measure – support from the NPSR. This not only provides the most dependable measure, but it also measures the role of party and ideological affiliation based upon the most clearly “ideological party”. Other centralist organizations like Unity and Fatherland arguably appeal to a wider range of citizens across the entire ideological spectrum and were also more likely to support a “left” candidate than the communist party was to support anyone “right of center.”<sup>153</sup>

The test hypothesis states that support for NPSR/CPRF-endorsed candidates in the 2000-2001 election round is positively related to regional levels of support for the CPRF in the 1999 Duma elections.<sup>154</sup> Once again, a number of candidates control and the security opponent dummy are included to produce the following model:

$$LCANDVOTE = a + \beta_1(KPFR99) - \beta_2(NUMBER CAND) - \beta_3(SECOPP) + e$$

The regression results for this model are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6 Regression Results for NPSR/CPRF Endorsed Candidate Support**

<i>Variables</i>	$\beta^a$
<b>Number of Candidates.</b>	-3.820** (1.195)
<b>Security Opponent</b>	-24.298* (9.428)
<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	.335
<b>F-score</b>	5.198**
<b>N=26<sup>b</sup></b>	

<sup>a</sup> Coefficients for OLS regression model. Standard errors presented in parentheses.  
<sup>b</sup> Lower N reflects a number of instances where the CPRF did not endorse any candidate

These results offer no bases for accepting the hypothesis that support for NPSR endorsed candidates increased with the strength of support for the CPRF in the 1999 Duma elections. The CPRF support measure provides little or no leverage in predicting the outcome for NPSR-endorsed candidates, and of all the variables initially included in the model, only the security organ-based candidate and number of candidates controls survive into the final iteration.<sup>155</sup> While the somewhat expedient nature of this test warns against drawing any decisive conclusions, these results nonetheless provide further evidence against the contention that ideology or partisanship played an important role in these elections.

### ***Discussion***

The above results suggest that a number of important changes have occurred in regional executive elections since the 1996-1997 elections. First, economic factors, which showed no relation to incumbent vote percentages in the earlier round, played an important role in 2000-2001. Ideological affiliation which proved to be the only significant predictor for the 1996-1997 election results, failed to offer any significant predictive leverage in the most recent round. As in

western studies, certain factors play a greater role than others. The various iterations of the OLS equation show that indicators for changes in unemployment, wage arrears, and the number of individual's living below the regional poverty level were weakly related to incumbent's fortunes. On the other hand, changes in real wages and pensions offered significant leverage in explaining these outcomes.

As discussed in Chapter Three, variations in findings between the 1996-1997 and 2000-2001 election rounds are most likely attributable to the two factors of referendum voting and a lack of short term incumbents. With regard to the first, the absence of appointed incumbents in the 2000-2001 election round eliminates a "presidential referendum" effect that played a prominent role in the 1996-1997 elections. With previously elected officials running for the governorship, voters' assessments of the president no longer factor into decisions to support or oppose regional executive incumbents. As for the second factor, incumbents in the 2000-2001 elections held their positions for full terms, eliminating the effect that the presence of short term incumbents – some appointed mere months before their first elections - may have had in 1996-1997. In terms of the economic variables, the change in outcomes indicates either that the elimination of the presidential referendum voting and short-term incumbent factors had "unmasked" existing predispositions toward economic voting, or that such factors had increased in strength over the past 45 years. In either case, the increased significance of these factors suggests that, in order to survive elections, regional executives must take regional living standards into account.

Of further interest are the *types* of economic effects that most influenced incumbent election fortunes. The fact that, contrary to measures of change in the various economic indicators, static levels offered no explanatory leverage yields another important implication of

this study. It suggests that voters are reacting to the effects of regional administrations' policies and not some natural predisposition of their regions to yield better standards of living. Had measures of static levels played a salient role, one could still argue that voters were reacting to conditions over which administrations had little control. If levels mattered, then almost any regime pursuing any set of policies could count on stronger electoral support than a regime in a less well endowed region. With the results of this study suggesting that voters are reacting to changes in conditions over time, a linkage is apparent between the success or failure of regional administrations' efforts to manipulate regional economic conditions and voter support – policymaking matters.

An interesting future path of inquiry based on these results centers upon which types of policies such voting promotes. If voters are reacting to the results of regional administrations' economic policy making, which types of policies are most adept at garnering electoral support? While elections may force incumbents to pursue policies that raise regional living standards (at least in the year prior to the election) this is not necessarily good news for champions of liberal market reforms. The “competitive federalism” literature indicates that competition amongst regional governments for capital and other factors of production will force regions to pursue pro-market policies. A key factor contributing to these outcomes is governmental accountability for economic performance. However, if elections are the main instrument for holding governments accountable, and real wages and pensions are apparently the meter which the public utilizes to assess its regime, then the way is open for essentially “buying” the vote through short term populist policies implemented on the eve (1 year) of the election. Real wages and pensions are a function of two factors; raw wages and pensions and the regional living standards for wage earners and pensioners. Policy makers can thereby increase their clout with voters by either



pursuing longer term policies which result in increasing wage levels and additional budget revenues to supplement federal pension payments, or they can subsidize local firms and introduce price supports to lower the cost of living relative to stagnant wages and pensions. Either choice could contribute to the types of results seen in the regression models above. In the end, we once again face Manin, Przeworski, and Stokes's myopic voter. If in fact voters are reacting to the spending power of their wages and pensions (i.e. real wages and pensions as operationalized in this study), then the question remains as to whether these are sustainable policies or merely pre-election expedients (clear-cutting the oblast) to gain support for the incumbent. Given the restrictions of this current study, and in the interest of maintaining the focus on accountability, I will leave further investigation of this interesting issue for a later date.

***“Throwing the Rascals Out?”***

Up to this point, the analyses suggest the existence of many of the voting behavioral characteristics necessary to promote accountability. The logit models in Chapter Four demonstrate that voters give strong preference to so-called “jurisdictional” economic assessments and apparently “punish and reward” their regional executives for the perceived success or failure of their economic policies. Results from the regressions in the first section of this chapter take the analyses to the aggregate level and indicate that incumbent's vote shares rose and fell with variation in the magnitude and direction of real wage and pension fluctuations. To remind the reader, this particular observation constitutes a marked change over the previous 1996-1997 election cycle in which ideology and party support provided the only significant predictor for incumbent success. Thus, at this stage in the analyses, I argue that voters appear to “vote properly” and their votes are manifested at the aggregate level in variations of incumbent support.

Nonetheless, to return to the earlier discussion of Manin, Przeworski, and Stokes' work, the authors state that, "...what ultimately matters for accountability is not the popularity or even the share of the vote but survival in office".<sup>156</sup> Even if incumbents are "punished" with low shares of the vote, other factors – both systematic and purely coincidental – may intervene to prevent voters from "throwing the rascals out". In this respect, it is important to determine if "citizens can discern whether governments are acting in their best interest and sanction them appropriately, so that those incumbents who satisfy citizens' demands remain in office and those who do not lose it".<sup>157</sup>

The remainder of this chapter therefore presents an examination of the relationship between incumbent wins and losses and regional economic performance. By essentially reapplying the independent variables from the vote share analyses to predict incumbents' probability of maintaining office, I demonstrate that not only do these variables provide significant leverage in determining incumbent vote shares, but they also allow us to predict with a significant degree of certainty the probability that incumbents will win or lose an election.

### ***Winners and Losers in the Regional Election Process***

The following analysis employs logit techniques to help determine whether the fluctuations in economic performance that helped determine incumbents' share of the vote also contributed to incumbent wins and losses. In the interest of avoiding repetition, I present the modified hypotheses for this section but do not discuss any independent variables that were used in the previous analyses. The hypotheses are as follows:

**H1: Real Wages** Incumbents' likelihood of reelection is positively related to the change in real wages during the year prior (1995-1996 for the 1996-1997 elections, and 1998-1999 for the 2000-2001 elections) to the election

- H2: Real Pensions** Incumbents' likelihood of reelection is positively related to the change in real pensions during the year leading up to the election
- H3: Poverty Levels:** Incumbents' likelihood of reelection is negatively related to the change in the number of individuals living below the poverty level during the year leading up to the election.
- H4: Regional Unemployment** Incumbents' likelihood of reelection is negatively related to the change in the level of regional unemployment during the year leading up to the election.
- H5: Arrears :** Incumbents' likelihood of reelection is negatively related to change in the volume of regional wage arrears during the year leading up to the election.
- H6: Gross Regional Product:** Incumbents' likelihood of reelection is positively related to change in the region's gross regional product during the year leading up to the election.<sup>158</sup>
- H7: Investment:** Incumbent's likelihood of reelection is positively related to change in regional per capita investment levels during the year prior to the election.

The security candidate hypothesis included in the Chapter Five regressions was eliminated from this model due to a high correlation (A Pearson coefficient of  $-.744$ ) between security candidate participation and incumbent election losses. While one might argue that these results indicate that the most efficient predictor for incumbent wins and losses is the presence or absence of a security organ based opponent, a survey of the cases warrants caution.

As indicated in Chapter Three, security opponents ran in five of the thirty-three elections under examination. In each one of these cases, the incumbent lost the election. However, the security-based opponent defeated the incumbent in only three of these cases. Looking at the total

number of cases of incumbent defeats (8), security based opponents took office in less than half. Furthermore, in each of the cases where the incumbent was defeated by security organ-based opponents, the defeat coincided with significant dissatisfaction over the course of economic development in the region. In the year prior to the election, Ul'yanovsk oblast exhibited some of the greatest decreases in real wages and pensions of any region in the sample of cases and, as indicated in Chapter Four, its second-term incumbent had essentially run out of policy options. Kaliningrad's governor was increasingly unpopular due to both economic stagnation and the increasing criminalization of the region's political and economic arenas. The general in this case, Commander of the Baltic Fleet, Vladimir Yegorov, was recruited by an organization of regional political economic and political elites hoping to end the incumbents' corrupt rule.<sup>159</sup> In Voronezh, the "general" was Head of the Voronezh Branch of the FSB, Vladimir Kulakov. Similar to the Kaliningrad situation, Kulakov was nominated by an organization called "For the Rebirth of the Economy - a union of "140 of the leading industrial enterprises in cooperation with the head of the Voronezh Branch of Sberbank".<sup>160</sup>

Thus, the fact that only three of the five "generals" participating in the elections actually won and that in each of these situations, generals were tied to movements geared towards essentially breaking regional economies out of stagnation wrought by corruption and heavy state intervention, suggests that opponents from military and security organs were primarily a useful tool for cliques within regional economic elites attempting to improve their lot within the regional economic environment. In this respect, there is perhaps less support for arguments indicating that victorious generals were part of a master plan created by Moscow to "militarize" the regions. Choosing a general/admiral or FSB chief to run against a partially entrenched opponent simply offered opposing elites a viable means to educe a regime change. Such figures

bring with them a certain element of legitimacy (particularly amongst conservative groups in society like the all important pensioners and veterans), and are often well known amongst the population (particularly Kaliningrad's Yegorov and Ul'yanovsk's Shamanov). Advancing security based candidates was therefore more of a means for coalitions in society to achieve their particular goals than an end in itself. With these points in mind, and given the problems arising from including the security candidate variable in the model, I am justified in eliminating the security opponent variable from this analysis.

### ***Final Model and Results***

Turning then to the model itself, a binary dependent variable demands the use of binary response models like logit and probit that determines the probability of a certain binary outcome (in this case, a win for the incumbent) given variation across a set of predictors. However, as Long notes, using logit and probit with samples of less than 100 cases is risky because the exact behavior of logit estimations for very small samples is still largely unknown.<sup>161</sup> Nonetheless, these models provide one of the few means available to test relationships between a set of independent variables and a binary dependent variable. Therefore this section presents the results of a logit analysis with the strong caveat that these findings are speculative results based on a potentially unstable estimation.

Several iterations of the model were run with predictors eliminated from the model based on both theoretical considerations and the impact of each alternative explanatory variable's removal upon the log likelihood ratio (removal criteria: Log LR > .05). The final model and results are as follows:

$$\text{Log}O_i = a + \beta_1(\text{Vote96}_i) + \beta_2(\text{Pensions}_i) + \beta_3(\text{Wages}) + \beta_4(\text{Red99}_i)$$

**Table 7 Win/Loss Logit Results**

	$e^{\hat{\beta}^a}$	$p$ .
<b>Vote96</b>	1.204	.062
<b>Pensions</b>	1.257	.080
<b>Wages</b>	1.146	.033
<b>Red99</b>	1.302	.040
<b>Constant</b>	.000	.088
	<b>Value</b>	
<b>Model <math>\chi^2</math></b>	12.391	.015
<b>Hosmer and Lemeshow Test</b>	5.062	.751
<b>Nagelkerke <math>R^2</math></b>	.484	
<b>N</b>	31	

<sup>a</sup> Denotes odds ratio from maximum likelihood estimation of a logit model.

Once again, the model delivers impressive results that challenge much of the popular wisdom surrounding Russia's 2000-2001 election cycle. The model parameters exceeds standard significance requirements and the Nagelkerke  $R^2$  registers a respectable .484. Classification tables for the model (omitted here) indicate that the final set of predictors accurately predicts 87.1% of the variance in the dependent variable – a 12.9% increase over random guessing. Only four of the 31 cases (three predicted losses and one predicted victory) were misclassified.

From the standpoint of accountability for economic performance, the results for the economic variables prove very encouraging. As in the vote share model, changes in real pensions survive into the final iteration, with a one-unit increase in pension growth yielding a 25% increase in the odds of an incumbent victory. Real wages also survive, with a one-unit increase in wage growth yielding a 15% increase in the odds of the incumbent retaining office. As might be expected, incumbents' success in the previous elections (Vote96) also provides significant leverage in predicting incumbents' wins and losses.

Because this particular result differs so significantly from the vote share model, the survival of the Red99 variable representing the portion of the 1999 vote cast for the CPRF demands additional explanation. While the Red99 variable fell out of the initial iterations of the

vote share model, it survives into the final iteration of the model predicting the odds of an incumbent win. Furthermore, the removal of the Red99 variable from this model results in the elimination of all other predictors, suggesting that this factor plays a rather important role in determining incumbent election success.

This is most likely attributable to the peculiar “red belt” phenomenon and its coincidence with incumbent election success in the 2000-2001 elections. Regions in which the CPFR won larger percentages of the party list vote during the 1999 Duma elections also tend to have “red” governors. Furthermore, such cases constituted the bulk of those instances in which incumbents won reelection despite the poor economic performance in their regions. In many of these cases, elections were decided according to simple plurality rules while the peculiar characteristics of the red belt regions allowed the incumbent to utilize conservative ideological appeals to mobilize a sufficient portion of the population (primarily pensioners, veterans, and workers in non-competitive industries) to surmount this minimal barrier. Under this combination of circumstances, economic performance played a lesser role in determining wins and losses. Incumbents in these regions tended to gather smaller shares of the regional vote (as in the vote share model) but nonetheless retained office. This observation raises an important point. The degree of gubernatorial accountability for regional economic performance seems to vary from region to region, and accountability may be weakest in those regions where economic performance is at its worst.

Once again, it must be restated that the small number of cases examined warns against drawing strong conclusions from the logit results. Nonetheless, the results from this final model are unexpected and heartening. The dichotomous win/loss variable is a particularly “noisy” measure that is difficult to account for even in established democracies.<sup>162</sup> In the case of Russian

regional elections, the focus on dirty campaigns and underhanded election tactics raises the expectation that variations in economic performance measures would offer little leverage for predicting probabilities of incumbent wins and losses. These results tentatively suggest that regional living standards played an important role in determining not only the incumbent's share of the regional vote but also whether incumbents remained in office. As a whole, the quantitative analyses of this most recent regional election cycle offer some bases for optimism amidst the generally pessimistic dialogue surrounding regional-level democracy in Russia.



## Chapter 6 Obstacles, New Paths of Inquiry, and Conclusions

Thus far, this analysis of regional executive accountability has yielded encouraging and rather surprising results. Contrary to the popular discourse surrounding regional-level democratic processes in the Russian Federation, a link has been established between regional economic performance and incumbent success as measured both in terms of vote shares, as well as in terms of the inherently more difficult issue of wins and losses. Respondents in the two regional election cases exhibited jurisdictional economic support calculi suggesting that voters take into account economic conditions in their particular regions when deciding to support or oppose incumbents. The aggregate level studies indicated that, once free of the presidential referendum effect created by appointed governors, the outcomes of regional executive elections during the 2000-2001 cycle were partially determined by regional-level standard of living measures like real pensions and wages. Furthermore, these results suggested that *policies* mattered by indicating that changes in regional performance were more important than static measures resulting from features inherent to the given region. In broader terms, these results belie the image of regional executives driving their regions into economic ruin for their own political gain by instead suggesting that incumbents must tend to regional living standards or pay the price at the polls.

With all of these points in mind, can we then conclude that the 2000-2001 elections ushered in the triumph of the regional *demos*? Are regional elections today operating as efficient mechanisms through which voters register their attitudes towards regional conditions? This final chapter raises a number of caveats to the conclusions of the previous chapters and points to issues not captured in the quantitative analyses by drawing upon more interpretive research indicating existing and potential obstacles to the further enhancement of accountability through elections. Furthermore, it identifies areas for further inquiry concerning ongoing

research into regional level voting behavior and the development of comprehensive aggregate level databases for future longitudinal and cross-sectional studies. This discussion of future paths of inquiry demonstrates that, in addition to this study's value in presenting evidence of economic accountability through regional executive elections, it also serves as a rich point of departure for further research into a broad set of important topics.

***Obstacles to Accountability: Chernaia Tekhnologiia***

While the results of the models in Chapters Four and Five suggest that regional elections are performing their accountability function to a certain (and significant) degree, it would be rather naïve to suggest that Russia's regional elections are models of electoral accountability. A number of high-profile examples of election manipulation made a tangible mark on the outcomes of certain regional executive elections, and specific aspects of regional civil society – particularly weak political parties and a divided and biased regional media – complicate the individual support calculi necessary for voters to render decisions about incumbents' records in office. Together, these factors restrict the effectiveness of democratic elections as a means to hold regional executives accountable for their performance.

In regards to the issue of election manipulation, nearly every election yielded its own examples of “dirty tricks” (*chernaia tekhnologiia*) ranging from little more than “negative campaigning” to assassination and bomb threats. However, certain tactics are worth noting both for the amount of attention they attracted in the press and for the fact that they were later adopted and imitated in other regions. Looking at various forms of election manipulation in regional executive elections occurring between 1999-2001, Joel Moses speaks of certain “alternatives” which:

“...became terms of the Russian political lexicon in the media known by the name of the region in which they first occurred...The four most conspicuously labeled in the Russian media were the “Belgorod alternative,” the “Kursk alternative,” the “Bryansk alternative,” and the “Orel alternative.”<sup>163</sup>

According to Moses, the “Belgorod alternative” involves collusion between the regional executive and legislature whereby the latter makes changes in election rules that move the scheduled election date forward and reduce the margin necessary to win the election. During this alternative’s seminal election in Belgorod, the regional legislature moved the election date forward by eight months and changed the election laws to allow for victory with a simple plurality. The unexpected change in election dates undercut opponents’ plans, leaving candidates scrambling to gather signatures and mount an effective campaign in the sharply abbreviated period before the election. During the 2000-2001 election cycle, the Belgorod alternative was again observed in the Kirov election. There, Governor Vladimir Sergeenkov and the legislature moved the election from its scheduled autumn 2000 date to March and again changed the rules governing election victories from majority to simple plurality criteria. As indicated in Chapter Three “partial-Belgorod alternatives” in which legislatures changed elections to simple plurality rules but left election dates as scheduled, were also evident in Altai Krai and Murmansk, Pskov, Bryansk, Kirov, and Volgograd, oblasts.

The farcical “Bryansk alternative” features candidates registering “clones” (*dublery*) bearing names similar to those of major opponents. With like-named candidates competing in the election, candidates hope that voters will misinterpret campaign tactics and perhaps accidentally cast their votes for the clone instead of their main rival. The Bryansk case itself demonstrates the extremes to which such tactics were drawn. At one point in the Bryansk election campaign, of

the fourteen candidates registered with the regional election commission, there were three “Denins”, two “Lodkins” (including the incumbent), and two “Demochkins”.<sup>164</sup> To make matters worse, the “cloning” in Bryansk was not limited to candidates. During the campaign, a political block called “For Putin” arose around a local engineer by the name of Vladimir Borisovich Putin. This “movement” attempted to capitalize on the popularity of the President and stir up support for the “real Denin”, Nikolai Vasil’evich.<sup>165</sup>

During Orel Oblast’s 1997 election, oblast governor Yegor Stroeve established the “Orel alternative” by forcing opposing candidates from the race through a combination of coercion and legal action and replacing them with a single inexperienced “challenger”. With the regional press questioning the background, intentions, and loyalties (particularly with regard to his “rival”- the governor) of this largely unknown opponent, few voters supported the late-runner. During the 2000-2001 election cycle, the “Orel alternative” was successfully imitated in Rostov, resulting in a similarly overwhelming victory for the incumbent.<sup>166</sup>

Another variant employed during Samara’s 2000 and Kemerovo’s 2001 elections featured the incumbent governor forcing an early election by resigning his post prior to the scheduled end of his term. In both cases, the early resignation significantly shortened the amount of time remaining for opponents to prepare their campaigns, and allowed the candidates to avoid any charges of using their “administrative resources” to gain an unfair advantage over their opponents.<sup>167</sup> Interestingly, both incumbents who resorted to the “Kemerovo/Samara alternative” were opponents of Vladimir Putin during the 2000 Presidential elections. This suggests that both Titov and Tuleev feared either that a Federal Government-backed candidate might mount a particularly strong campaign prior to the originally scheduled election date or that they would be subject to the next campaign tactic – the “Kursk alternative”.

The “Kursk alternative” differs from all the others in that its first and only manifestation involved an alleged move by the Federal Government to eliminate an unfavorable yet regionally popular gubernatorial candidate.<sup>168</sup> As indicated in Chapter Three, the Kursk election presented one of the clearest cases of Federal Government intervention in a regional campaign, and of all the tactics employed during the 2000-2001 elections, this particular tactic perhaps made the greatest impact on all incumbents’ subsequent behavior. Succeeding elections featuring incumbents suspected of being on the President’s mythical “black list of governors” exhibited a higher degree of paranoia amongst campaign staff members uncertain to what limits they could push campaign laws and make use of administrative resources.

This set of campaign tactics provides only some indication of the tools available to candidates seeking to manipulate election outcomes, and the 2000-2001 election cycle was fraught with instances in which incumbents and opponents alike violated the spirit and letter of regional election laws. However, as with many other concepts popularized in the regional and national media, one should assess the impact of these tactics with a certain degree of skepticism. The apparent use of any of these tactics does not automatically imply the counterfactual that outcomes would have been different in their absence. As Olga Shevel’ indicated (see endnote 166), the Rostov governor’s use of the “Orel alternative” was entirely unnecessary. Titov’s victory in the Samara elections was perhaps less a result of his early resignation than of recent policies that gained him support from the region’s pensioners.<sup>169</sup> Conceivably, the decision to move the election forward in Kirov oblast helped the incumbent win the election, but changing the victory requirements to a simple plurality proved unnecessary – the incumbent won with 58% of the vote.

Nonetheless, other cases suggest that such tactics had an important impact. As indicated several times throughout this text, results from the Pskov and Bryansk elections signify what a combination of *dubbery*, stand-ins, and low victory thresholds can do for even an unpopular incumbent's election chances. The Volgograd election demonstrated one of the more blatant, yet successful attempts to implement the "Belgorod alternative". In this instance, a change in the regional election law allowing the governor to win election by a simple plurality was tabled in early August and rapidly pushed through the regional legislature before the end of September.<sup>170</sup> During Volgograd's December 24 election, the victorious incumbent gathered only 37% of the votes cast while the next three strongest candidates accounted for 49.17%. A two-round majority rule election might have elicited a substantially different outcome.

As three of the more egregious instances of incumbent regimes' "electioneering", the Pskov, Bryansk, and Volgograd cases shared certain noteworthy characteristics. Incumbents in poorly performing regions won elections with very low portions of the overall number of eligible voters thanks in part to election laws pushed through loyal (and communist or LDPR-dominated) legislatures. To return to the logit results in table 7, the fact that each of these cases lie solidly within the so-called "red belt" also provides further indication as to why the percentage of the vote cast for the CPRF in the 1999 Duma elections provided a significant predictor for incumbent wins and losses. "Democratic" and "Liberal" incumbents certainly demonstrated their aptitude for "chernaia tekhnologia", but it was in regions like Pskov, Bryansk, Volgograd, and Tula where the 2000-2001 elections' most blatant violations occurred. In each case, traditional, "red" governors garnered strong support amongst a larger (as compared to the federal average) communist electorate, and through various legal and quasi-legal measures excluded or simply neutralized (through plurality voting rules) the remaining voters.

### ***Other Barriers: The Media and Political Parties***

Aside from these nefarious campaign tactics, at least two other broader factors serve to undermine the viability of elections as accountability mechanisms: A lack of an autonomous regional-level media and the weak role of regional-level political parties in sub-national executive elections. While each of these issues warrants a separate study in itself, I wish to touch on them briefly in this context so as to indicate their importance within the present study and to expose areas demanding further investigation.

#### ***The Media***

Western studies of public opinion and voting behavior have indicated the important role that the media plays in shaping popular support, influencing voters' choice of candidates, and affecting how individuals view their society's current condition.<sup>171</sup> Depending upon the study in question, exposure to the media may partially determine the types of issues voters consider, how they formulate these issues, and which candidates voters believe stand the greatest chance in the coming election. Media coverage shapes candidates' images and plays a major role in helping voters to associate various issues with specific candidates. In terms of economics, media exposure can influence the weight that voters place on personal economic fortunes (according to Mutz, voters with more exposure to media are less likely to vote egotistically) and constitutes a major contributing factor in shaping voters' perceptions of broader economic dynamics.<sup>172</sup> With regard to the latter, Hetherington indicates that the media is capable of portraying economic performance as being much worse than it actually is – with sometimes dire consequences for incumbents.<sup>173</sup>

All of the above-mentioned studies draw primarily upon data from the United States where media structures differ substantially from those in Russia's regions. Depending upon the

business environment, the orientation of the regional government, and a number of other factors, the major players in a “typical” Russian regional media environment generally consist of the oblast controlled television-radio station (GTRK), perhaps one or two independent stations with varying political loyalties, one or more oblast and/or major municipality-controlled-newspapers (including publications specific to various departments of the oblast and city administrations – i.e. social services), a “business” daily or weekly, and the regional communist party’s newspaper.<sup>174</sup> Each of these outlets usually exhibits a rather clear agenda when reporting on regional conditions and supporting or opposing various political actors. Oblast publications and broadcast media naturally put the best face on the regional administration’s activities and place the blame for the most obvious regional problems either on other levels of government or upon some other internal or external actors or conditions. Business publications are often comparatively well financed, hire more professional journalists, and display at least an air of objectivity. Nonetheless, such publications carry their own agendas depending upon the incumbent’s relationship not only to the regional business sector as a whole but with various cliques amongst the business elite.<sup>175</sup> The local communist publication usually varies its stance depending upon both the ideological orientation of the political figure in question, and that political figure’s relationship to the local party organs (the latter not necessarily determined by the former).

One does not require sophisticated or extensive content analyses to uncover the general orientation of most regional media outlets. A simple comparison of the handling of a number of important and contentious issues suffices to demonstrate that subtlety is not a prerequisite for joining a Russian regional news staff. Having said this, one must consider these factors when examining how citizens formulate their understandings of political figures and regional socio-



economic conditions. To take a simple example, a citizen living in an oblast capitol knows whether or not her house is heated. By talking to their neighbors or walking to the store four blocks away, she can also investigate whether or not a substantial portion of their city has heat. However, if the oblast-controlled news station reports that the regional capitol is the only area without heat and that citizens in other places throughout the oblast are walking about their apartments in shorts and tank tops (cut to images of happy citizens doing just that), the viewer may well believe that this is a local (i.e. the mayor's) problem

How might voters react to such conditions? What do these biases imply for voters' assessments of candidates and pre-election regional economic performance? While one might imagine an infinite number of possible effects, three stand out as potential "modal responses" from media consumers. First, voters might unreflectively digest all the information presented in whatever media source they happen to consume and allow these ideas to directly impact their vote choices (a *persuasive* effect). Second, voters with pre-existing preferences for specific candidates or groups might identify sources supporting these candidates and groups and trust the information published or broadcast by that media outlet (a *motivational* or *reinforcing* effect). Third, voters may be well aware of the media sources' bias and either reject most of the information presented by the media or attempt to piece together some objective picture based upon a collection of biased sources, personal experience, and other sources of information (personal discussions, etc).

While I currently lack the data to present a rigid test of these three propositions, extensive field experience and work by other researchers provides sufficient grounds to offer a number of speculative arguments.<sup>176</sup> With regard to the persuasive effect, other evidence indicates that Russian voters are more sophisticated than the images of mindless, media-consuming, golems

rendered by arguments promoting the media's role as an opinion maker. Looking at data from the 1995 Duma and 1996 Presidential elections, Timothy Colton indicates that, "popular awareness of media favoritism is widespread in the Russian Federation," and that, "almost 40 percent of citizens espied distortions in media coverage of the 1995 Duma campaign; the next summer more than 50 percent sensed it in the race for the presidency, almost all of them seeing the media product as warped in Yeltsin's favor."<sup>177</sup> Transferred to the regional level, such awareness suggests that citizens might not be so easily swayed by biased media reports and that a regional administration's monopoly on information sources provides no guarantee of essentially dictating knowledge to the masses. On the other hand, in the absence of alternative data sources, a situation might arise in which the average voter feels that he or she lacks any reliable information with which to evaluate candidates or regional conditions – the oblast controlled media "lies" and no other information is available.

Discussions, interviews, and other observations in Samara, Perm, and Ul'yankovsk oblasts suggest some support for the mobilizational effect - media consumers identify media biases and draw upon those sources that best reflect their particular predispositions. Individuals with stated preferences for one candidate tended to dismiss media sources supporting other candidates as examples of "yellow (*zheltyi*) journalism" while drawing most of their arguments and supporting information from sources favoring their preferred candidates (even when these sources were clearly as biased as any other). Readership also divided along established social cleavages. Pensioners seldom read business dailies and business people were rarely observed reading the local communist paper. As the "official source" of information in the oblast, oblast administration-sponsored media might draw consumers from a broad spectrum of society but trust in the information seemed to vary depending upon the social requisites of regime support.

The third modal response concurs with Colton's arguments regarding the effect of media bias during federal elections. With potential voters skeptical about media information, one might expect potential voters to assemble a patchwork of information from a variety of media sources, interpersonal communication, personal experience, and other sources. In addition to each of these sources' independent effect on opinion formation, combinations of factors - say a personal experience of unemployment and media reports on high unemployment in the region - might interact to produce particular outcomes independently of any single factor. In this respect, Colton also speaks of the importance of interpersonal communication through "informal peer circles" as an alternative information source.<sup>178</sup>

Nonetheless, at the regional level, the voter's ability to piece together information from a variety of sources remains contingent upon the sources available. This in turn varies not simply from region to region but also within regions themselves. An examination of the Ul'yanovsk case indicates that the highest numbers of viewers of the regional administration-backed Tele-radio station (GTRK) "Volga" resided in the rural regions with audience rates in raion centers, towns, and villages of 64.1%, 60.9%, and 63%, respectively.<sup>179</sup> This compares to audiences of 48.3% in Ul'yanovsk city and 55.9% in other large cities like Dmitrovgrad. Amongst Volga's audience in the rural regions, 20.2% claimed that they read no newspaper and 61.2% claimed that they received information from only one newspaper. Of the audience members reading only one paper, 26.8% read the pro-gubernatorial *Narodnaya Gazeta*. Such figures suggest that much of GTRK Volga's broadcast area included a "captive audience" with little or no access to opposing viewpoints. Even allowing for interpersonal communication, it is likely that rural voters had little access to alternative information - most of their interactions would be with similarly situated rural residents.

One might draw two conclusions from this brief discussion on the role of the media in regional elections. First, it points to a wealth of material for future analyses that will contribute not only to our understanding of Russian regional elections but also to the possible effect of a highly biased media in any election setting. To my knowledge, very little such research has taken place at the level of federal elections, and there are no published works depicting the situation at the regional level.<sup>180</sup> I later discuss some prospects for such studies in the section entitled *Future Paths of Inquiry*.

Second, putting aside the speculation regarding the effects of the current system one can assume with some degree of confidence that the goal of accountability would be better served by the development of regional-level media sources that are less reliant on any single benefactor or organization. However, until regional economies themselves further diversify, we can expect to observe a continuation of the type of impartiality currently witnessed in most regions. The rise of more diversified ownership and financial support for media outlets would ideally render moot the speculative discussion on the effects of an impartial media and allow us to examine the role of political awareness *per se* as it is studied in other settings.<sup>181</sup> Citizens could treat their media as a source of sufficiently objective information rather than a tangle of interests demanding deconstruction and interpretation. In its current state, Russian regional media presents more of a hindrance than an aid to accountability.<sup>182</sup>

### ***Political Parties***

The second factor impeding the role of elections in promoting accountability relates to the role that party structures play – or perhaps more appropriately, do *not* play - in regional executive elections.

Even the minimalist accountability model applied throughout this study places significant information burdens upon survey respondents and voters. Aside from gathering the information necessary to make a reasonable assessment of regional-level economic performance, individuals must also determine what the incumbent and his challengers intend to do about the current situation. In assessing challengers' goals and intended policies, voters are faced with an even greater quandary. While they may assess the incumbent on the basis of the previous term, challengers are relatively unknown figures that must present their programs in a very brief period prior to the election. Furthermore, since many challengers have little or no experience in regional political office (the exception being those instances in which mayors or regional deputies compete), voters have very few bases to assess whether the challenger has the means or intent to implement his or her campaign promises. With such a dearth of information amongst voters, incumbents of all types gain a margin of support from the voters' natural fear of the unknown.<sup>183</sup>

A stable, institutionalized, regional-level party system in which parties advance their own candidates could mitigate both of these problems. With regard to the information issue, parties provide a useful "information shortcut" for individuals facing uncertain electoral choices. Political parties simplify the election decision by presenting voters with a choice of broad policies embedded within a single party ideology. Drawing upon the original work of Anthony Downs, Samuel Popkin notes:

"Parties use ideologies to highlight critical differences between themselves, and to remind voters of their past successes. They do this because voters do not perceive all the differences, cannot remember all the past performances, and cannot relate all future policies to their own benefits."<sup>184</sup>

In single-mandate district elections, or elections for executives at any level of government, party identification saves the voter from the task of uncovering information about a candidate who may only recently have emerged from the masses to vie for citizens' votes. Rather than expending the time and effort to familiarize themselves with each candidate's platform, record, and reputation, voters can ease the process by relying upon their particular party identification.

An additional potential advantage behind the emergence of a stable regional-level party system is the element of accountability and restraint it might lend to regional election processes. In a system characterized by weak parties endorsing candidates who entered the race mostly on their own initiative, candidates have little incentive to forgo even the most base election tactics. This is particularly true for candidates whose primary source of well-being and power lies outside of the political arena *per se* (business people for instance). If a "dirty tactic" succeeds in undermining the opponent, then the candidate increases his or her chances of taking office. However, even if the tactic fails and the candidate is exposed for resorting to such deplorable methods, he or she can simply exit electoral politics after the race and return to his or her previous occupation.<sup>185</sup> By contrast, in a system where stable parties advance competing candidates for election, the election game becomes iterative whether the candidate wins or not. This factor both raises additional sanctions on terminal incumbents (those in their last term of office), and places the costs for "dirty campaigning" upon parties represented by the offending candidates.

Stable political parties, are tied to election processes and compete in each election with the understanding that their performance will affect their success in future races. If candidates are bound to such institutions, the (mis)behavior of those candidates may have profound consequences for the future of the party. Hence, a stable party system creates an iterative game

that places restrictions upon terminal incumbents and “transient” candidates. Both types of candidates might disappear after the elections – political parties hope to survive to participate in future contests.<sup>186</sup>

Unfortunately, Russia’s regional level political parties are characterized by internal divisions, minimal levels of inter-election activity, and little consistency between official party platforms and candidate endorsements. Parties divide across levels of government with municipal, regional, and federal level party structures endorsing different candidates during the same elections. Regional parties break into fractions as individual political leaders fight for political and economic advantage. Between elections, parties either disappear entirely, or enter a dormant state, rousing themselves (sometimes in an altered form) and reminding regional voters of their existence only months prior to an election. Finally, if parties indeed act as information shortcuts for partisan voters, Russian regional parties often forfeit such a role by endorsing candidates whose views oppose those of the “official” party platform.

For their part, political figures’ reluctance to consistently and openly identify with regional parties further exacerbates these problems. Russian politics remains a very individualistic pursuit in which political figures rely for victory on their personal popularity and clout rather than their association with larger and more stable political organizations. Candidates seek out party endorsements primarily as part of a broader campaign strategy to appeal to a “critical mass” of demographic groups sufficient to gain office. This approach often results in a puzzling together of different parties (and fractions of parties). Depending on the change in political tides between elections, the same political figure’s patchwork of endorsements (the haphazard nature of this process does not warrant the use of the term “coalition”) may change dramatically from campaign to campaign. With candidates essentially choosing their own parties

and with these choices based predominantly on vote maximization rather than considerations of ideological consistency, the parties' role as an information shortcut naturally decreases.

### *Further Paths of Inquiry*

Moving on from this discussion of some of the enduring obstacles to executive accountability through elections, I now turn to a more explicit outline of future research into these and other questions. As a first step into the regional level accountability problematic, one of the goals of this research is to identify new topics of inquiry and in this respect, the preceding study has certainly achieved its purpose.

To begin, this study demonstrates the potential benefits of broader "jurisdictional voting" studies applying a single focused survey instrument to samples drawn from a larger selection of regions.<sup>187</sup> Such a study might be conducted during upcoming election cycles (the next being 2004-2005) when the brief but intensive election season would provide a broad selection of case regions drawn from a relatively controlled environment. In developing new survey instruments for such a study, more attention should be focused on distinct comparative and absolute sociotropic measures as well as both prospective and retrospective economic evaluations. Other measures for consideration include questions focused upon the respondents' overall assessment of marketization and democracy, and questions similar to those included in Denise Powers and James Cox's study that examine whether respondents blame the legacies of the Soviet Union or the post-Soviet government for the current economic situation.<sup>188</sup> More discriminatory approaches applied by Raymond Duch, should also be considered in an effort to identify the sources of heterogeneous responses amongst the electorate.<sup>189</sup>

The study should also shift the focus to issues of political awareness and information with particular emphasis on those aspects about which the existing survey data lacked sufficient



measures. While exposure to certain types of media was explored in my separate study of the election in Ul'yankovsk,<sup>190</sup> this was a single case study with only speculative implications for Russia as a whole. Furthermore, even this study lacked any explicit indication about the amount of information to which the respondents' were exposed and how this exposure affected the strength and nature of opinions. Each of these issues should be considered in the course of developing future survey-based studies of regional election dynamics. Questions regarding both the amount and type of exposure (specific news outlets) should be tailored to each region's media landscape and included on the questionnaires. Finally, if possible, panels of respondents should be interviewed over time (at the very least before and after the election campaign) in order to verify their vote choice and determine how opinions changed in response to campaign events presented in regional media.

In terms of the aggregate-level studies, continuous updating of the existing database to include data from new elections could yield a rich, and eventually "large N" source of data for further hypotheses testing. Additionally, the anticipated publication of current economic performance measures will also allow for the retesting of some of the performance hypotheses using more precise lagged variables. Of particular concern in this regard are those cases that occurred towards the end of the examined election cycle for which the existing measures of economic performance were drawn from a period nearly a year before the election.

However, the viability of conducting longitudinal analyses with such a database depends greatly upon the stability of Russian economic and political institutions. At the time of writing, a number of reforms are either under consideration or already accepted that would fundamentally change the legal environment within which future elections take place. More specifically, we can expect single-tour, simple-plurality elections to disappear as federal guidelines are enforced

mandating majority-based election rules (“two-tour elections”). In addition, if the debate over term limits is settled, there will be fewer “actual” incumbents (as opposed to *preemniki*) running for elections.<sup>191</sup> Of course, debates at the federal level also point to the possibility of eliminating regional executive elections – with obvious implications for the future of this area of study.

In terms of economic factors, some potential issues to consider as the aggregate database is developed include changes in both the measure of and regional executive responsibility for regional economic performance. As evidenced by the decree, “Of the results of analyses on consumer baskets for primary socio-economic groups in the subjects of the Russian Federation”, and a subsequent report by the Russian Federation Ministry of Labor and Social Development, reforms are currently underway to alter and standardize the measure of regional cost of living.<sup>192</sup> In accordance with the government decree, a series of meetings were held between November 2000 and June 2001 in which regional representatives presented recommendations for revising the methodology used to determine the price and content of a basket of basic consumer goods and services. In the process, regional executives, in cooperation with regional legislatures, would incorporate these methods into new laws regarding the regional minimal cost of living. The ultimate goal of this project is to institutionalize a single methodology (allowing for adjustments across established geographic zones as a reflection of largely climactic factors) for the determination of the minimal cost of living in every region of the federation by the end of 2001. For most regions this will result in a sudden increase in official minimal living standards and could elicit spurious results in future longitudinal analyses of regional-level economic voting.

Perhaps more important than the expected reforms to the methods for measuring regional living standards are the changing means at the disposal of sub-national governments to manipulate their regions’ economies. The Putin administration continues to push for the greater

centralization of finances, and in 2000, governors lost control over a very important source of regional income – the value added tax (VAT). Furthermore, continuing political centralization, greater monitoring of federal financial flows, and the growing crisis of infrastructure and energy finance may restrict regional executives' options with regards to interregional trade barriers, subsidies, and price controls. With budgets tightening and capital flowing more freely between regions, executives will enjoy less discretion in their choice of methods to manipulate the regional economy and constituents' standard of living.<sup>193</sup> The breakdown of social services in Ul'yánovsk demonstrated that hardening budget constraints hold the potential to spur convergence towards a relatively narrow set of policy options despite the policy preferences of regional executives.<sup>194</sup>

Analyses of regional executive elections provide a viable area of inquiry both for questions of post-Soviet economic and political development and for the study of voting behavior and government accountability in general. However, while the “moving target” metaphor applies to many contemporary political issues, in this case the particular “target” (regional executive elections) will move, might change shape, and may even disappear. Therefore, future research into this topic must be informed by a keen awareness of institutional developments, changes in measurement techniques, and the shifting *de facto* balance of power between the center and regions.

### *Conclusion*

Overall, the results of this study are encouraging. Despite the tendency, especially at the regional level, to focus on the negative aspects of Russian democratization, this analysis points to a number of positive behavioral and even institutional developments. Russian voters are conscious of variations in regional economic performance and take these evaluations into

account when assessing their regional executives. Barriers to accountability, while still present, are apparently inadequate to entirely impede the manifestation of this behavior in election outcomes. Governors must work for improvements in regional living standards in order to secure their chances of maintaining office.

The preceding study was also fruitful as a means to expose new paths of inquiry and allow for the development of more focused questions. In terms of a “research program”, it points the way towards further survey and aggregate level research focused on more specific aspects of the economic voting problematic, the role of the media, and the impact of political awareness. Rather than a conclusive study of Russian regional executive elections, this study presents a point of departure for ongoing inquiries into the nature of regional level voting behavior. The character of the post-Soviet regional setting and the host of institutional and procedural developments currently underway makes research into this question not only interesting for the advancement of our understanding of Russia *per se* but also for the broader literature on economic voting, and the behavior of citizens in sub-national elections.

Finally, this study provides some means by which to place Russia’s current federal reforms into perspective. Efforts to establish greater federal control over regional-level democratic processes are difficult to assess without first understanding the broad patterns of political and socio-economic developments at the regional level. Until we step back from a reliance on anecdotal evidence often colored by both personal and political preferences, it is difficult to assess whether the Putin administration’s reforms are justified efforts to eliminate “regional autocracies” or merely attempts to accumulate power under central government organs.

The evidence is mixed. While the extent to which elections do reflect variation in performance confutes the most strident efforts to eliminate regional elections, executives’

continued ability to manipulate outcomes suggests that some additional means are necessary to reform and then enforce election laws. The “Kursk variant”, despite the negative press it received due to its apparently arbitrary character, likely served some purpose by putting incumbents on notice during the 2000-2001 elections. A greater role of presidential representatives in the seven federal districts might also have a moderating effect. Finally, recent efforts by the Central Election Commission and the Federal Government to eliminate the option of manipulating term limits and election rules (particularly simple-plurality elections) may also prevent the repetition of some of the recent round’s most blatantly crafted elections.

In any event, the direction of Russia’s economic and political development will not be decided by Moscow alone. If one of the functions of a federal system is flexible rule responding to the varied needs of a diverse territory, then the sub-national governments must reflect - in some manner - the interests of their citizens. Without some means to hold regional governments accountable to the public, Russian will continue to exhibit the “dysfunctional federalism” described by Darrel Snyder and others.<sup>195</sup> The results of the current study provide some basis for optimism. Many of the basic building blocks of accountability exist, but much work lies ahead to clear the remaining institutional and procedural barriers that continue to block its fuller manifestation.

## Appendix A: Descriptive Statistics for Aggregate-level Data

<i>1996-1997</i>	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
BELPOV95	35	16.00	67.00	29.49	9.89
BELPOV96	35	16.00	66.00	28.07	10.12
EMP9495	35	-1.50	4.30	1.51	1.48
EMP9596	35	-1.60	5.40	0.77	1.54
INCUMVOT	35	5.00	81.00	42.03	19.74
INV9495	35	321.00	7,280.00	963.20	1,135.75
INV9596	35	-262.00	5,431.00	471.69	904.11
INVEST95	35	600.00	11,124.00	1,617.06	1,714.87
INVEST96	35	687.00	16,555.00	2,088.74	2,592.05
PDIF9495	35	-35.70	21.30	-11.64	15.38
PDIF9596	35	-15.20	45.60	22.74	12.00
PENSMIN5	35	63.40	169.80	109.57	20.38
PENSMIN6	35	77.00	194.50	132.31	24.58
POV9495	35	-9.10	39.60	6.18	7.60
POV9596	35	-12.00	13.00	-1.41	5.24
RDBRN95	35	34.53	73.72	52.27	9.67
UNEMP95	35	5.90	14.90	9.58	2.23
UNEMP96	35	6.50	16.70	10.35	2.67
WAGBMIN5	35	111.00	293.00	166.46	35.83
WAGBMIN6	35	123.00	359.00	189.51	42.86
WDIF9495	35	-128.00	-5.00	-57.11	24.91
WDIF9596	35	-8.00	70.00	23.06	15.94
<b><i>2000-2001</i></b>					
ARR1998	32	152.00	468.00	296.22	77.56
ARR1999	32	177.00	716.00	372.38	107.73
ARR9798	32	-43.00	205.00	61.88	54.75
ARR9899	32	-48.00	272.00	76.16	60.64
BELPOV98	32	15.80	72.50	30.78	11.16
BELPOV99	32	17.80	88.80	42.14	14.41
INCUMVOT	31	15.00	88.00	53.36	20.01
NUMBCAND	32	1.00	13.00	4.34	2.68
PENMIN98	32	56.00	121.00	86.53	15.24
PENMIN99	32	48.00	113.00	84.53	13.06
PMIN9798	32	-82.00	-18.00	-53.25	13.38
PMIN9899	32	-14.00	15.00	-2.00	7.27
POV9798D	32	-4.60	11.30	4.14	3.33
POV9899D	32	-0.10	34.30	11.36	7.79
RED99	32	14.99	44.53	29.90	6.99
REDBRN99	32	22.22	48.90	34.10	6.02
UNEM9798	32	-3.00	5.20	1.68	1.79
UNEM98	32	7.10	21.00	14.31	3.39
UNEM9899	32	-4.90	5.70	0.03	2.45
UNEM99	32	9.20	21.00	14.34	3.21
W9798DIF	32	-63.00	12.00	-14.31	16.26
W9899DIF	32	-73.00	-17.00	-46.03	14.31
WAGMIN98	32	135.00	410.00	193.25	49.72
WAGMIN99	32	101.00	337.00	147.38	46.46

## Appendix B: Code Book for 1996-1997 Aggregate-level Database

### I. CASES

The cases include the 35 elections that occurred in Russia's oblasts and krai between September 1, 1996 and March 23, 1997. A list of the regions follows:

- |                           |                             |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1) Arkhangel'skaya Oblast | 19) Stravropolskii Krai     |
| 2) Murmanskaya Oblast     | 20) Kurganskaya Oblast      |
| 3) Pskovskaya Oblast      | 21) Permskaya Oblast        |
| 4) Bryanskaya Oblast      | 22) Chelyabinskaya Oblast   |
| 5) Vladimirskaya Oblast   | 23) Altaiskii Krai          |
| 6) Ivanovskaya Oblast     | 24) Chitinskii Krai         |
| 7) Kaluzhskaya Oblast     | 25) Khabarovskii Krai       |
| 8) Kostromskaya Oblast    | 26) Kamchatskaya Oblast     |
| 9) Ryazanskaya Oblast     | 27) Magadanskaya Oblast     |
| 10) Kirovskaya Oblast     | 28) Sakhalinskaya Oblast    |
| 11) Voronezhskaya Oblast  | 29) Kaliningradskaya Oblast |
| 12) Kurskaya Oblast       | 30) Tyumenskaya Oblast      |
| 13) Astrakhanskaya Oblast | 31) Amurskaya Oblast        |
| 14) Volgogradskaya Oblast | 32) Tul'skaya Oblast        |
| 15) Samarskaya Oblast     | 33) Leningradskaya Oblast   |
| 16) Saratovskaya Oblast   | 34) Rostovskaya Oblast      |
| 17) Ul'yanovskaya Oblast  | 35) Volgogradskaya Oblast   |
| 18) Krasnodarskii Krai    |                             |

### II. INDICATORS

*General Case Characteristics*

**V1: NO:** Case number

**V2: OBKRAIID:** Name of Oblast or Krai

**V3: OBKRAI:** (Oblast=1; Krai=2)

**V4: CLIMATE:** Average July Temperature

**V5: MONTH:** Election date

**SOURCES:** Materials for this section were drawn from the following sources:

- 1) Website for the Central Voting Commission of the Russian Federation (<http://www.fci.ru>).
- 2) Goskomstat data
- 3) Steven Solnick, "Gubernatorial Elections in Russia, 1996-1997," *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 14 (1998): 48-80.

*Case Ideology Indicators*

**V6: REDBELT:** Indicates whether region is historically (cast more votes for Zhuganov than Yeltsin in final tour of 1996 presidential election) a “redbelt” region (0=no; 1=yes)

**V7: REDBRN95:** % of vote cast for CPRF or LPDR in the 1995 Duma elections party list ballot

**V8 LEFT95:** % of vote cast for CPRF and APR candidates on the 1995 Duma election party list ballot

**V9 DEM95:** % of vote cast for Our Home is Russia, Russia’s Choice, and Yabloko candidates on the 1995 Duma election party list ballot

**V10: PRES1996:** % of vote cast for Yeltsin in the 1996 Presidential Elections

**SOURCE:** Materials for this section were drawn from the website for the Central Voting Commission of the Russian Federation (<http://www.fci.ru>). Results of the 2000 Duma elections were available only at the okrug level. These results were downloaded, aggregated into regional-level outcomes and divided into ideological categories.

*Election Laws*

**V11: TOURS:** Number of election tours (1= one tour; 2= two tours)

**V12: ZAYAVKA:** Minimal participation requirement

**V13: INCFREND:** Index of pro-incumbent laws

1= 2 tour system with turnout requirement > 25%

2= 25% turnout requirement and two tour system

3= turnout requirement less than or equal to 25% and single tour system

**SOURCES:** Materials for this section were drawn from the following sources:

- 1) Panorama web site (<http://www.panorama.ru:8101/index.html>)
- 2) Website for the Central Voting Commission of the Russian Federation (<http://www.fci.ru>).
- 3) Various regional and federal-level press reports

*Candidate Characteristics*

**V14: YRSINCUM:** Years in office

**V15: JAN96:** Indicates whether the incumbent was appointed after January of 1996. (0= no; 1= yes)

**V16: NUMBCAND:** Number of candidates in deciding tour



**SOURCES:** Materials for this section were drawn from the following sources:

- 1) Website for the Central Voting Commission of the Russian Federation (<http://www.fci.ru>).
- 2) Grigoryi Belonuchkin's "Politika" website (<http://www.cityline.ru/politica/vybory/re96t.html> and [re97t.html](http://www.cityline.ru/politica/vybory/re97t.html)).
- 3) Steven Solnick, "Gubernatorial Elections in Russia, 1996-1997," *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 14 (1998): 48-80.

*Election Results*

**V17: YAVKA:** Level of participation

**V18: VICTOUR:** Indicates tour in which campaign was decided (1= first [or single-tour system]; 2= second)

**V19: INCWIN:** Incumbent win/loss (0= loss; 1=win)

**V20: INCVOTE:** Percent of the vote gathered by the incumbent

**V21: OTRIV:** Difference between the incumbent's vote and the vote for the second strongest candidate

**V22: VICTNPSR:** Victory/loss for NPSR/CPRF supported candidate (0= loss; 1= win)

**V23: VICTOKS:** Victory/loss for OKS supported candidate (0= loss; 1= win)

**V24: PERCNPSR:** Percent of vote gathered by NPSR/CPRF supported candidate

**V25: PERCOKS:** Percent of vote gathered by OKS supported candidate

**SOURCES:** Data for this section was drawn from the following sources:

- 1) Website for the Central Voting Commission of the Russian Federation (<http://www.fci.ru>).
- 2) Grigoryi Belonuchkin's "Politika" website (<http://www.cityline.ru/politica/vybory/re96t.html> and [re97t.html](http://www.cityline.ru/politica/vybory/re97t.html)).
- 3) Official party website of the "CPRF" (<http://www.kprf.ru>),
- 4) Assorted other regional and federal-level press reports.

*Economic Indicators (List may be expanded pending receipt of new data)*

**V26: WAGMIN94:** Average wage as a percentage of the cost of a basket of essential goods for 1994

**V27: WAGMIN95:** Average wage as a percentage of the cost of a basket of essential goods for

1995

**V28: WAGMIN96:** Average wage as a percentage of the cost of a basket of essential goods for 1996

**V29: PENMIN94:** Average pension as a percentage of the cost of a basket of essential goods for 1994

**V30: PENMIN95:** Average pension as a percentage of the cost of a basket of essential goods for 1995

**V31: PENMIN96:** Average pension as a percentage of the cost of a basket of essential goods for 1996

**V32: BELPOV94:** Percent of population living below the official poverty level in 1996\*

**V33: BELPOV95:** Percent of population living below the official poverty level in 1998\*

**V34: BELPOV96:** Percent of population living below the official poverty level in 1998\*

**V35: UNEM94:** Level of unemployment as determined by employment surveys 1994

**V36: UNEM95:** Level of unemployment as determined by employment surveys 1995

**V37: UNEM96:** Level of unemployment as determined by employment surveys 1996

**V38: INVEST94:** Level of per capita investment in 1994

**V39: INVEST95:** Level of per capita investment in 1995

**V40: INVEST96:** Level of per capita investment in 1996

**SOURCES:** Materials for this section were drawn from official Goskomstat publications, particularly the annual statistical collection Regionii Rossii (Regions of Russia).

## Appendix C: Code Book for 2000-2001 Aggregate-level Database

### I. CASES

The cases include the 32 elections that occurred in Russia's oblasts and krai between March 26, 2000 and April 8, 2001. A list of the regions follows:

- |                           |                             |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1) Arkhangel'skaya Oblast | 17) Ul'yankovskaya Oblast   |
| 2) Murmanskaya Oblast     | 18) Krasnodarskii Krai      |
| 3) Pskovskaya Oblast      | 19) Stavropolskii Krai      |
| 4) Bryanskaya Oblast      | 20) Kurganskaya Oblast      |
| 5) Vladimirskaya Oblast   | 21) Permskaya Oblast        |
| 6) Ivanovskaya Oblast     | 22) Chelyabinskaya Oblast   |
| 7) Kaluzhskaya Oblast     | 23) Altaiskii Krai          |
| 8) Kostromskaya Oblast    | 24) Chitinskaya Oblast      |
| 9) Ryazanskaya Oblast     | 25) Khabarovskii Krai       |
| 10) Kirovskaya Oblast     | 26) Kamchatskaya Oblast     |
| 11) Voronezhskaya Oblast  | 27) Magadanskaya Oblast     |
| 12) Kurskaya Oblast       | 28) Sakhalinskaya Oblast    |
| 13) Astrakhanskaya Oblast | 29) Kaliningradskaya Oblast |
| 14) Volgogradskaya Oblast | 30) Tyumenskaya Oblast      |
| 15) Samarskaya Oblast     | 31) Amurskaya Oblast        |
| 16) Saratovskaya Oblast   | 32) Tul'skaya Oblast        |

### II. INDICATORS

#### *General Case Characteristics*

**V1: NO:** Case number

**V2: OBKRAIAD:** Name of Oblast or Krai

**V3: OBKRAI:** (Oblast=1; Krai=2)

**V4: CLIMATE:** Average July Temperature

**V5: MONTH:** Election date

**SOURCES:** Materials for this section were drawn from the following sources:

- 1) Website for the Central Voting Commission of the Russian Federation (<http://www.fci.ru>)
- 2) Goskomstat data

#### *Case Ideology Indicators*

**V6: REDBELT:** Indicates whether region is historically (cast more votes for Zhuganov than Yeltsin in 1996 presidential election) a "redbelt" region (0=no; 1=yes)

**V7: REDBRN99:** % of vote cast for CPRF or “Bloc Zhirinovskiy” in the 1999 Duma Elections

**V9: CENT99:** % of vote cast for “Unity”, “Fatherland”, and “Our Home is Russia” in the 1999 Duma Elections

**V9: LIB99:** % of vote cast for “SPS” and “Yabloko” in the 1999 Duma Elections

**V10: PRES2000:** % of vote cast for Putin in the 2000 Presidential Elections

**SOURCE:** Materials for this section were drawn from the website for the Central Voting Commission of the Russian Federation (<http://www.fci.ru>). Results of the 2000 Duma elections were available only at the okrug level. These results were downloaded, aggregated into regional-level outcomes and divided into ideological categories.

#### *Election Laws*

**V11: TOURS:** Number of election tours (1= one tour; 2= two tours)

**V12: ZAYAVKA:** Minimal participation requirement

**V13: INCFREND:** Index of pro-incumbent laws

1= 2 tour system with turnout requirement > 25%

2= 25% turnout requirement and two tour system

3= turnout requirement less than or equal to 25% and single tour system

**SOURCES:** Materials for this section were drawn from the following sources:

- 1) Panorama web site (<http://www.panorama.ru:8101/index.html>)
- 2) Website for the Central Voting Commission of the Russian Federation (<http://www.fci.ru>).
- 3) Various regional and federal-level press reports

#### *Candidate Characteristics*

**V14: YRSINCUM:** Years in office

**V15: PREEMNIK:** Indicates whether the incumbent declined to run and designated a “successor” to challenge the election. (0= no; 1= yes)

**V16: SECOPP:** Indicates whether security organ affiliated candidate challenged the election. (0= no; 1=yes)

**V17: VOTE96:** Incumbent’s vote share in the 1996-1997 elections (in the case of a “successor” the favored candidate is treated as the incumbent).

**V18: YELTAPPO:** Indicates whether or not incumbent was an original Yeltsin appointee (0=no; 1=yes)

**V19: NUMBCAND:** Number of candidates in deciding tour

**SOURCES:** Materials for this section were drawn from the following sources:

- 1) Website for the Central Voting Commission of the Russian Federation (<http://www.fci.ru>).
- 2) Grigoryi Belonuchkin's "Politika" website (<http://www.cityline.ru/politica/vybory/re00t.html> and [re01t.html](http://www.cityline.ru/politica/vybory/re01t.html)).
- 3) "Regionii Rossii: Politika i Kadry" (Regions of Russia: Politics and Cadre). Publishes weekly bulletins on regional elections and politics. (<http://www.materik.ru/mfpp/polika>).

*Election Results*

**V20: YAVKA:** Level of participation

**V21: VICTOUR:** Indicates tour in which campaign was resolved (1= first [or single-tour system]; 2= second)

**V22: INCWIN:** Incumbent win/loss (0= loss; 1=win)

**V23: INCVOTE:** Percent of the vote gathered by the incumbent

**V24: OTRIV:** Change between the incumbent's vote and the vote for the second strongest candidate

**V25: VICTNPSR:** Victory/loss for NPSR/CPRF supported candidate (0= loss; 1= win)

**V26: VICTCENT:** Victory/loss for "Fatherland" or "Unity" supported candidate (0= loss; 1= win)

**V27: VICTLIB:** Victory/loss for "SPS" or "Yabloko" supported candidate (0= loss; 1= win)

**V28: PERCNPSR:** Percent of vote gathered by NPSR/CPRF supported candidate

**V29: PERCCENT:** Percent of vote gathered by "Fatherland" or "Unity" supported candidate (in case of split, candidate with highest percentage is used)

**V30: PERCOT:** Percent of vote gathered by "Fatherland" supported candidate

**V31: PERCEDIN:** Percent of vote gathered by "Unity" supported candidate

**V32: PERCLIB:** Percent of vote gathered by "SPS" or "Yabloko" supported candidate (in case of split, candidate with highest percentage is used)

**V33: ODDITY:** Indicates “odd” cases in which incumbents were forcibly removed from the race (Kursk), all opposition candidates attempted to exit from the race (Tula), incumbents exited and then returned to race (Perm). Coded as: (0= “normal”; 1= “oddiy”). List of eligible oddities may expand as the research progresses.

**SOURCES: Data for this section was drawn from the following sources:**

- 1) Website for the Central Voting Commission of the Russian Federation (<http://www.fci.ru>).
- 2) Grigoryi Belonuchkin’s “Politika” website (<http://www.cityline.ru/politica/vybory/re00t.html> and [re01t.html](http://www.cityline.ru/politica/vybory/re01t.html)).
- 3) “Regionii Rossii: Politika i Kadry” (Regions of Russia: Politics and Cadre). Publishes weekly bulletins on regional elections and politics. (<http://www.materik.ru/mfpp/polika>).
- 4) Official party websites of “Unity” (<http://www.edin.ru>), “Fatherland” (<http://www.otechgazeta.narod.ru>), “CPRF” (<http://www.kprf.ru>), “SPS” (<http://www.sps.ru>).
- 5) Assorted other regional and federal-level press reports.

*Economic Indicators (List may be expanded pending receipt of new data)*

**V34: WAGMIN96:** Average wage as a percentage of the cost of a basket of essential goods for 1996

**V35: WAGMIN98:** Average wage as a percentage of the cost of a basket of essential goods for 1998

**V36: WAGMIN99:** Average wage as a percentage of the cost of a basket of essential goods for 1999

**V37: PENMIN96:** Average pension as a percentage of the cost of a basket of essential goods for 1996

**V38: PENMIN98:** Average pension as a percentage of the cost of a basket of essential goods for 1998

**V39: PENMIN99:** Average pension as a percentage of the cost of a basket of essential goods for 1999

**V40: BELPOV96:** Percent of population living below the official poverty level in 1996\*

**V41: BELPOV98:** Percent of population living below the official poverty level in 1998\*

**V42: ARR1997:** Wage arrears for 1997 (as percent of total regional wage fund)

**V43: ARR1999:** Wage Arrears for 1999 (as percent of total regional wage fund)

**V44: ARR2000:** Wage Arrears for 2000 (as percent of total regional wage fund)

- V45: AUTO96:** Number of automobiles per capita for 1996
- V46: AUTO98:** Number of residents per private automobile, 1998
- V47: AUTO99:** Number of residents per private automobile 1999
- V48: TEL96:** Number of telephones per 100 urban residents in 1996
- V49: TEL98:** Number of telephones per 100 urban residents in 1998
- V50: TEL99:** Number of telephones per 100 urban residents in 1999
- V41: UNEM96:** Level of unemployment as determined by employment surveys 1996
- V52: UNEM98:** Level of unemployment as determined by employment surveys 1998
- V53: UNEM99:** Level of unemployment as determined by employment surveys 1999
- V54: CRIME96:** Registered crimes per 100,000 in 1996 (all crimes)
- V55: CRIME98:** Registered crimes per 100,000 in 1998 (all crimes)
- V56: CRIME99:** Registered crimes per 100,000 in 1999 (all crimes)
- V57: VVP1998:** Gross regional product in 1998
- V58: VVP1999:** Gross regional product in 1999

**SOURCES:** Materials for this section were drawn from official Goskomstat publications, particularly the annual statistical collection Regionii Rossii (Regions of Russia).

**Appendix D Results for 2000-2001 OLS Regression Models, Standardized Coefficients**

	<i>2000-2001</i>
<b>Number of Candidates</b>	-0.62
<b>Real Wages</b>	0.24
<b>Real Pensions</b>	0.18
<b>Security-based Opponent</b>	-0.59
<b>Tours</b>	-0.35
<b>1996-1997 Incumbent Share</b>	0.23



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<sup>1</sup> See (in order): Ukaz Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii “O polnomochnom predstavitele Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii v federal’nom okruge” (13 May 2000, N 849); Federal’nyi zakon, “O vnesenii izmenenii i dopolnenii v Federal’noi zakon “Ob obshikh printsipakh organizatsii zakonodatel’nikh (predstavitel’nikh) i ispolnitel’nikh organov gosudarstvennoi vlasti subektov Rossiiskoi Federatsii” (Signed by State Duma on 19 July 2000) *Rossiskaya Gazeta* 1 August 2000, page 6; Federal’nyi zakon, “O vnesenii dopolneniya v federal’nyi zakon “Ob obshikh printsipakh organizatsii zakonodatel’nikh (predstavitel’nikh) i ispolnitel’nikh organov gosudarstvennoi vlasti subektov rossiiskoi federatsii” (8 February 2001 N 3-F3). The term limit issue has been the topic of frequent waffling by the president and federal authorities. Elections for key regional executives like Shaimiev in Tartarstan apparently resulted in changes to the law allowing for third and even fourth terms in some cases. See Ivan Rodin “Regional’naya Politika Kremlya Opyqt’ Menyaetsya?” *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* 6 February 2001; [http://www.ng.ru/politics/2001-06-02/1\\_change.html](http://www.ng.ru/politics/2001-06-02/1_change.html) , accessed on November 21, 2001.

<sup>2</sup> The issue of returning to regional executive appointments has appeared in a number of media and academic discussions. For an example from Duma debates, see the discussion surrounding Vitalyi Vladimirovich Lednik’s presentation of an amendment eliminating elected governors in: *Gosudarstvennaya Duma: Stenogramma Zasedanii* 77:525 (15 February 2001): 33-45.

<sup>3</sup> Henry Hale, “The Regionalization of Autocracy in Russia”, in *Harvard University Program on New Approaches to Russian Security Policy Memo Series*, ed. Erin Powers, Memo no. 42, 1998. The practice of referring to Russia’s regions as “fiefdoms” of their respective executives has become a commonplace throughout region-focused stories and analysis. I am unaware of who initially applied this characterization.

<sup>4</sup> Bernard Manin, Adam Przeworski, and Susan Stokes, “Elections and Representation” in *Democracy, Accountability and Representation*, ed. Adam Przeworski, Bernard Manin, and Susan Stokes (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999), 29-54.

<sup>5</sup> Manin, Przeworski and Stokes, “Elections and Representation”, 40.

<sup>6</sup> World Bank, *Russian Federation Data Profile* online version at <http://devdata.worldbank.org/external/CPProfile.asp?SelectedCountry=RUS&CCODE=RUS&CNAME=Russian+Federation&PTYPE=CP> Accessed November 23, 2001.

<sup>7</sup> While the term “khozyain” translates literally into “manager”, the term generally conveys a sense of a patriarchal “boss” who will manage the affairs of a given organization.

<sup>8</sup> Gerald Kramer, “Short-term Fluctuations in U.S. Voting Behavior, 1896-1964,” *American Political Science Review*, 65 (1971): 131-143. Kramer’s piece also presents a review of earlier economic voting literature.

<sup>9</sup> Bloom and Price later argued that the economic voting function was “asymmetrical”. Voters punished incumbents for poor performance but did not necessarily reward them for good. See, Howard Bloom and Douglas Price, “Voter Response to Short-run Economic Conditions: The Asymmetric Effect of Prosperity and Recession,” *American Political Science Review*, 69 (1975): 1240-1254

<sup>10</sup> Edward Tufte, “Determinants of the Outcomes of Midterm Congressional Elections,” *American Political Science Review*, 69 (1975): 812-826; Edward Tufte, *Political Control of the Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978); Raymond Fair, “The Effects of Economic Events on Votes for the President,” *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, 60 (1978): 159-173; J.R. Hibbing and J.R. Alford, “The Electoral Impact of Economic Conditions: Who is Held Responsible?” *American Journal of Political Science*, 25 (1981): 423-439.

<sup>11</sup> See W.S. Robinson, “Ecological Correlations and the Behavior of Individuals”, *American Sociological Review* 15:3 (June 1950): 351-357

<sup>12</sup> George Stigler, “General Economic Conditions and National Elections,” *American Economic Review*, 63 (1973): 160-167.

<sup>13</sup> Donald Kinder and D. Roderick Kiewiet, “Sociotropic Politics: The American Case,” *British Journal of Political Science*, 11 (1979): 129-161; Stanley Feldman, “Economic Self-Interest and Political Behavior,” *American Journal of Political Science*, 26 (1982): 446-466; Stephen Weatherford, “Economic Conditions and Electoral Outcomes: Class Differences in the Political Response to Recession,” *American Journal of Political Science*, 22 (1983): 917-938.

<sup>14</sup> The “value added” of survey approaches (like this current one) may be seen in the following quote from Kinder and Kiewiet, “It is important to keep in mind that all these analyses rely [authors note: Kinder and Kiewiet were referring to the 1970’s American studies] upon aggregate-level data – what has been examined is the relationship

between *aggregate* economic conditions and *collective* political outcomes. On logical grounds, therefore, the evidence has nothing in particular to say about how economic conditions affect individual voters. The aggregate evidence is necessarily compatible with any number of individual-level models". See, Kinder, Donald, and Roderick Kiewiet, "Sociotropic Politics: the American Case", *British Journal of Political Science*, 11 (1981): 497. For more arguments to this effect see Tufte "Determinants of the Outcomes of Midterm Congressional Elections," (1975).

<sup>15</sup> However, as Colton notes, the general consensus appears to be that sociotropic voting is more prevalent. Nonetheless, as Kinder and Kiewiet (1981) themselves indicate, sociotropic voting may in fact be motivated by a sort of "enlightened self-interest" – i.e. voters could prefer an improving economy because of the increased individual prospects. See Timothy Colton, "Economics and Voting in Russia," *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 12 (1996): 313-314.

<sup>16</sup> While Stein referred to this as the "federalist perspective" on voting, I refer to it merely as "jurisdictional voting" arguing that similar issues are at stake in federal, unitary and intra-level of government comparisons. See Robert Stein, "Economic Voting for Governor and U.S. Senator: The Electoral Consequences of Federalism", *Journal of Politics* 52 (1990): 29-53. Other locus-related issues are particularly prevalent in the study of legislatures. In these cases, while jurisdictional issues play some role, another major issue is the fact that legislatures "dilute" responsibility within a larger body containing many different individuals, fractions, and parties. See Powell and Whitten (1993) and Heath and Paulson (1992).

<sup>17</sup> Stephen Turret, "The Vulnerability of American Governors, 1900-1969," *Midwest Journal of Political Science*, 15 (1971): 108-132; John Chubb, "Institutions, the Economy, and the Dynamics of State Elections," *American Political Science Review* 82 (1988): 133-154; Malcolm Jewell and David Olson, *Political Parties and Elections in American States* (Chicago: Dorsey, 1988); Michael Lewis-Beck and Tom Rice, *Forecasting Elections* (Washington DC: CQ Press, 1992).

<sup>18</sup> Stein, 1990, L.R. Atkeson. and R.W. Partin, "Economic and Referendum Voting: A Comparison of Gubernatorial and Senatorial Elections," *American Political Science Review*, 89 (1995): 99-107; Richard Niemi, Harold Stanley and Ronald Vogel, "State Economies and State Taxes: Do Voters Hold Governors Accountable?" *American Journal of Political Science*, 39 (1995): 936-957.

<sup>19</sup> Niemi, Stanley and Vogel, "State Economies and State Taxes: Do Voters Hold Governors Accountable?," 938.

<sup>20</sup> For similar and other reasons, there remains a dearth of economic voting studies for other developing countries as well. Some exceptions include: Mitchell Seligson, and Miguel Gomez, "Ordinary Elections in Extraordinary Times: The Political Economy of Voting in Costa Rica," in *Elections and democracy in Central America*, ed. John Booth and Mitchell Seligson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989); Ronald McDonald, and Mark Ruhl, *Party Politics and Elections in Latin America* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989), Karen Remmer, "The Political Impact of Economic Crisis in Latin America," *American Political Science Review*, 85 (1991): 777-800; Alexander Pacek, and Benjamin Radcliff, "The Political Economy of Competitive Elections in the Developing World," *American Journal of Political Science*, 39 (1995): 745-759

<sup>21</sup> Stephen White, Richard Rose, and Ian McAllister, *How Russia Votes*, (Chatham: Chatham House, 1996); Timothy Colton and Jerry Hough, *Growing Pains*, (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institute Press, 1998); James Gibson, "The Russian Dance with Democracy", *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 17:2 (2001): 101-128.

<sup>22</sup> One can divide the economic voting literature focused on transition states into two broad categories: those that look at the effect of economic performance and standard of living on support for *institutions* (i.e., the market, free elections) and those which focus on these factors' impact on support for parties and candidates. Since this study does not examine support for institutions *per se*, I will only discuss this literature briefly in Chapter Two. For examples of this literature see, Richard Rose, William Mishler, and Christian Haerpfer, *Democracy and its Alternatives* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), ch. 8; For another study of economic and political institutional support in Russia, see James Gibson, "Political and Economic Markets", *Journal of Politics*, 58:4 (1996): 954-984.

<sup>23</sup> Colton, "Economics and Voting," 313-314.

<sup>24</sup> Colton himself cites the example of Hough, Davidheiser, and Lehmann, (1996, p. 55) who state that, "One does not need sophisticated political science to explain why parties supporting government policy received 25 percent of the vote [in December 1995] and strongly anti-government parties 54 percent". See, Jerry Hough, Evelyn Davidheiser, and Susan Lehmann, *The 1996 Presidential Election*, (Washington D.C., Brookings Institution Press, Brookings Occasional Papers, May 1996).

<sup>25</sup> Denise Powers and James Cox, "Echoes from the Past: The Relationship between Satisfaction with Economic Reforms and Voting Behavior in Poland", *American Political Science Review*, 91:3 (September 1997): 617-633.

<sup>26</sup> Atkeson and Partin, "Economic and Referendum Voting: A Comparison of Gubernatorial and Senatorial Elections," 99.

<sup>27</sup> Given the conflicts within the latter two states throughout the 1990s, they are unlikely candidates for a study of this nature.

<sup>28</sup> Although it should be noted that autonomy of regional governments was already increasing during the Gorbachev era.

<sup>29</sup> For instance, Gontmakher estimates that at the end of the 1990's regional governments were responsible for roughly 70% of all social programs on their territory. Generally speaking, between 1991-1999 regional administrations became responsible for regional economic policy (including investment promotion, subsidies to ailing industries, privatization, research and development, and small and medium business development), housing and communal services, social policy (except pensions and veterans benefits), education (up to the university level), health care, infrastructural development (roads, energy systems), and cultural affairs (libraries, museums, etc). E. S. Gontmakher, "Principy I osnovnye elementy sotsialnoi strategii" [Principles and Basics Elements of Social Strategy] in E.B. Gilinskaya and S.N. Smirnov eds *Territorial'nye Problemy Sotsialnoi Politiki* (Moscow: State University Higher School of Economics 2000), 18; M.V. Romanovsk and O.V. Brublevskoi, *Budgetnaya Sistema Rossiiskoi Federatsii* [Budget System of the Russian Federation] (Moscow: "Yurait", 2000), 91.

<sup>30</sup> These are coefficients of variation converted into percentages.

<sup>31</sup> Goskomstat Rossii, *Regionii Rossii: 2000*, (Moscow: Goskomstat, 2000)

<sup>32</sup> See Daniel Elazar, *Exploring Federalism* (Tuscaloosa, University of Alabama Press, 1991), ch. 3

<sup>33</sup> For the various pathologies of Russian Federalism see: Darrell Slider, "Russia's Market-Distorting Federalism," *Post-Soviet Geography and Economics*, 38 (1997): 445-460; Ekaterina Zhuravskaya, "Incentives to Provide Local Public Goods: Fiscal Federalism, Russian style," *Journal of Public Economics*, 76 (2000): 337-368; Rui J.P. de Figueiredo Jr. and Barry Weingast, "Russian Federalism: A Contradiction in Terms", *Hoover Digest*, 4 (2001) online version <http://www-hoover.stanford.edu/publications/digest/014/weingast.html> accessed November 24, 2001.

<sup>34</sup> Hale, "The Regionalization of Autocracy in Russia" 1998

<sup>35</sup> Olivier Blanchard, and Andrei Shleifer, "Federalism with and Without Political Centralization: China Versus Russia," working paper, *National Bureau of Economic Research*, [online series] (March 2000 [cited May 6, 2000]); available from World Wide Web@ <http://www.nber.org/papers/w7616>

<sup>36</sup> Steven Solnick, "Gubernatorial Elections in Russia, 1996-1997," *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 14 (1998): 48-80.

<sup>37</sup> 21 of the 37 incumbents lost. Such "parceling out" was particularly evident in the so-called "Red-Belt regions" (usually considered to be those regions generally situated in the European-portion of Russia south of the 55<sup>th</sup> parallel which, for a number of historical, demographic, and economic reasons consistently support communist candidates in national elections), where Yeltsin appointees lost in 11 of 16 races.

<sup>38</sup> See Appendix B for the database's coding.

<sup>39</sup> Website for the Central Voting Commission of the Russian Federation (<http://www.fci.ru>).

<sup>40</sup> Grigoryi Belonuchkin's "Politika" website (<http://www.cityline.ru/politica/vybory/re00t.html> and [re01t.html](http://www.cityline.ru/politica/vybory/re01t.html)).

<sup>41</sup> "Regionii Rossii: Politika i Kadry" (Regions of Russia: Politics and Cadre). Publishes weekly bulletins on regional elections and politics. (<http://www.materik.ru/mfpp/polika>).

<sup>42</sup> Particularly, A. Granberg ed., *Regionalnoe Razvitiie: Opyt rossii i evropeiskogo soyuza* [Regional Development: The Experiences of Russia and the European Union], (Moscow: "Ekonomika", 2000).

<sup>43</sup> Along with the Laboratory for Regional Analysis and Political Geography at MGU, the "Expert" Institute, the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, and the Moscow National Bank created the investment guide, *Predprinimatel'skii klimat regionov Rossii: Geografiya Rossii dlya investorov I predprinimatelei* [The Entrepreneurial Climate in Russia's Regions: A Russian Geography for Investors and Entrepreneurs] (Russia: "Nachala Press", 1997). In addition to providing a useful guide for investors, the text offers a comprehensive examination of regional political, economic and social climates, a range of social-economic and political data, and ratings for all regions. In addition to this, the "Expert" institute publishes yearly regional ratings similar to those in the more inclusive guide.

<sup>44</sup> While more of these idiosyncrasies will be discussed in later chapters, I offer the case of Bryansk as one example. Here, the election was characterized by the candidacy of three "clones" – individuals with names similar to those of other prominent candidates or political figures. Hence, the incumbent, Yuri Evgen'evich Lodkin was "cloned" by challenger Yuri Dmitrovich Lodkin. The strongest challenger to the "real" Yuri Lodkin, Nikolai Vasil'evich Denin was "cloned" by another challenger, Aleksandr Vladimirovich Denin. Finally, one candidate Vladimir Borisovich Putin, was clearly drawing upon the popularity of Russia's president. Boris Zemtsov, "Piarom po Reitingu" *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 236 (2287) 14 December 2000. [http://www.ng.ru/regions/2000-12-14/4\\_reiting.html](http://www.ng.ru/regions/2000-12-14/4_reiting.html) accessed November 23, 2001.

<sup>45</sup> For more on the so-called ‘area specialist’ vs. ‘comparativist’ debate see the debate in *Slavic Review* between Valerie Bunce and Phillippe Schmitter and Terry Karl. Phillippe Schmitter with Terry Karl, “The Conceptual Travels of Transitologists and Consolidologists: How far to the East Should They Attempt to Go?”, *Slavic Review* 53:1 (Spring 1994): 173-185; Valerie Bunce, “Should Transitologists be Grounded?”, *Slavic Review* 54:1 (Spring 1995): 111-127.

<sup>46</sup> Colton “Economics and Voting”, 294.

<sup>47</sup> Bernard Manin, Adam Przeworski, and Susan Stokes, “Elections and Representation”, in *Democracy, Accountability and Representation*, ed. Adam Przeworski, Susan Stokes, and Bernard Manin (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999), 29.

<sup>48</sup> Manin, Przeworski, and Stokes, “Elections and Representation,” 43.

<sup>49</sup> Criteria are paraphrased from: Manin, Przeworski, and Stokes, “Elections and Representation,” 47-49. The authors also include a sixth category stating that citizens must “have some institutional instruments to reward and punish governments for outcomes they generate in different realms” (49). Since elections remain the single such instrument in all democracies, this largely normative criteria is omitted.

<sup>50</sup> Maslow, A., *Motivation and Personality*. (New York: Harper, 1954).

<sup>51</sup> Goskomstat Rossii, *Rossiiskii Statisticheskii Ezhegonik: 2000*, [Russian Statistical Yearbook] (Moscow: Goskomstat, 2000), 157, 163.

<sup>52</sup> Respondents were asked to choose from, “insufficient food and other essential products, price increases, economic crisis, crime, moral and cultural crisis, environmental degradation, aggravation of inter-ethnic relations, income inequality, fascism and extremism, corruption, weak state power, conflict amongst political leaders, war and civil conflict (particularly in Chechnya), wage arrears, and difficult to say. Data taken from: VTsIOM, *Monitoring obshchestvennogo mneniya* 46:2 (March-April 2000): 56.

<sup>53</sup> Concern over crime is consistently the most prominent “non-economic” issue being chosen by 53.8, 49.6, 42.7, and 43.8% of the respondents in 1997, 1998, 1999, and 2000.

<sup>54</sup> For a review some of the earlier literature, see Kramer “Short-term Fluctuations in U.S. Voting Behavior, 1896-1964”.

<sup>55</sup> Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, (New York, Harper, 1957); V.O. Key, *The Responsible Electorate; Rationality in Presidential Voting, 1936-1960* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1966)

<sup>56</sup> Kramer, “Short-term Fluctuations,” 133.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 134.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 140.

<sup>59</sup> Howard Bloom and Douglas Price, “Voter Response to Short-run Economic Conditions: The Asymmetric Effect of Prosperity and Recession,” *American Political Science Review*, 69 (1975): 1240-1254; Edward Tufte, “Determinants of the Outcomes of Midterm Congressional Elections,” *American Political Science Review*, 69 (1975): 812-826; Edward Tufte, *Political Control of the Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978); Raymond Fair, “The Effects of Economic Events on Votes for the President,” *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, 60 (1978): 159-173; J.R. Hibbing and J.R. Alford, “The Electoral Impact of Economic Conditions: Who is Held Responsible?” *American Journal of Political Science*, 25 (1981): 423-439.

<sup>60</sup> The ecological inference problem was first recognized by Ogburn and Goltra, and later expounded by Robinson. See Ogburn, William, and Inez Goltra, “How Women Vote: A Study of an Election in Portland Oregon”, *Political Science Quarterly*, 34 (1919), 413-433; W.S. Robinson, “Ecological Correlations and the Behavior of Individuals”, *American Sociological Review* 15:3 (June 1950): 351-357. For a solution to the problem see, King, Gary, *A Solution to the Ecological Inference Problem*, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1997)

<sup>61</sup> Tufte “Determinants”; Kinder and Kiewiet, “Sociotropic Politics”, 497

<sup>62</sup> Kramer, “Short-term Fluctuations”; Fair, “Effects”; Lepper, S.I. “Voting Behavior and Aggregate Policy Targets”, *Public Choice* 18 (1974): 67-81; Li, R.P.Y. “Public Policy and Short-term Fluctuations in U.S. Voting Behavior: A Reformulation and Expansion”, *Political Methodology*, 3 (1976): 49-70.

<sup>63</sup> Bloom and Price, “Voter Response”; Stigler, “General Economic Conditions”

<sup>64</sup> Feldman, “Economic Self-Interest”; Weatherford, “Economic Conditions”

<sup>65</sup> The “value added” of survey approaches (like this current one) approach may be seen in the following quote from Kinder and Kiewiet, “It is important to keep in mind that all these analyses rely [authors note: Kinder and Kiewiet were referring to the 1970’s American studies] upon aggregate-level data – what has been examined is the relationship between *aggregate* economic conditions and *collective* political outcomes. On logical grounds, therefore, the evidence has nothing in particular to say about how economic conditions affect individual voters. The

aggregate evidence is necessarily compatible with any number of individual-level models” (1981, 497). For more arguments to this effect see Tufte, “Determinants”.

<sup>66</sup> Logan, Mikal Ben Gera “Short-Term economic Changes and Individual Voting Behavior” (manuscript, Yale University, 1977) ; Fiorina, Morris, “Economic Retrospective Voting in American National Elections: A Micro-Analysis”, *American Journal of Political Science*, 22 (1978): 426-443

<sup>67</sup> Kinder and Kiewiet are careful to indicate that the sociotropic versus pocketbook voting debate is not about “altruism” versus self-interest. Sociotropic voters may very well be acting in their own interest rationally calculating that a healthy national economy will yield benefits for their pocketbooks. See Kinder and Kiewiet, “Sociotropic Politics”, 132.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 132

<sup>69</sup> Feldman, “Economic Self Interest”; Butler, David and Donald Stokes, *Political Change in Britain*, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1969)

<sup>70</sup> Sniderman, Paul, and Richard Brody, “Coping: The Ethic of Self-Reliance”, *American Journal of Political Science*, 63 (1977): 501-521

<sup>71</sup> Feldman “Economic Self Interest,” 240.

<sup>72</sup> While Stein referred to this as the “federalist perspective” on voting, I refer to it merely as “jurisdictional voting” arguing that similar issues are at stake in federal, unitary and intra-level of government comparisons. Other locus-related issues are particularly prevalent in the study of legislatures. In these cases, while jurisdictional issues play some role, another major issue is the fact that legislatures “dilute” responsibility within a larger body containing many different individuals, fractions, and parties. G. Powell and Guy Whitten, “A Cross-National Analysis of Economic Voting: Taking Account of the Political Context,” *American Journal of Political Science*, 37 (1993): 391-414; Anthony Heath and Bruno Paulson, “Issues and the Economy,” *Political Quarterly*, 63 (1992): 432-447.

<sup>73</sup> Stein, “Economic Voting,” 32.

<sup>74</sup> Tidmarch, Charles, Lisa Hyman, and Jill Sorokin, “Press Issue Agenda in th 1982 Congressional and Gubernatorial Election Campaign”, *Journal of Politics*, 46 (1984): 1226-45.

<sup>75</sup> Turret “Vulnerability”; Chubb, “Institutions”; Jewell and Olson, *Political Parties*, Lewis -Beck and Rice, *Forecasting*

<sup>76</sup> Chubb, “Institutions,” 150

<sup>77</sup> Oates, Wallace, *Fiscal Federalism* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972);

Tiebout, C., “A Pure Theory of Local Expenditures”, *Journal of Political Economy*, 65, (1956), 416-24.

<sup>78</sup> Peterson, Paul, *City Limits* (Chicago: Chicago University Press,1981), 47

<sup>79</sup> Stein, “Economic Voting”; Atkeson and Partin, “Economic and Referendum Voting”; Niemi, Stanley and Vogel, “State Economies”

<sup>80</sup> In his analyses of elections in a number of former socialist countries, Tucker (1999) uses the term “referendum” voting in a way nearly synonymous with Fiorina’s (1981) “retrospective” voter, indicating that the election is essentially a “referendum” drawing upon citizens’ evaluation of economic performance during the previous term. Since the present study is an analysis of gubernatorial elections, I employ the term “referendum voting” in the more traditional sense found in previous sub-national election studies. See Tucker, Joshua, “Reconsidering Economic Voting: Party Type vs. Incumbency in Transition Countries,” Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Atlanta, September 2-5, 1999.

<sup>81</sup> Stein, “Economic Voting,” 52

<sup>82</sup> Kiewiet, Roderick and Douglas Rivers, “A Retrospective on Retrospective Voting”. *Political behavior*, 6 (1984): 369-391.

<sup>83</sup> Colton “Economics and Voting”; Colton, Timothy and Jerry Hough eds. *Growing Pains* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1998)

<sup>84</sup> Making this statement, I take issue with Solnick’s assessment that Colton’s piece essentially supported the contention that economic voting was *not* and issue for contemporary Russia (1997, 69).

<sup>85</sup> Colton himself cites the example of Hough, Davidheiser, and Lehmann, who state that, “One does not need sophisticated political science to explain why parties supporting government policy received 25 percent of the vote [in December 1995] and strongly anti-government parties 54 percent”. See Hough, Jerry, Evelyn Davidheiser, and Susan Lehmann, *The 1996 Presidential Election*, (Washington D.C., Brookings Institution Press, Brookings Occasional Papers, May 1996), 55.

<sup>86</sup> See W.S. Robinson, “Ecological Correlations and the Behavior of Individuals”, *American Sociological Review* 15:3 (June 1950): 351-357.

<sup>87</sup> In all fairness, Solnick recognizes the ecological inference problem and notes that, “(t)hough a definitive conclusion on the regional elections would require individual-level data comparable to Colton’s, aggregate regional data also reflect a surprisingly weak sociotropic effect”. See Solnick, 69.

<sup>88</sup> See Stein, “Economic Voting,” 32-34.

<sup>89</sup> According to these authors and other evidence gathered in the course of my own fieldwork, regional legislatures – the institution which logically would be in the best position to offset executive control – had ceased to perform their balancing function after the events of October 1993. After Yeltsin’s showdown with the federal Duma, he ordered all regional legislatures to be disbanded. Elections for new bodies were to be held by March 1994. However, because federal law stipulates that election laws and institutions like the regional election commission are to be developed and implemented by both the regional executive and legislature, the absence of a sitting legislature effectively put all control into the hands of regional executives. In many instances executives took advantage of this state of affairs to ensure that election outcomes suited their interests. Furthermore, presidential decrees and federal laws after the October 1993 events maximized the power of executives relative to the new legislatures, effectively “rewarding” regional executives for their loyalty during the parliamentary crisis by giving them substantial powers. As a result of these and other factors, regional legislatures are no longer considered to be prominent actors in regional-level policy-making. See, Gelman, Vladimir and Olga Senatova, “Sub-National Politics in Russia in the Post Communist Transition Period: A View from Moscow”, *Regional and Federal Studies*, 5 (Summer 1995): 211-223.

<sup>90</sup> Romanovsk, M.V. and O.V. Vryblevsk, *Budjetnaya Systema Rossiskoi Federatsii* [Budget System of the Russian Federation] (Moscow: “Yurait”, 2000), 91

<sup>91</sup> By comparison, regions in Australia received 20% of their tax revenues, in the United States, 45%, and in Canada 50%. Lavrov, Aleksei “Budgetary Federalism” in *Conflict and Consensus in Ethno-Political and Center-Periphery Relations in Russia*, ed. Jeremy Azrael and Emil Payin (RAND, Washington DC 1998), 34

<sup>92</sup> Treisman, Daniel, “Russia’s Tax Crisis: Explaining Falling Revenues in a Transitional Economy”, *Economics and Politics*, 2 (1999): 145-169

<sup>93</sup> Gelman and Senatova, “Sub-national Politics”

<sup>94</sup> Treisman, “Russia’s Tax Crisis”

<sup>95</sup> According to Evgenya Serova roughly 30% of Russia’s regions established some form of border control during the financial crisis. See Serova, Evgenya. “Federal Agro-Food Policy in the Conditions of the Financial and Economic Crisis,” *Russian Economy: Trends and Perspectives*, November 1998.

<sup>96</sup> Scholars arguments are also clearly colored by “where they sit” when conducting their research. Interviews with regional authorities or documents published by regional scholars or journalists invariably indicate that the center retains too much power, leaving the regions to cope with too many responsibilities and too few resources. Observers based in Moscow, by contrast, cast blame on regional authorities who possess too much autonomy from the Center. Both sides provide convincing statistics to back their arguments.

<sup>97</sup> Slider, “Russia’s Market-Distorting Federalism,” 449.

<sup>98</sup> King offers a solution to the economic inference problem through the use of precinct-level data. This promises to offer a useful approach for future studies but due to the unavailability of applicable sub-regional data, will have to be ignored in favor of more traditional methods for the course of this study. See King, Gary, *A Solution to the Ecological Inference Problem*, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1997)

<sup>99</sup> *Sploshnie Vybery* - A Russian term meaning “endless elections”. This phrase was often used in Russian media coverage of the 2000-2001 election round and gives a sense of the weariness with which some Russian’s view the entire contemporary election process.

<sup>100</sup> These elections, having already been subject to some treatment by Solnick will be treated in a less detailed manner here. Readers are encouraged to refer to Solnick’s work for a more extensive overview.

<sup>101</sup> Olga Shudra, a legal expert from the Middle-Volga Academy of State Service, greatly contributed to my understanding of Russian election law, especially with regards to the changes instituted in 1999 (18.05.00). Other data in this chapter was drawn from Russia’s Central Election Commission site, Grigoriy Belonuchkin’s site at <http://www.cityline.ru/politica/vybori/>, “Regionii Rossii” web site, phone calls to regional election commissions, the “Panorama” site and other mass media reports from both the central and regional press.

<sup>102</sup> The 1994 “Guarantees” law allowed for length of residence requirements at the regional level, leaving the way open for some rather extreme instances like the 10 year resident requirement in Bashkortostan. However, the 1999 amendments to the 1997 “Guarantees” law prohibited any length of residency requirement.

<sup>103</sup> The 1999 amendments to the 1997 “Guarantees” law allow candidates for legislative positions to place a monetary deposit (*zalog*) upon registration in lieu of gathering signatures. However, according to Olga Shudra this



law does not apply to most executives at the regional level. One exception is a law in Kamchatskaya oblast that allows candidates to either collect signatures or pay a *zalog* of 2000 times the regional minimum wage.

<sup>104</sup> This restriction was added only in the final 1999 amendment to the 1997 “Guarantees”. Prior to that, the “protest vote” was mainly symbolic. Hence, in the 1996-1997 round of gubernatorial elections, even if the vote “against all” exceeded that of the votes of all other candidates, the candidate with the highest number of votes would be selected.

<sup>105</sup> Prior to that, a number of regional laws specified a two consecutive term limit but were later circumvented by legislatures reinterpreting the law to state that executives could not be *elected* for more than two consecutive terms. Most Governors were *appointed* for the period from 1992-1996 and, thanks to such changes, could run for a “second term” in 2000-2001.

<sup>106</sup> For a further discussion of the ineffectiveness of federal government control in the regions prior to the Putin presidency see, Gelman, Vladimir and Olga Senatova, “Sub-National Politics in Russia in the Post-Communist Transition Period: A View from Moscow”, *Regional and Federal Studies*, 5:2 (Summer 1995): 211-223.

<sup>107</sup> Cases against the election commission or its members are handled by the election commission at the next federal level. All other cases are handled in court.

<sup>108</sup> Such “dosrochnyi” votes are generally considered to be favorable to incumbents. First, they are very difficult to monitor and are hence subject to falsification. Second, the fact that they are cast prior to the election data naturally favors the incumbent. Incumbents have greater name recognition than challengers and hence the less challengers are able to campaign the more likely individuals will simply cast their votes for the most familiar candidate. In the Samara case, this last factor was especially relevant. In a tactical move, Titov had resigned from his post, forcing an early election which inevitably cut into the timetables of challengers preparing for the regularly scheduled December elections (more on this in chapter 4).

<sup>109</sup> Popova, Ol’ga, “Tarkhov nachinaet i proigrivaet”, *Samarskoe Obozrenie*, 14 (2 Oct. 2000); Popova, Ol’ga, “Tarkhov sdalsia, promeniav samaru na cheboksary”, *Samarskoe Obozrenie*, 14 (9 Oct. 2000)

<sup>110</sup> Gelman and Senatova, “Sub-national Politics,” 212-217.

<sup>111</sup> I would like to express my appreciation to Vladimir and Aleksandr Kazantsev for providing a brief analysis of this aspect of regional executive – legislature relations.

<sup>112</sup> An examination of the changes in the regional election commissions in Samara and Ul’yanovsk oblasts indicated that executives and legislatures frequently “exchanged appointees”. Those individuals who were earlier appointed by one body were later appointed by the other in the course of creating a “new” body.

<sup>113</sup> Solnick, “Gubernatorial Elections”

<sup>114</sup> In Krasnodarskii Krai, the initial participation requirement was 50%. After the first election was nullified by low participation, this limit was reduced to 25% on October 29, 1996.

<sup>115</sup> To compare these numbers to those of another federation, in 1982 nineteen of twenty-five American governors successfully sought reelection – an attrition rate of only 24%

<sup>116</sup> In the case of Bryansk, Yeltsin permitted elections in April which resulted in the defeat of his appointed candidate. Later, he dismissed the victor, Yuri Lodkin, after the parliamentary struggle of October 1993. A similar case happened in Chelyabinsk - with the exception that this election was not even sanctioned by Yeltsin and was undertaken independently by the regional legislature. Once again, a Yeltsin critic, Pyotr Sumin was elected and after a brief period in which the elected governor refused to surrender his post, he was finally dismissed after the October 1993 events. Both candidates were subsequently reelected when elections were held in 1996.

<sup>117</sup> The number of regions with no participation barrier however fell to 2 of 32 for a total of 6.3% of all regions (“no barrier regions” made up 3 of the 35 elections in 1996-1997 – 8.6% of the total).

<sup>118</sup> In addition to 1996-1997 participation barriers of 0, 25 and 50%, one region (Altayskii krai) featured a 33% barrier and two (Murmanskaya and Ryazanskaya oblasts) 35% barriers. All three regions reduced their barriers to 25% by the 2000-2001 round.

<sup>119</sup> Astrakhan oblast was the only other oblast or krai in the 2000-2001 election round with similar requirements. Here too the governor is wildly popular, winning the 2000 election with the support of *every* party in the oblast and 82% of the vote (amidst a participation rate of 55%).

<sup>120</sup> Dymitry Oreshkin, a political analyst from the “Mercator” group made similar statements in an interview published in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*. See Serkov, I.B., “Vlast Postroilas” [Political power was established] 1-2 (10-16 January) 2001 electronic version at [http://www.lgz.ru/archives/html\\_arch/lg01-022001/polit/art1.htm](http://www.lgz.ru/archives/html_arch/lg01-022001/polit/art1.htm) (accessed 9-6-01)

<sup>121</sup> *Preemnik* is a Russian term that literally means successor or protégé. In this case it refers to a candidate who receives the endorsement of a terminal incumbent.

<sup>122</sup> To a lesser extent the particular nature of these cases also speaks to the criteria of a viable opposition and media (criterion 4) and the ability to replace incumbents with challengers (criterion 2). Aspects of the cases relevant to these two issues will be discussed as they arise.

<sup>123</sup> Given the difficulty (and oftentimes expense) of acquiring regional-level surveys containing the appropriate measures, this study examines data collected in two regions – Ul'yanovsk and Samara. The Ul'yanovsk study was an oblast-wide 1630 respondent random survey undertaken in September of 2000 by the Ul'yanovsk State Technical University's "Perspektiv" Sociological Laboratory (Valentina Shuvalova, Director). The Samara survey was the third part of a four-stage survey of 2099 respondent sample from the city of Samara, undertaken by the Samara Oblast Fund for Social Research in June 2000 (Vladimir Zvonovskii, Director). Both surveys were carried out by order of gubernatorial candidates with the sole aim of sampling public opinion so as to develop the candidate's campaign strategy.

Early formulations of this study were criticized on the grounds that these surveys were conducted by order of candidates or political organizations. In response to this, it should be noted that both agencies are reputable organizations having worked in the regions for roughly ten years and having conducted studies for VtSIOM, and a number of western agencies and research teams. Furthermore, the methodology was explained in great detail and conformed to most survey research standards. Multistage sampling was used in both surveys. Survey districts were defined and interviewers sent to random locations to question respondents in interviews of 35 -50 minute durations. The demographic structure of the district's sample was then compared to said district's population demographics, with an acceptable margin of error of 3%. As a follow-up, 10% of the respondents were later contacted to confirm their responses. Finally, given the intended use of these surveys as a means to canvass the population and provide information for the development of candidate's campaigns, there is little logical reason why either the agency or the client would desire anything but the most objective results. These surveys were released only to the candidate's campaign staffs before I acquired them for my own exclusive use. No portions of these surveys were released to the media and were not used for agitation purposes.

<sup>124</sup> While Stein referred to this as the "federalist perspective" on voting, I refer to it merely as "jurisdictional voting" arguing that similar issues are at stake in federal, unitary and intra-level of government comparisons. Other locus-related issues are particularly prevalent in the study of legislatures. In these cases, while jurisdictional issues play some role, another major issue is the fact that legislatures "dilute" responsibility within a larger body containing many different individuals, fractions, and parties. See G. Powell and Guy Whitten, "A Cross-National Analysis of Economic Voting: Taking Account of the Political Context," *American Journal of Political Science*, 37 (1993): 391-414; Anthony Heath and Bruno Paulson, "Issues and the Economy," *Political Quarterly*, 63 (1992): 432-447.

<sup>125</sup> Bernard Manin, Adam Przeworski, and Susan Stokes, "Introduction", in *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*, ed. Adam Przeworski, Susan Stokes, and Bernard Manin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 14-15.

<sup>126</sup> Samara Oblast Committee of State Statistics, *Samarskaya Oblast-99: Statisticheskii Sbornik*, [Samara Oblast-99: Statistical Collection] (Samara: Samara Oblast Committee of State Statistics, 2000).

<sup>127</sup> Ul'yanovsk Oblast Committee of State Statistics, *Ekonomicheskoe Polozhenie Ul'yanvoskoi Oblasti v 1999 godu*, [Economic Situation in Ul'yanovsk Oblast in 1999] (Ul'yanovsk: Ul'yanovsk Oblast Committee of State Statistics, 2000)

<sup>128</sup> A donor region is one whose contributions to the federal budget are in excess of the federal funds returned to the region. In 1996 only 9 regions of Russia's 89 were official "donors", see Avtandil Tsuladze, "Tri pravitel'stva – tri istochnika protivorichii" [Three Governments – Three Points of Contention] in *Segodnya* No.164 [cited 28 June 2000]; available from World Wide Web @

[http://www.7days.ru/w3s.nsf/Archive/2000\\_164\\_polit\\_text\\_culadze1.html](http://www.7days.ru/w3s.nsf/Archive/2000_164_polit_text_culadze1.html)

<sup>129</sup> Berkowitz and Dejong indicate that, "beyond their presidential preferences and relative economic isolation...regions within the Red Belt have lagged behind the rest of Russia in adopting federally initiated policies to liberalize prices and eliminate distortionary budgetary subsidies". For more on the economic policies of typical Red Belt regions see Daniel Berkowitz and David Dejong, "Russia's Internal Border" *Regional Science and Urban Economics* 29 (1999): 633-649.

<sup>130</sup> During the winter of 2000-2001 a number of oblasts, primarily in the harsher climates of the north east portion of the country suffered from heat and energy crisis wrought by regional and municipal governments' failures to adapt their budgets to rapidly increasing energy costs.

<sup>131</sup> Phillip Hanson, "Samara: A Preliminary Profile of a Russian Region and Its Adaptation to the Market." *Europe-Asia Studies* 49 (1997): 407-429



<sup>132</sup> A “real life” manifestation of this issue is seen in the practice of opposition candidates in many regional elections to provide comparisons between regional performance measures in 1991 and in the election year. Of course, nearly every measure points to a catastrophic decline but, as this reflects a nation-wide problem generally beyond the control of any one governor, one should also look at the relative performance of the region – an outcome for which the incumbent is arguably more responsible

<sup>133</sup> In certain respects this is similar to the distinction that Atkeson and Partin draw between “referendum” and “retrospective economic” voting in their study of U.S. gubernatorial elections. Referendum voting basically punishes or rewards governors for the success or failure of national policy, drawing few distinctions on the basis of individual regional performance. The latter involves more sophisticated assessments by voters who assign responsibility only (more or less) where it is due.

<sup>134</sup> For a more detailed treatment of the economic conditions driving regional convergence in federations see G. Montinola, Yingyi Qian, and Barry Weingast, “Federalism, Chinese Style: The Political Basis for Economic Success,” *World Politics*, 48 (1996): 50-81

<sup>135</sup> This question followed another question comparing the economic situation in Samara to that of Russian as a whole. Hence, the term “economic situation” was excluded in the original question.

<sup>136</sup> Paldman offers a simple description of the basic economic voting model indicating that each model contains an “e” (economic – indicated in the following equation by the braces) and a “p” (political – indicated by the square brackets in the following model) part so that,  $Y = \{a_1u + a_2p + \dots\} + [c_1D^1 + c_2D^2 + \dots] + e$ . For the sake of this study, the first three hypotheses tap into the “e” part of the popularity function while the controls account for the “p” part – dealing with the more idiosyncratic political aspects of the regions under consideration. See, Martin Paldman, “How Robust is the Vote Function?: A Study of Seventeen Nations over Four Decades” in *Economics and Politics: The Calculus of Support*, ed. Helmut Northrop, Michael Lewis-Beck and Jean Dominique Lafay, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991), 13

<sup>137</sup> The Ul’yanovsk survey included a question measuring the extent to which respondents agree with the following statement: “Some people think that law and order is greater in those regions where the governor is a former military officer (general)”. Respondents had the option of answering 1) Strongly agree; 2) Agree; 3) Uncertain; 4) Disagree; 5) Strongly Disagree. The answers were coded in the same order as in the questionnaire with non-responses coded as missing.

<sup>138</sup> Arkady Ostrovsky, “Putin Sends General to “Retake” Old Outpost of the Red Economy”, *Financial Times*, (Dec. 23, 2000), electronic version.; Maura Reynolds, “Russia’s ‘Cruel’ Soldier Comes Home”, *Los Angeles Times*, (January 19, 2001)

<sup>139</sup> For information about this technique see: Alfred DeMaris *Logit Modeling: Practical Applications* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications 1992); David Hosmer and Stanley Lemeshow *Applied Logistic Regression* (New York: Wiley and Sons 1989).

<sup>140</sup> Progressive iterations of the Samara model removing first the AGE measure and then AGE and POCKETBOOK, resulted in almost no increase in this figure.

<sup>141</sup> As might be expected, the elimination of the age variable accompanied the inclusion of the employment measure. This also suggests that one’s source of well-being (pensions, wages, stipends, welfare payments) has a greater influence on support calculi than one’s age.

<sup>142</sup> As indicated in Chapter 3, the “final” round of an election varies depending upon whether regional legislation allows for a simple plurality vote or whether a candidate in a majority vote region wins more than 50% of the vote in the first round.

<sup>143</sup> Raymond Fair, “The Effects of Economic Events on Votes for the President,” *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, 60 (1978); George Stigler, “General Economic Conditions and National Elections,” *American Economic Review*, 63 (1973): 160-167.

<sup>144</sup> Appropriate and reliable GRP data is not available for the 1996-1997 cycle model.

<sup>145</sup> Appendix A contains descriptive statistics for each of the measures.

<sup>146</sup> Official registered unemployment figures in Russia are generally considered to be poor indicators of actual unemployment. However, this variable uses results of regional level survey analyses conducted from 1992-1999 to better estimate actual employment levels. As just one indication of the variation between the two different measures, the 1999 all-Federation unemployment level as portrayed by the survey method was 13.4% while the figure based on registered unemployment was only 1.8%.

<sup>147</sup> This approach was used with some success in Niemi, Stanley, and Vogel, “State Economies”.

<sup>148</sup> Steven Solnick, “Gubernatorial Elections in Russia, 1996-1997,” *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 14 (1998): 48-80

<sup>149</sup> However, for the most part, these regions also elected “red” governors in the 1996-1997 round, and one might just as easily expect them to strongly support their governor as a display of opposition to the system.

<sup>150</sup> Solnick, Steven, “Gubernatorial Elections”: 70n33

<sup>151</sup> The actual contents and goals of these policies are debatable. However, this question lies beyond the scope of this study and it will suffice to say that, when compared to the left opposition, there is little question that Yeltsin preserved the *image* of a pro-market democratic reformer.

<sup>152</sup> The stress should be placed on the term “deepen” as Shamanov’s pre-election platform also included statements against the sale of land and in favor of re-privatization of certain regional assets.

<sup>153</sup> SPS and Yabloko would also be good candidates, but the fact that the first party only officially existed as a Duma faction during the period covering most of the elections, and that both parties pursued a much more piecemeal strategy of support during the 2000-2001 election rounds, again introduces the reliability issue.

<sup>154</sup> Solnick used the red-brow vote in the 1995 Duma elections as a measure of party affiliation *and* the strength of the anti-Yeltsin “protest vote”. Here, partly to acknowledge changes in the geography of party and ideological allegiance since 1995, I use support for the CPRF during the 1999 Duma elections.

Furthermore, by essentially dropping the “brown” from Solnick’s “red/brown” indicator I focus more on party and ideological affiliation *per se* and not upon the now irrelevant anti-Yeltsin protest vote. The red/brown vote only has value as a protest measure, as parties on these parts of the Russian political spectrum appeal to different, although sometimes overlapping, sectors of society. As an example, 1995 Duma results in places like the city of Togliatti in Samara oblast (generally not considered to be a CPRF stronghold) indicated strong support for the LDPR. Combining CPRF and LDPR results for the city would produce a measure which says very little about support for either party.

Finally, it should be noted that the LDPR did not actually contest the 1999 Duma elections. The LDPR itself was disqualified and its members contested the election under the newly reconstituted “Bloc Zhirinovskiy”. In the event, the bloc attracted only a fraction of the support that the LDPR had gained in earlier elections and its exclusion from this analysis could only have a marginal effect.

<sup>155</sup> The logic for this outcome is clear. A larger number of candidates tends to divide the total number of votes cast into smaller portions. As for the security organ-based candidate control, the NPSR endorsed none of these candidates, and in most races, the NPSR either failed to endorse any candidate or endorsed a candidate who subsequently performed poorly.

<sup>156</sup> Manin, Przeworski, and Stokes, “Introduction” 18.

<sup>157</sup> Jose Antonio Cheibub and Adam Przeworski, “Accountability for Economic Outcomes” in *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation*, eds. Adam Przeworski, Susan Stokes, and Bernard Manin, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 225.

<sup>158</sup> Appropriate and reliable GRP data is not available for the 1996-1997 cycle model.

<sup>159</sup> Joel C. Moses, “Political-Economic Elites and Russian Regional Elections, 1999-2000: Democratic Tendencies in Kaliningrad, Perm, and Volgograd”, presented at the annual convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, Washington DC, November 15-18, 2001; Author’s interview with Arbakhan Magamedov, Ul’yanovsk State Technical University, March 24, 2001.

<sup>160</sup> “Regionii Rossii: Politika i Kadry” (Regions of Russia: Politics and Cadre). No 19 (18 December 2000) (<http://www.materik.ru/mfpp/polika>).

<sup>161</sup> Long, J.S., *Regression Models for Categorical and Limited Dependent Variables* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1997), 54.

<sup>162</sup> Cheibub and Przeworski, “Accountability for Economic Outcomes,” 225.

<sup>163</sup> Moses, “Political-Economic Elites and Russian Regional Elections, 1999-2000: Democratic Tendencies in Kaliningrad, Perm, and Volgograd” 2000, 5-8.

<sup>164</sup> The official Central Election Commission report indicates that only nine candidates participated in the election. These included one “Demochkin”, two “Denins”, and two “Lodkins”. This suggests that two of the clones left the race prior to the election. [http://www.fci.ru/elections/default\\_gl.htm](http://www.fci.ru/elections/default_gl.htm) (accessed February 26, 2002)

<sup>165</sup> Boris Zemtsov, “Piarom po reitingu” (PR according to ratings), *Nezavisimia Gazeta*, [http://ng.ru/2000-12014/4\\_reiting.html](http://ng.ru/2000-12014/4_reiting.html) 12/13/2000, 2/26/2002.; Vladimir Petrov, “Dvoyniki i dublery” (Twins and Clones), *Vesti.ru*, <http://www.vesti.ru/2000/12/09/976286725.html> 12/09/2000, 2/26/2002

<sup>166</sup> Dar’ia Guseva, “V Rostove oprobavali “upravliaemuiu demokratiuu” (In Rostov they tried “directed democracy”) *Vremya novostei*, 25 September 2001, 24 February 2002 <http://www.vremyamn.ru/cgi-bin/2000/172/3/4>; Ol’ga Shevel’, “Vybory bez Vybora” (Elections without choice), *Vremia novostei*, 25 September 2001, 24 February 2002

<http://www.vremyamn.ru/cgi-bin/2000/172/3/3>. In the latter article, Shevel' makes the interesting observation that the oblast administration was nearly guaranteed a victory without any attempts to manipulate the election but that the incumbent's staff "could not resist using the notorious administrative resources".

<sup>167</sup> In the Samara case, a review of the oblast administration-supported *Volzhskaya Kommuna* indicated, that even with the governor no longer "officially" at his post, he still enjoyed the full backing of the pro-administration media. *Volzhskaya Kommuna* and other media related to the administration continued to report on the ex-governor's activities – especially those with the most "campaign appeal". In matter of fact, from such media reporting, it was almost difficult to believe that Titov had actually left.

<sup>168</sup> Moses provides a broader definition of the Kursk alternative seeing it as a tactic whereby any candidate successfully takes a rival to court and removes him prior to the election. I argue that this misses a major aspect of the Kursk case and the example that it constituted for other governors throughout the 2000-2001 elections. The Kursk case essentially put governors who were not in Putin's good graces on notice. This involved Federal-backed action and was hence qualitatively different from the legal battles which took place between candidates during nearly every election.

<sup>169</sup> Dr. Yevgenii Molevich, interview by author, Samara City, Samara, October 15, 2000. See also, Zoya Andreeva, "Yevgenii Molevich: Titov sam sozdal sebe oppozitsiiu", *Reporter*, 21 July 2000.

<sup>170</sup> Vadim Shumilin, "Vtoroe Dykhanie: Volgogradskii Gubernatori nameren ostat'sia u vlasti, perepisav zakon o vyborakh" (Second Wind: Volgograd's Governor, Intending to Remain in Power, Rewrites the Election Law), *Nesavisimaia Gazeta*, #142 2 [http://www.ng.ru/regions/2000-08-02/4\\_brieth.html](http://www.ng.ru/regions/2000-08-02/4_brieth.html) August 2000, 12 March 2002.

<sup>171</sup> For studies focusing on the impact of the media on popular support and elections see: Shanto Iyenger and Donald Kinder, *News That Matters: Television and American Opinion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987) Diana Mutz, Paul Sniderman, and Richard Brody, eds., *Political Persuasion and Attitude Change*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996). For a normative argument about the media's appropriate role in a democracy see: Graham Ramsden, "Media Coverage of Issues and Candidates: What Balance is Appropriate in a Democracy?", *Political Science Quarterly*, 111:1 (1996): 65-81. Studies looking at the role of the media in determining individuals' evaluations of the economy include: Diana Mutz, "Mass Media and the Depoliticization of Personal Experience", *American Journal of Political Science*, 36:2 (1992): 483-508; Marc Heatherington, "The Media's Role in Forming Voters' National Economic Evaluations in 1992", *American Journal of Political Science*, 40:2 (1996): 372-395; For a challenge to the media's role in shaping economic evaluations see: H. Brandon Haller and Helmut Northrop, "Reality Bites: News Exposure and Economic Opinion", *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 61:4 (1997): 555-575.

<sup>172</sup> Diana Mutz, "Mass Media and the Depoliticization of Personal Experience", *American Journal of Political Science*, 36:2 (1992): 483-508

<sup>173</sup> Marc Heatherington, "The Media's Role in Forming Voters' National Economic Evaluations in 1992", *American Journal of Political Science*, 40:2 (1996): 372-395

<sup>174</sup> There are also numerous other publications with smaller press runs and distribution. These include newspapers from universities, raion administrations, special interest papers and others. Also, during an election campaign, candidates often publish newspapers that generally exist only for the duration of the campaign. These are exclusively propaganda publications and their impact on the course of a campaign is doubtful.

<sup>175</sup> The increasingly ambiguous relationship between Samara's Titov and the regional media from 1999-on provides an example of the latter. After challenging Vladimir Putin in the 2000 Presidential election, one of the region's most prominent business publications, *Samarskoe Obozrenia* turned sharply against Titov and his supporters. Other private television and radio stations also changed allegiances as significant portions of the regional business elite aligned themselves with the Federal Government.

<sup>176</sup> Drawing upon the Ul'yanovsk survey data, I present an initial investigation of these issues in my manuscript, "Jurisdictional Voting in Russia's Regions: Initial Results from Individual-level Analyses" (currently under consideration by *Europe-Asia Studies*).

<sup>177</sup> Timothy Colton, *Transitional Citizens*, 61.

<sup>178</sup> Timothy Colton, *Transitional Citizens*, 61-62.

<sup>179</sup> Audience rates indicate the percentage of respondents in each area claiming to watch *GTRK Volga*.

<sup>180</sup> Aside from Colton's work on the role of the media in elections, the single most authoritative study on post-Soviet media is, Ellen Misckiewicz, *Changing Channels: Television and the Struggle for Power in Russia*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

<sup>181</sup> Nonetheless, a study by David Barker and Kathleen Knight indicates that the problem of strong media bias is certainly not restricted to the Russian Federation. See these authors' examination of Rush Limbaugh's listening

audience in, David Barker and Kathleen Knight, “Political Talk Radio and Public Opinion”, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 64 (2000): 149-170.

<sup>182</sup> For a more detailed discussion on the erosion of Russian media autonomy see: Laura Belin, “Political Bias and Self-Censorship in the Russian Media”, in ed. Archie Brown, *Contemporary Russian Politics: A Reader*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>183</sup> When speaking of the “unknown challenger” issue, interviewees oftentimes referred to a Russian saying about “buying a cat in a sack”. Such a transaction puts the buyer at a disadvantage because the sack conceals the nature of the creature within.

<sup>184</sup> Samuel Popkin, *The Reasoning Voter*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 51.

<sup>185</sup> Of course this is a simplification. As indicated at the end of Chapter 3, a number of other factors may raise the costs for terminal incumbents and other candidates who practice dirty campaign tactics. Life goes on after the election and, unless the candidate leaves the region, he or she may face the consequences of a particularly *groznyi* campaign under an embittered and victorious opponent.

<sup>186</sup> Terry Moe, “Political Institutions: The Neglected Side of the Story”, *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization*, 6 (1990): 213-253.

<sup>187</sup> I am currently developing and examining the feasibility of such a project.

<sup>188</sup> Denise Powers and James Cox, “Echoes of the Past: The Relationship between Satisfaction with Economic Reforms and Voting Behavior in Poland”, *American Political Science Review*, 91 (1997): 617-633

<sup>189</sup> Raymond Duch, “A Developmental Model of Heterogenous Economic Voting in New Democracies”, *American Political Science Review*, 4:95 (2001): 895-910.

<sup>190</sup> Andrew Konitzer-Smirnov, “Jurisdictional Voting in Russia’s Regions: Initial Results from Individual-level Analyses” forthcoming in *Europe Asia Studies*

<sup>191</sup> In most studies of electoral accountability, the final-term incumbent issue is resolved by looking at support for same party candidates in upcoming elections. Unfortunately, until a viable and institutionalized party system develops in Russia, an alternative approach must be found. With luck, most incumbents will continue the practice of clearly identifying and supporting a *preemnik*.

<sup>192</sup> See Russian Federation Ministry of Labor and Social Development, *Ob itogakh raboty po provedeniyu ekspertizy proektov potrebitel’skoi korsziny dlya osnovnykh sotsial’no-demograficheskikh grupp naseleniya v sub’ektakh Rossiiskoi Federatsii*, (Of the results of analyses on consumer baskets for primary social-economic groups in the subjects of the Russian Federation) <http://www.chelt.ru/income/exp/coll.html> 7/27/01, 2/27/02; Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation from 5 July 2000 ? 494, *Ob ekspertize proektov potrebitel’skoi korsziny dlia osnovnykh sotsial’no-demograficheskikh grupp naseleniia v subektakh Rossiiskoi Federatsii*, (Of the analyses of consumer baskets for basic socio-demographic groups in the subjects of the Russian Federation).

<sup>193</sup> At the same time that any of these “objective factors” change, it will also be important to monitor – through surveys – the public’s perception of the executive’s power to affect the regional economy. As was the case throughout the present study, I do not assume that subjective evaluations of regional executive’s power necessarily coincide with objective conditions.

<sup>194</sup> See Andrew Konitzer-Smirnov, “Breaching the Soviet Social Contract: Post-Soviet Social Policy Development in Ul’yanovsk and Samara Oblasts”, in Judyth Twigg and Kate Schecter eds., *Social Cohesion in the Russian Federation: The Consequences of Transition* (forthcoming)

<sup>195</sup> Darrell Slider, “Pskov Under the LDPR: Elections and Dysfunctional Federalism in One Region”, *Europe-Asia Studies* 51:5 (1999): 755-767.