When Elections Subvert Authoritarianism

Failed Cooptation and Russian Post-Electoral Protests of 2011-12

Margarita Zavadskaya

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to
obtaining the degree of Doctor of Political and Social Sciences
of the European University Institute

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European University Institute
Department of Political and Social Sciences

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Contents

Introduction

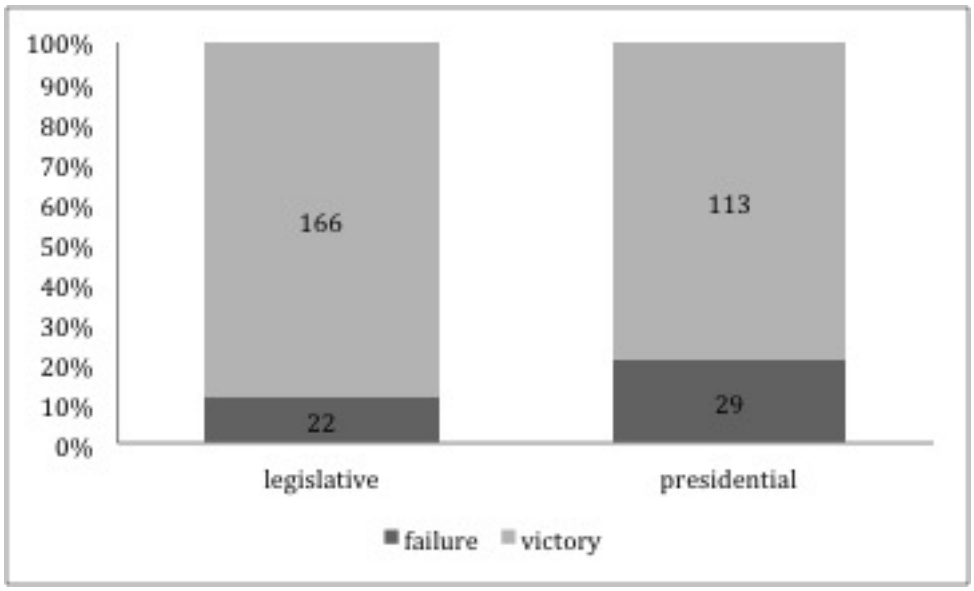
One of the widely shared features of modern autocracies is the presence of democratically-designed institutions. Elections, referendums, legislatures, and parties are the essential institutions 'by default'. Political regimes that have introduced nationwide elections have become the predominant type of political regimes in the contemporary world. In classical political theory these institutions are seen as a key element of democracy and are designed in order to channel political participation and to allow for the articulation of public demands (Dahl 1971). First and foremost, elections are supposed to be a mechanism by which citizens can hold their political leaders accountable. However, modern non-democratic incumbents have managed to transform and adapt these institutions according to their interest in political survival. Parliaments help sustain autocracy by providing an arena for negotiation and bargaining for those who may credibly threaten the current regime (Bueno De Mesquita et al. 2005; Gandhi and Przeworski 2007; Lust 2009; Escriba-Folch and Wright 2015). Political parties in authoritarian regimes facilitate cadre rotation and cooptation as well as the redistribution of spoils, rents, and other benefits (Geddes 2003; Magaloni 2006; Greene 2009; Svolik 2012). Elections and referendums, in turn, facilitate mobilization of citizens and control of loyalty among the coalition members.

Despite the overwhelming control maintained over representative institutions in non-democratic political regimes, some elections and referendums seem to have gotten out of hand. The wave of "color revolutions" (Serbia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan), the referendum failure (Chile), and ruptures within dominant-party systems (PRI in Mexico, KMT in Taiwan) are striking instances of *the unintended or unanticipated consequences* of "authoritarian" institutions.

Andreas Schedler raised the question of the conditions under which authoritarian elections fulfill a "stabilizing" role, and those in which they act as "subversive" forces (Schedler 2006). I endeavor to turn this query into my research question, which may be formulated as follows: **when do elections and referendums support autocratic rule and when do they play the role of "subversive institution"** [1]**?** When and why does the incumbent turn out to be unable to control the political situation? In my

[1]I have borrowed this term from Valery Bunce. Bunce, V. (Bunce 1999). Subversive institutions : the design and the destruction of socialism and the state. Cambridge, UK ; New York, Cambridge University Press.

Figure 1: Electoral Failure across Competitive Authoritarian Elections (1990 – 2011)



Source: NELDA; author's dataset; N of elections = 321; N of countries = 71

research I look into the conditions under which institutions play a supportive role and those under which they produce anti-hegemonic outcomes.

I argue that there is room for further analysis of the "stabilizing versus subversive" conditions as there is still considerable variation in the outcomes among the regimes that are institutionally able to have electoral competition, even while they are "unfree" and democratic norms are systematically violated. Figure 1.1 [2] represents the variation in the rate of electoral failure in 321 competitive legislative and executive elections across 71 non-democratic regimes over a 21 year period. Out of 188 legislative elections, 22 were unambiguously lost by the incumbent's party; the rate of electoral failure among the executive elections is almost the same – 29 out of 142. Excluding closed authoritarian regimes, hybrid regimes, and electoral democracies, there is still a significant variation in electoral outcomes. This variation cannot be attributed solely to the type of political regime or the level of competition; rather, other factors must be at play.

The intuition is that elections somehow affect domestic politics even in those frankly non-democratic regimes in which we used to treat electoral events as 'insignificant, indecisive, tutelary' (Hermet, Rouque, and Rose 1978). Electoral events impose their logic on political actors and may re-shape their preferences and, thereby, transform political reality by opening a window of opportunity for new scenarios. Referendums and elections in an authoritarian context are usually not analyzed together. However, both exemplify

[2]Founding elections, elections under transitional government, and formally noncompetitive elections are excluded. Elections in failed states (e.g. Rwanda, Somali etc.) are also excluded. Elections where it is impossible to define an incumbent or successor (e.g. Jordan, and Bhutan) are also excluded. I included elections only if $PoliticalRights(FreedomHouse)_{t-1} > 2$ or $PolityIV_{t-1} < 6$, where t stands for the year of observation and $t-1$ means the year before elections.

crucial focal points related to mass mobilization, and both aim to legitimize policy decisions. Thus, elections and referendums can be viewed through the lens of "eventful" political science or as exceptional events that are distinct from "politics as usual" (Bunce and Wolchik 2011).

In order to answer the question of what kind of role elections play in competitive authoritarian regimes and how controlled and fraudulent elections might lead to unanticipated outcomes, I analyze the existing literature to derive hypotheses that can be empirically tested. Are elections intrinsically a democratic institution or are they 'neutral' and thus able to serve any master – democracy or autocracy? If elections impose a 'democratic' logic of behavior on the authoritarian incumbent and his/her clientele and if they create intrinsically contradictory incentives, precisely when do they realize their 'triggering' potential? In the following chapters I sketch out a possible approach to the relationship between minimally competitive elections and their potential to support or subvert authoritarian regimes.

Answering the research question – when do elections and referendums support autocratic rule and when do they play the role of "subversive institution"? – involves three conceptual and methodological challenges that are addressed in corresponding chapters of the thesis. The first challenge is the potential endogeneity of the time of elections that endangers any possibility to draw causal relations. The second challenge is the variety of existing authoritarianisms that differ in terms of their institutions and ways of operating and exercising power. The third challenge presents the existing criticism of attributing causal effects of institutions to specific outcomes as long as these institutions can be manipulated by the incumbent (Pepinsky 2014).

Each chapter consequently addresses one of the challenges outlined above. The first chapter is devoted to the debate over modern forms of authoritarian rule and elections that nowadays constitute an integral part of any country striving for international recognition. The second chapter depicts the phenomenon under scrutiny – unintended or unanticipated outcomes of elections, and possible ways of operationalization, as well as theoretical expectations, the sample of cases and methods used to test the hypotheses. I analyze the role of election timing on the frequency of contentious events, i.e. anti-governmental mass demonstrations and riots conditional on the type of institutional settings of a given regime. In other words, I look at the frequency of protests while controlling for the election versus non-election period of time. In the third chapter I demonstrate the preliminary results of empirical analysis where I try to estimate the correlates of unintended consequences – electoral failure and post-electoral mass protests. I conclude with a brief discussion of the possible interpretation of the results and implications for the future research.

Chapter 1

Unanticipated or subversive electoral consequences and the variety of authoritarianisms

Elections were called early in Kazakhstan in 2011, despite being originally planned for 2012. President Nursultan Nazarbayev, who had been in power since 1989, decided to run for another term rather than calling for a referendum that would have simply extended his presidential term limits until 2020. Some observers claimed that it was Nazarbayev's desire to please the international community by showing his readiness to put the country back on the road to democracy and commit to the international democratic standards[1]. Although Nazarbayev faced three challengers who managed to pass the tough Kazakh-language examination, all of them expressed their support for the incumbent. As a result, Nazarbayev was elected with 95.5% of the popular vote, with turnout reported at 89.5%. It was 'politics as usual' under this authoritarian regime, with reports of ballot box stuffing, voter intimidation, and ballot rigging. There were no mass protests; only the opposition, which had been deprived of any legal political status and the benefit of international monitors such as the OSCE, claimed that these elections "could and should have been better."[2].

Only a year earlier, in December, 2010, neighboring Belarus had experienced mass protests after its presidential elections, despite a similarly oppressive regime, tangible threats, and completely fraudulent elections. The Belarusian protests were brutally repressed by riot police and all five challengers were beaten, detained, and then sentenced to 15 years in jail for leading unsanctioned protest actions.

The examples of two elections, under similar conditions in neighboring countries, lead us to ask: Why did no one protest in Kazakhstan, while in Belarus the opposition and

[1] Outdong himself. // The Economist. 5.04.2011. Accessed on 26.02.2017. http://www.economist.com/blogs/banyan/2011/04/kazakhstans_presidential_election

[2] Ibidem.

ordinary citizens took to the streets? The Kazakhstani elections were a showcase of a typical post-electoral scenario under authoritarian regimes, while the Belorussian case seemed to deviate. The Belorussian case appeared to be an instance of the unintended or unanticipated consequences of 'authoritarian' institutions, begging the question: when do elections support autocratic rule and when do they play the role of 'subversive institution'? This chapter explores the conditions under which institutions play a supportive role for the incumbent regime, and when they produce subversive effects.

I distinguish between the two main dimensions: electoral outcomes *per se*, and mass protests. The combination of these dimensions produce different post-electoral consequences and my task is to find out whether this variation is systematic, and if so, what the predictors are. In the theoretical part I show that electoral outcomes may vary in the degree of their 'subversiveness' from the outright electoral failure to the minor changes in the margin of victory compared to the previous electoral cycle. The protest dimension seems complex as well, as the protests may be concentrated in the capital cities or spread over the whole country, and may be more sporadic and represented by a low number of participants or a boisterous mass uprising.

In this chapter I provide a concept of unintended consequences by combining electoral failure and post-electoral protests. Then I proceed with an overview of elections under authoritarianisms and how the variety of authoritarianisms affects the role and function of elections and is propensity to produce unintended subversive effects. Finally, I introduce the argument in brief, research design and empirical strategies.

1.1 A Variety of Post-Electoral Scenarios

Scholars lack a systematized understanding of the outcomes induced by the institutions of mass political mobilization under authoritarian conditions. We either explain the incumbent's electoral strength (e.g. margin of victory) (Greene 2009; Schedler 2008), or focus exclusively on regime change (Howard and Roessler 2006; Kalandadze and Orenstein 2009). Other studies draw attention to post-electoral destabilizing events such as protests, revolts, or civil strife (Norris 2014; Schedler 2013; Norris, Frank, and Coma 2015). However, protests and regime change should be studied as a closely-intertwined single scenario that unfolds immediately after the elections. This chapter therefore suggests a conceptualization of subversive outcomes that is capable of grasping both effects: electoral outcomes, together with post-electoral developments. This allows for a more complex and, at the same time, parsimonious model.

Unintended or subversive outcomes are defined here as electoral outcomes that severely diverge from the incumbent's expectations and goals. Table 1.1 presents a number the incidences of electoral failure and protests. The combinations of different scores of these two dimensions constitute four types of post-electoral outcome. There is no doubt that

Table 1.1: Electoral defeat and post-electoral protests in competitive authoritarian regimes

	No protest	**Protest**	**Total**
Defeat	25 *e.g. Albania 1992, 1997; Croatia 2000, Ghana 2000*	16 *e.g. Côte-d'Ivoire 2000*	41
Victory	214 *e.g. Singapore 1990s-2000s, Kazakhstan 1990s-2000s*	64 *e.g. Belarus 2010, Russia 2011*	278
Total	239	80	319

Source: NELDA; Keesing's Record of World Events; author's data.

the use of a dichotomized variable is a rather crude approximation of reality. However, it allows us to embrace empirically the whole spectrum of outcomes.

Three of these outcomes are subversive, or undesired by the incumbent, but, at the same time, diverge substantially. In one case, the incumbent wins the elections with a considerable margin of victory, but this victory results in mass protests by voters. This scenario unfolded in Belarus in 2010 when hundreds of people joined opposition leaders and took into the streets in Minsk. These peaceful protests faced a brutal crackdown by the police special forces. As a result, many participants were seriously injured; a number were detained and then tortured, or had to flee the country (Wilson 2011). In the second scenario, the incumbent loses the elections and political power peacefully transfers to the opposition. Elections in Ghana 2000, Mexico 2000, and Taiwan 2000 illustrate this category of outcomes. Another more complicated example is the unexpected death of the Croatian president Franjo Tuman in 2000, which spurred conflicts within the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) and, ultimately, led to its defeat at the next parliamentary elections.

Cases where the incumbent's electoral failure coincides with mass protests are rare. The first Serbian presidential elections of 2000 fall in to this category. When Slobodan Milošević lost the first round to his opponent Vojislav Koštunica. Milošević's reluctance to give up power provoked the so-called "bulldozer revolution" (Birch 2002). Another example is Côte d'Ivoire (2000), where the incumbent's defeat led to a political collapse and civil war. In the same year, Iranian conservatives lost parliamentary elections. However, the Iranian protests were not triggered by the electoral results *per se*, but rather by the cumbersome procedure of counting votes (Isfandiyari 2000).

The majority of cases are situated in the cell with 'pro-incumbent' electoral outcomes, or outcomes that are predictable for the incumbent. In reality, this category is the norm under competitive authoritarian regimes: the incumbent retains political power or hands it over to his/her successor. This action is not followed by protests and constitutes the necessary element of reproduction of the existing political order. The remaining three

scenarios are deviations from the normal scenario under competitive authoritarianism. Nevertheless, these deviations constitute one third of the observable cases from 1990 to 2011. Could this variation be systematic?

As Andreas Schedler argues, "the nested game of authoritarian elections may facilitate gradual processes of democratization by elections, as in Senegal or Mexico. It may lead to democracy through the sudden collapse of authoritarianism, as in Peru and Serbia in 2000. It may provoke an authoritarian regression, with a breakdown of the electoral cycle through military intervention, as in Azerbaijan in 1993 or Côte d'Ivoire in 1999. It may also lead to extended periods of static warfare in which authoritarian incumbents prevail over opposition parties..." (2006:15). Elections may not only produce simply 'color revolution'" or ritually reinforce the regime, but rather have a wider range of possible outcomes.

Unfortunately, there is no systematized concept of the outcomes induced by the institutions of mass political mobilization in authoritarian polities. Scholars move either to a straightforward measure (e.g. margin of victory) (Greene 2007; Schedler 2008) disregarding conceptualization, or constrain the possible outcomes to regime change on the basis of fluctuations in scores of democracy indices (Howard and Roessler 2006; Kalandadze and Orenstein 2009). I suggest a conceptualization of outcomes of participatory institutions that is capable of grasping both short- and long-term effects. Unintended or subversive outcomes are those that severely diverge from the incumbent's expectations, i.e. his/her goals are not achieved.

At the operational level there are two ways of converting the constructed four types of outcomes into a measurable variable. Outlined scenarios may be treated either as categorical variables or as an ordinal scale of 'subversiveness'. An anti-hegemonic effect is observed when a frank electoral failure takes place or the margin of victory is considerably lower compared to the previous electoral cycle. This measure is more sensitive to the cases with insecure electoral victory than a simple win/lose indicator. The margin of victory measure is not to be used across cases (Schedler 2008; Greene 2009); rather the temporal comparison is required here, i.e. a relative loss or gain to the previous tenure. The mass and opposition protests parameter reflects the level of the incumbent's support and of citizens' commitment to collective action. The considerable pressure from below alters the post-electoral situation dramatically. The Cross-National Time Series Data Bank (CNTS) provides systematized data on various types of contentious episodes since 1700 (Banks and Wilson 2016).

The second dimension of the effect of elections is mass and opposition protests that reflect the level of organization and salience of the aftermath of contentious events if any takes place. I lay out the ordinal scale according to which post electoral events can be estimated according to the scale of 'subversiveness' as not significant, sporadic and scattered protests by not numerous groups, and large-scale protest actions.

In most empirical analyses, electoral outcomes and protests are artificially dissected, despite their strong connection. If a universally hated dictator loses elections, it does not make any sense to organize a mass upheaval. Another example is the case when the probability of losing power by electoral means is extremely unlikely, due to electoral fraud coupled with efficient co-option and buying-off strategies. In these situations, protests remain the only way to express dissatisfaction and manifest the illegitimacy of the existing regime. As such, I distinguish between these two main dimensions: electoral outcomes *per se*, and mass protests. The combination of these dimensions produce different post-electoral consequences. This chapter seeks to determine whether this variation is systematic, and if so, its predictors. I provide an analysis of the unintended consequences – electoral failure and post-electoral protests – and then combine them into a scale of subversive outcomes. In order to capture various ways that elections threaten authoritarianism I explore two groups of dependent variables – proximate electoral outcomes and mass protests in election aftermath.

The dependent variable consists of four categories or scenarios based on the distribution of outcomes from Table 1.1:
(1) Authoritarian stability, no protest and no defeats;
(2) Challenge from below, voters and opposition protests, doubting the legitimacy of regime and free and fair character of election, challenge electoral victories;
(3) Democratization by elections, where electoral defeat is not accompanied by protests;
(4) Destabilization, when regardless of incumbent's electoral failure, there are still massive protests.

The first scenario of authoritarian stability is the most emblematic of authoritarian states, while the other three are deviations. Here I test for what accounts for the particular type of deviation from the 'normal' scenario. All deviations make up the scale of electoral 'subversiveness' where challenge from below comes as the first and lowest type of subversion, while peaceful turnover presents the most subversive outcomes by giving leeway to the opposition through institutional means. The ultimate form of subversion by elections is the total destabilization of the political system, by invoking massive unrest with violent intra-elite clashes. The last scenario – 'political destabilization' – constitutes the most ambiguous group of cases, which I would label 'outliers among the deviations'. If the previous two scenarios are obvious instances of anti-incumbent outcomes, the third group appears to be the domain of odd cases, where electoral turnover is still accompanied by mass and often violent protests, related to the way elections have been carried out. The preliminary analysis demonstrated that sixteen cases is an insufficient number to produce robust and coherent results. Thus, I drop this category from the quantitative analysis. What should be noted is that these four outcomes do not reflect the further change in political regime since I measure only immediately observable outcomes or a post-electoral situation with unexpected or undesired results. However, these four types of outcomes

can be used as a minimal unit of analysis to trace the medium- and long-term effects on a political regime trajectory i.e. what I imply under indirect or cumulative institutional effects.

1.2 Elections as *an Explanans*

While some scholars explain why some regimes resort to electoral means of maintaining power (Geddes 2003; Escriba-Folch and Wright 2015; Gandhi and Przeworski 2007; Knutsen and Nygård 2015), others employ elections as an *explanandum* in the analysis. Some scholars connect elections and their outcomes with further democratization or with regime persistence or even autocratization (Lindberg 2006; Schedler 2006; Hadenius and Teorell 2007; Lindberg 2009). It may be that elections together with other factors are able to further political development. On the other hand, elections resulting in incumbent failure ('color' or 'electoral' revolutions) are merely one side of the coin. From this standpoint elections do not undermine the regime; rather they uphold it by reproducing patronage or clientelistic practices, vote buying and/or controlling (Hermet, Rouque, and Rose 1978; Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007; Lust 2009; Herron 2011). Our understanding of elections as an object of study is thrown into sharp relief when we focus on the distinction between 'normative' (or substantive) and 'instrumental' (or procedural) definitions of democracy itself. From the first perspective elections are viewed either as a perfect form of selecting political leaders that constitute the very basis for democracy (Dahl 1971; Powell 2000) or at least place significant normative value on the electoral procedure of selection (Schumpeter 1950; Downs 1957). Elections, in this view, are seen as either a necessary condition for democracy or, in more maximalist accounts, as both necessary and sufficient.

The question that emerges is, however, whether elections themselves are intrinsically democratic or not. We are used to considering elections as the sine qua non of democracy; at the same time, we also know that some non-democracies regularly hold elections and not necessarily non-competitive elections. Moreover, without delving into the evolution of political institutions, elections have not always been an indispensable part of 'good governance'. The most skeptical views in this regard are expressed by adherents of 'direct' forms of democracy (Barber 2004; Fishkin 2011)[3]. For instance, Bernard Manin points out that elections should be considered a mixed institution, which combines both democratic and aristocratic aspects (Manin 1997). According to Manin, the main flaws of elections are unequal treatment of candidates by voters, the distinction among candidates required by a situation of choice and, last but not least, the cost of disseminating information and cognitive advantages conferred by salience (Manin 1997, pp. 134-135).

[3]For instance, Karl Marx considered as the lot (or some other similar form of direct popular political participation) to be the fairest way to select rulers. Mosca and Schumpeter clearly admitted that political preferences are formed and shaped by political elites in their interests, so elections are obviously not the ideal way for selecting the best for political leadership (cited from Hermet et al. 1978).

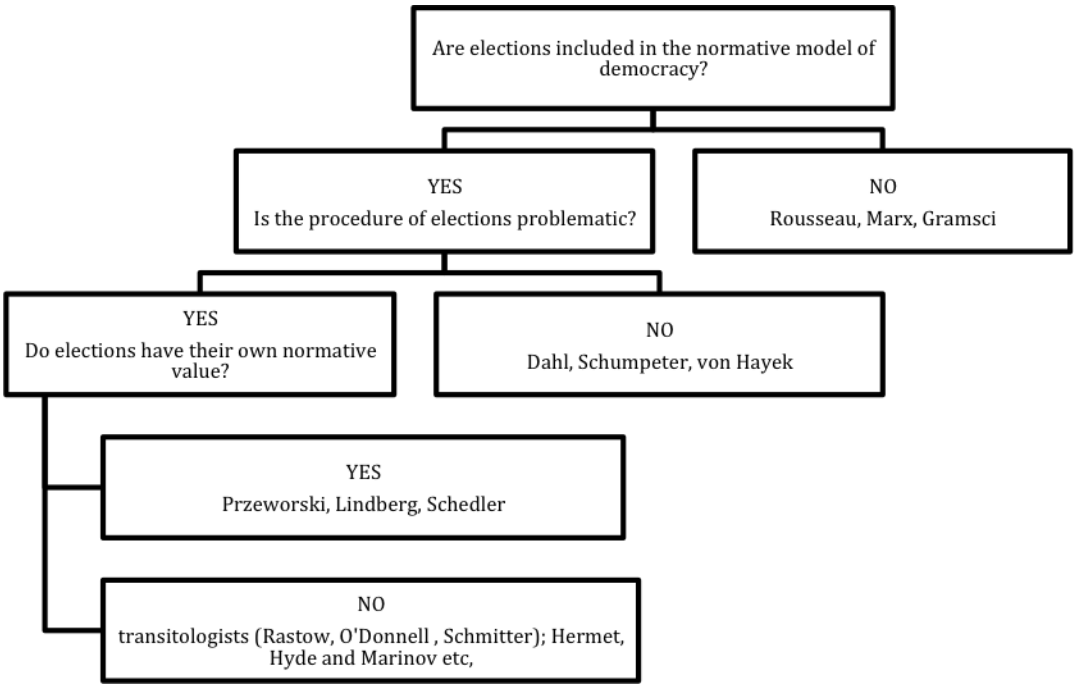
Thus, elections themselves form an 'elective aristocracy' and the role of elections and their intrinsic features are rather problematic. Here I show the brief scheme (Figure 1.1) representing the evolution of the normative status of elections in political theory.

Elections are not the most perfect mechanism of selecting political leadership: as opposed to the lottery, elections are not entirely unbiased towards candidates and clearly favor one type of politician over others (Manin 1997, 42-45). For instance, some classical thinkers denounce elections as an inferior and non-democratic procedure that ignores common will (*volonté générale*) or allows for intermediaries that aggregate and translate the will of the people thereby inevitably distorting the latter. Marxists also hold elections to be an imperfect bourgeois substitute for genuine direct popular democracy (Hermet et al. 1978:2). Even if elections are recognized as the principal selection mechanism, the role of elections as a necessary and/or sufficient condition for a democracy to be established varies from one theory to another. For example, Robert Dahl (1971) and Joseph Schumpeter (1950) emphasize the role of free and fair elections alongside other definitional traits of democracy or poliarchy, such as freedom of speech, political participation and self-expression, pluralism of decision-making etc. On the other hand, drawing on Schumpeter's understanding of democracy as competition among elites, Adam Przeworski brings elections to the spotlight as the major tool of selecting political leadership and political turnover by peaceful means (1991, 4–8). Transitologists contend that elections constitute only a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for a regime to qualify as a democracy (O'Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead 1986; Schmitter and Karl 1991).

The story becomes more complicated when it comes to the role of elections in authoritarian regimes. If elections possess 'democratizing' properties, as is often suggested with regard to 'hybrid' regimes that hold relatively competitive elections, then elections can be held in an optimistic light. Staffan Lindberg claims that even 'low quality' elections serve to nurture, step by step, nurture the future democratic and competitive electoral politics by creating new expectations and practices, as well as standards of political behavior (2009). However, this does not hold in reality, as a significant number of these regimes have proven to be stable. For example, Mexico and Kenya have been holding competitive elections for decades. For this reason Ellen Lust argues that elections, rather than slowly 'democratizing' a regime can act to maintain an authoritarian structure over time. Elections, she argues, can successfully sustain non-democratic regimes by providing mechanisms for addressing competition over resources and access to spoils, a phenomenon she labels 'competitive clientelism' (Lust 2009). From this perspective, elections are merely an institution or mechanism for solving problems of political survival (Gandhi and Przeworski 2007). In other words, elections are 'privatized' by incumbent elites to meet their survival needs.

Some scholars consider elections in authoritarian regimes as 'quasi-elections' or a kind of 'electoral event' but not 'real' elections possessing the normative component suggested

Figure 1.1: The role of elections in the research agenda



by the ideal political model. The first comprehensive study devoted to these 'elections without choice' was published only in 1978, covering the cases of Portugal, Kenya, China, the USSR, and other countries (Hermet, Rouque, and Rose 1978). In order to separate democratic elections from authoritarian ones the authors suggest a set of criteria. 'Classical' or democratic elections are characterized by: 1) minimal state control over competition or freedom of eligibility to be elected; 2) free overall and equal suffrage, and; 3) 'turnover' in both government and policy. According to these criteria 'electoral situations' may be competitive, semi-competitive, or entirely non-competitive (Hermet, Rouque, and Rose 1978, p. 6). As Beatriz Magaloni reasonably claims in her careful investigation of the 70-year domination of Mexico by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), elections not only create a democratic façade and enhance the regime's legitimacy, but serve at least four other critical functions. First, they regularize power-sharing among incumbent elites. Additionally, they broadcast publicly the measure of the regime's strength (its 'public image of invincibility'). Thirdly, they provide the regime with information about supporters and opponents. Finally, elections can 'trap' the organized opposition by forcing it to invest in existing autocratic institutions rather than challenging the incumbent by violent means (2006, 7–9).

The literature reveals a vital debate about the role of elections as a causal variable. Jason Brownlee, for example, claims that elections simply cannot be seen in this way empirically, arguing that, "elections provide an arena for political contestation, but they are not an independent causal variable" (Brownlee 2007, p. 32). Nevertheless, explicitly

or implicitly elections are often accorded a critical causal role in the research on democratization and modern authoritarianism. Much ink has been spilled over explaining the reasons why some regimes resort to electoral means of maintaining power (Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009). Elections can, I argue, almost certainly figure as an *explanans* in the analysis.

The focus on the role of elections in forcing political regime change in this context is overly limited. A more fundamental link between elections and the essential stability of a given state as political unit exists, and is concerned with the question of state capacity. Unintended or undesired electoral outcomes in this sense can lead not only to regime change, but even the collapse of an existing order. Richard Snyder expresses concern that scholars often overlook the question 'how much rulers actually rule' and how state capacity ('stateness') prevents so-called 'state-subverting' elections. In other words, "in addition to affecting the stability of regimes, elections can also influence the stability of states" (Snyder 2006). Levitsky and Way also point to the importance of organizational power, encompassing state coercive capacity, party strength, and economic control (Levitsky and Way 2010). There are prominent examples of elections in the de facto absence of a functioning state, as we have seen since the end of the cold war in Abkhazia, South Ossetia/Georgia, Transnistria/Moldova, Somaliland/Somali, and others. However this challenging topic stands for the most part on the sidelines of my research. The recent research by Cheibub and Hays (Cheibub and Hays 2012) challenges the claim that elections at the 'wrong' time may cause a violent conflict or civil war. According to them the relationship between elections and civil conflict as authoritarian regimes liberalize should not be taken at face value and elections may even reduce the probability of civil conflict.

Historically, elections and their role have been viewed through a variety of methodological approaches posited in the literature, which I tentatively define as follows: 1) structural functionalism; 2) rational choice approach; 3) neo-institutionalism (rational choice), and; 4) constructivism. The structural functionalist approach has focused on conceptualizing the role and functions of elections in non-democratic political systems, striving to comprehend the very nature of elections in mostly developing states and late democratizers (e.g. Portugal, Spain, and the GDR) (Hermet, Rouque, and Rose 1978; Rose and Mossawir 1967; Zaslavsky and Brym 1978). Answering the question of why autocrats try to play by democratically-designed rules, including elections, scholars came to a whole variety of conclusions, from the symbolic importance of elections as a sign of national unity (Bryme and Zaslavsly 1978) to the notion that elections act to legitimate the regime (Hermet, Rouque, and Rose 1978). If the ultimate function of elections is internal and external legitimation (i.e. sanctioning the regime on behalf of the populace and maintaining a decent international image to increase the inflow of investment, assistance and other benefits), then why it is that elections, rather than some other means of obtaining internal legitimacy such as ideology, nationalism, or a prospering economy

become the focus? Additionally, legitimation theory does not explain the presence of elections before the end of the Cold War, when democracy had not yet emerged as a necessary prerequisite to obtain international investment and assistance).

The rational choice institutionalist approach has drawn attention to the causal role of elections in acting as a focal point or arena in which incumbent elites, opposition, and civil society group are compelled to interact, but not as an explanation of further developments, such as protests or regime breakdown (Bunce and Wolchik 2011; Brownlee 2007; Tucker 2007). While more constructivist approaches such as Kuntz and Thompson's, defend the status of elections as an explanatory variable (to the extent that the very notion of variable is applicable in this heuristic tradition), they also go beyond it by claiming that stolen elections are not 'just a final straw' or 'additional weight' in triggering protests, but that they "constitute a powerful transformatory event, which fundamentally reshapes political contestation and thus deserves to be distinguished from other forms of electoral fraud" (italics added, Kuntz and Thompson 2009).

The institutionalist turn in the studies of authoritarian regimes proclaimed the crucial role of institutions under non-democratic conditions and that elections, parties, and legislatures are not simply 'fig leaves', but perform certain functions to sustain authoritarian stability (Gandhi and Przeworski 2007; Geddes 2003; Gandhi 2008; Schedler 2006; Schedler 2013; Brownlee 2007; Magaloni 2006; Greene 2007). This approach has drawn on the premise that institutions are created strategically in order to lower risks of unintended outcomes or, more generally, uncertainty (North 1991; Frye 1997). While this seems a reasonable assumption, it must also be noted that differentiating the effects of political institutions on political outcomes poses a variety of methodological challenges. The assumption that institutions represent stable equilibria that emerge as a consequence of actors' interests and bargaining explicitly suggests that institutions by definition cannot function as exogenous factors (Pepinsky 2014, 633–635). However, as the advocates of historical and rational choice institutionalisms posit, some institutional settings may 'lock in' or become 'sticky', thereby placing political actors into an institutional trap, re-shaping their interests and re-defining further behavior (Hall and Taylor 1996). Another issue is that under authoritarianism the crafters of political institutions get a free hand in re-drafting existing political institutions as their interests change. This makes institutions completely endogenous to the redistribution of power and the political regime as such (Pepinsky 2014). This candid criticism requires those willing to track any causal relations of political institutions to take particular precautions such as differentiating between creating institutions and ensuring that they do bind political behavior, restraining political actors from constant manipulating and abuse of the rules. If electoral legislation is being violated and widely abused on a regular basis, the legislation on political parties and electoral system remain relatively free from additional adjustments and manipulations. Following this line of institutionalist argumentation, I assume that the time when

elections are held makes a difference. The hypotheses that are sketched out in the next section are basically informed by this theoretical approach.

Institutionalist literature also presents several versions of how elections and authoritarian institutions are conceptualized. Andreas Schedler suggests a comprehensive classification of 'political institutionalisms' that differ from each other in how the nature of conflict, actors, institutions and uncertainty are defined (2013: 8). He outlines four perspectives: society-centered political sociology (Boix 2003; Acemoglu and Robinson 2006), state-centered political economy (Olson 1993; Wintrobe 2000; Gandhi and Przeworski 2007), elite-centered political economy (Geddes 2003; Brownlee 2007; Magaloni 2006), and, finally, regime-centered political institutionalism (O'Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead 1986; Bunce and Wolchik 2011)(see Schedler 2013, pp. 1-12). The first three treat institutions as exogenous to political decision-making, while the fourth one sees them as endogenous.

Within the institutionalist literature, elections are often cast as a way of 'releasing steam' and solving emerging conflicts. Elections build up a line of defense against voters, opposition (Gandhi and Przeworski 2007), and members of the ruling coalition (Svolik 2012). According to Lust (2009) and Magaloni (2006) elections allow for the management of intra-elite contestation by monitoring elite compliance and by eliminating the information deficit intrinsic to authoritarian regimes, thereby preventing defections. Gandhi claims that elections and other democratic institutions (legislatures and political parties) are mainly used for cooptation and for preventing formation of alternative centers of power (2008) following the logic of *divide et impere*. Svolik, in turn, underlines the uniqueness of authoritarian regimes that lack virtually any binding institutions for solving the credible commitment problem (Svolik 2012), leaving any conflict potentially liable to chaos or violence. Thus, every autocrat faces the two problems of political survival: power-sharing among the ruling elite and allies, and control over the ruled (2012: 5-8, 53-62). Elections and legislatures partially solve these problems by providing the possibility of interactions between members of the ruling coalition and, in particular, clear public signals from the autocrat to elites to comply with previously taken commitments. Hence, elections serve the interests of ruling elites and the autocrat's allies, but not the voters'. Lust(-Okar) posits that the primary role of elections is to serve as instrument that facilitates cooptation through the redistribution of spoils(Lust-Okar 2006; Lust 2009). The regime decides which opposition can be tolerated and which cannot. In such a case, elites might consider elections to be a fair channel of obtaining political power as long as the result requires individual contribution of efforts and resources (vote buying and/or persuasion). Lastly, Magaloni finds elections to be an efficient tool for preventing elite defections (2006), while overwhelming victory signals to the opposition that any resistance is futile and there is no life outside of the regime (2006). These theoretical accounts seem to be very close to each other, however each emphasizes aspects that sometime are not compatible with each

other.

The first trade-off relates to the information asymmetries that constitute the core of non-democratic politics and elections are often viewed as a means of reducing the level of uncertainty through obtaining the information on distribution of support. On the other hand, this might potentially lead to the occurrence of a genuine competition, which is essential to any electoral democratic regime, threatening, therefore, the incumbent. Another way to conceptualize elections is the signaling of the regime's strength by flexing its 'electoral muscles'. These two conceptualizations clearly contradict each other as in the first case there is no need for electoral manipulation, while in the second – there is a clear imperative for incumbents to rig elections and demonstrate the regime's invincibility to undermine the opposition's spirit. My approach is closer to Magaloni and Gandhi's account, which clearly allows one to draw the line between electoral democracies and autocracies.

The second trade-off emphasizes the incumbent's dilemma as to how much power-sharing is required to maintain a safe balance between 'feeding' insiders (core supporters) and breaking potential opposition alliances through cooptation (swing supporters). Bueno de Mesquita treats this question as the essential challenge of intra-elite management in autocracies (Bueno De Mesquita et al. 2005). The incumbent must distribute rent only among his or her supporters to provide positive incentives among supporters; on the other hand, the upper left cell highlights the importance of the divide-and-rule strategy that would prevent the opposition from consolidating its resources. Elections could be employed in either way – as a tool of redistribution or cooptation of potential defectors. This study primarily focuses on the co-optative role of elections under authoritarian regimes and why strategies towards moderate opposition and/or moderate supporters play the decisive role in a regime's stability.

I claim that the incumbent must choose 'an optimal strategy of repression and rewards' in order to maintain his or her power. If he or she[4] fails to do so, he or she may bring to life the dormant features of the existing institutions, which were abused previously. Simply put, elections with a proper level of competition and wise adjustment of repression and rewards can prolong the incumbent's political life and, consequently, a political regime's existence, despite the common wisdom that political competition, as a "harbinger of democracy," unavoidably leads to liberalization (Lindberg 2009). Hence, electoral competition does not necessarily mean democratization; in some cases it underpins authoritarianism.

Elections in authoritarian regimes serve as a tool to monitor an incumbent's support. At the same time, the incumbent's task is to monitor it without putting him/herself

[4]To the best of my knowledge there is no female incumbent in modern authoritarian regimes, however, in order not to deprive women of the possibility of aspiring to dictatorship, I will use both personal pronouns.

at risk. Thus, the incumbent finds him/herself in a vulnerable position given that he or she does not know the level support in advance, and therefore cannot optimally plan redistributive and repressive strategies. This problem is known as the 'dictator's dilemma', i.e. he or she cannot know the exact level of support due to the information asymmetry which is inherent in the autocratic context (Wintrobe 2000; Schedler 2008; Rozenas 2009). The absence of reliable surveys, free mass media and trustworthy feedback from officials create a distorting effect for the incumbent. This dilemma or 'Kafka's Castle' syndrome [5] seems to induce lapses and blatant errors, which disrupt the routine mode of interaction between the power holder, coalition members, regional administrations, and voters. When an electoral campaign is carried out clumsily or in a ham-fisted fashion, it may open up the opportunity for unintended anti-hegemonic consequences (Case 2006). Mass post-electoral protests are but one of such possibilities.

The major theoretical premise is that institutions are created not to be effective but mainly to serve the interest of those who are in a position of power to form new rules (North 1991). Thus, institutions lower the degree of uncertainty and help transform the elite's preferences into predictable outcomes (Weingast 1996). Furthermore, nothing prevents the incumbent from manipulating the existing institutions in such a way that norms and rules can also be contested (Pepinsky 2014). As a result, elections become a complex multilevel or nested game (Tsebelis 1990; Schedler 2006; Schedler 2002). However, the deficit of respect for the rules can be plugged by 'performance legitimacy', since "electoral authoritarian regimes turn crucially on the level of skill by which their controls are recalibrated by rulers" (Case 2006:95-112).

1.3 The Variety of Authoritarianisms and Elections

Various aspects of my research question have been widely investigated within the framework of different scholarly debates: those concerning institutional and political regime change and persistence, democratization, and elections and referendums in an authoritarian context. Juan Linz, one of the trailblazers of comparative authoritarianism, defines authoritarianism as a political system "with limited, not responsible, political pluralism, without elaborate and guiding ideology, but with distinctive mentalities, without extensive nor intensive political mobilization, except at some points in their development, and in which a leader or occasionally a small group exercises power within formally ill-defined limits but actually quite predictable ones." (Linz and Stepan 1996, p. 38). This definition distinguishes authoritarian regimes from totalitarian ones and grasps most of the features of modern forms of authoritarianism: demobilization and depoliticization, toler-

[5] This refers to Frantz Kafka's novel The Castle (Das Schloß, 1926) on the relationship between 'the Land surveyor' or the lord Klamm from the castle whose decrees are disseminated by his bureaucrats in the nearby village and which are mostly ignored due to the fact that nobody has ever seen the lord.

ance to limited political pluralism and multipartism, and the decisive role of single- and dominant party rule in maintaining the regime. His various distinctions between bureaucratic and populist authoritarianisms, sultanistic, totalitarian and authoritarian regimes and others pre-empted modern analytical typologies and classifications. Linz and other scholars who pioneered the systematic study of authoritarian politics created the basis for later conceptualizations and typologies (Perlmutter 1977; O'Donnell 1973; Huntington and Moore 1970). Given the conceptual depth, most of these typologies define autocracies though the goals these regimes pursue. The latter creates an analytical problem for those who seek to find any causal relations. Another issue is that classical typologies often do not draw clear boundaries between different regime types or categories are not mutually exclusive.

In this part I will briefly outline the main directions of the research debates on modern typologies of authoritarian regimes. I start with a typology of contemporary authoritarian regimes and the theories of authoritarian survival and breakdown, after which I move on to the conceptualizations of elections in an authoritarian context.

1.3.1 Conceptual and Definitional Challenges

One of the main debates unfolds around the question how to map the 'grey zone' of the political regime spectrum, considerably broadened as a result of the 'third wave' of democratization and inhabited by the so-called 'hybrid' or 'illiberal' democracies (Carothers 2002; Diamond 2002; Zakaria 2007), or 'electoral' or 'competitive' authoritarianisms (Levitsky and Way 2010; Schedler 2006), where the introduction of democratic institutions are present but practices are far from democratic. Adam Przeworski (Przeworski 2000) emphasizes the importance of the democratic institutions in the stabilization of the political order; namely, that elections have become a normatively significant element of democracy and not merely a technical procedure of elite selection (Schumpeter 1950).

This debate has been followed by the revision of established political regimes typologies (Dahl 1971; Linz 2000; Chehabi and Linz 1998), particularly those in the non-democratic spectrum (Brooker 2013; Ezrow and Frantz 2011). The classical scheme 'contestation-participation' has been disaggregated into different more detailed accounts. Barbara Geddes (2003) uses the nature of rulers as a departure point for her distinction between personalist, military, one-party, and hybrid regimes. Various institutional settings impose diverging sets of incentives and influence the durability of a regime and its survival. Geddes's typology has been updated by adding monarchies as a separate category (Wright 2008; Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2014). In a similar vein, Gandhi and Przeworski claim that "dictatorships are not all the same" and differentiate between military, civilian, and monarchical rulers (Gandhi and Przeworski 2007; Gandhi 2008).

Juan Linz, in turn, highlights the crucial role of the domestic economy and the way

a ruler uses public and private resources (Chehabi and Linz 1998). The analysis of the political transitions in Africa reinvigorated the Weberian concept of 'neopatrimonialism' (Bratton and Walle 1994), where political actors interpret the state in terms of private property belonging to the ruler.

I rely on the concepts of 'electoral' and 'competitive' authoritarian regimes (Schedler 2006; Levitsky and Way 2010), which include both the electoral dimension and political competition. Philipp Roessler and Marc Howard suggest a typology that allows for a more precise distinction between closed, hegemonic, and competitive authoritarian regimes (Roessler and Howard 2009, pp. 105-106). I focus only on 'competitive' authoritarian regimes where electoral victory by the opposition is at least technically possible, i.e. opposition parties are formally allowed and legitimate, and there is more than one candidate on the ballot (Hyde, Marinov, and Troeger 2012). Competitive authoritarianism thus qualifies as such a regime, where "formal democratic institutions are widely viewed as the principal means of obtaining and exercising political authority. Incumbents violate those rules so often and to such an extent, however, that the regime fails to meet conventional minimum standards for democracy" (Levitsky and Way 2002).

There is an impressive amount of work on authoritarian regime survival and breakdown, somewhat less about elections in autocracies. Political economists suppose that social inequality and poor economic performance are the basic reasons causing the fall of dictatorships (Downs 1957; Lipset 1960; Wintrobe 2000; Acemoglu and Robinson 2006). Another explanation has, however, been advanced by Levitsky and Way, who stated that the exceptional impact of the international environment (linkage and leverage), especially from powerful countries or organizations that donate subsidies or invest in a country's economy or possess some specific political interests in a region, may speed up authoritarian breakdown or promote steady democratic transformation (Levitsky and Way 2010). Some authors address sources of regime strength. The most popular explanation is economic prosperity and stable economic growth (Downs 1957). Under authoritarianism especially, extensive state control over economy and natural resources, and redistributive politics may be particularly important in allowing the government to exercise control over elites and voters (Wintrobe 1998; Greene 2009).

1.3.2 Various Institutional Designs under Authoritarianism

The spectrum of authoritarian regimes is by no means less varied than that of democracies. "Dictatorships are not all the same" as Gandhi and Przeworski start their piece on co-operation, cooptation, and rebellion in modern autocracies (Gandhi and Przeworski 2006, p. 1). They claim that institutional settings are not just window-dressing or simply an arena for rents distribution, but they serve as forums for decreasing informational uncertainty, articulation of demands, and co-option, when it is needed. In consequence, the

differences between various institutional designs are not random but vary systematically according to the needs for co-operation of political incumbents in those regimes. Cheibub, Gandhi and Vreeland also emphasize that "after being treated as a residual category for much time – everything that democracy is not, dictatorships increasingly are recognized as a political regime encompassing different ways of organizing political life that have consequences for understanding policies, outcomes, and the stability of authoritarianism itself" (Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland 2010, p. 83).

As has been mentioned above, I refer to two typologies of non-democratic regimes and the concepts of 'competitive' or 'electoral authoritarianisms'. The latter are special sub-categories where competitive elections constitute an important part of political life. This perspective implies the continuum of political regimes where 'electoral' or 'competitive' are placed somewhere in between genuine electoral democracies and frank non-elective or non-competitive autocracies. However, in order to account for the specific institutional traits within this pool of competitive or electoral authoritarian regimes, another typology is required – one that treats political regimes as different categories or qualitative types.

Given this, I include the typology of institutional designs in authoritarian regimes introduced by Geddes, Wright, and Frantz (GWF) in order to account for this missing link. Since institutions may induce diverging incentives for political actors, there is a necessity to take them into account. Broadly speaking, both typologies tap into the same phenomenon – institutional features and general level of institutionalization of an autocracy, i.e. the proliferation of depersonalized and relatively stable rules and norms (Huntington 2006; North 1991). As Przeworski, Cheibub, Alvarez, and Limongi put it:

> Montesquieu's legacy (1995[1748]) is the distinction between limited regimes and despotic regimes. Kelsen's contribution (1995), going back to Rousseau and Kant, was to distinguish between "autonomy" (systems in which norms are determined by those to whom they apply) and "heteronomy" (systems in which the legislators are distinct from those who are subject to the laws) (Przeworski et al. 2000: 15).

However, they focus on slightly different aspects of an institutional set-up: GWF put an emphasis on how authoritarian rule is exercised, differentiating among different groups of political leaders.

The first typology by Barbara Geddes (1999) suggests the assigning of authoritarian to military, single-party, personalist regimes, or "amalgams of the pure types". The basis for this typology is formed by the differences in "control over access to power and influence rather than formal institutions" (1999: 123). Geddes's initial typology had been missing monarchies as a separate category, but Joseph Wright together with Geddes and Frantz (2012) has filled this lacuna, thus making the classification more complete. On the other hand, Hadenius and Teorell have rejected the category of "personalist" regimes, since it

is a trait shared to some extent by all authoritarian regimes (2007). Instead, they focus on the mechanisms of gaining and retaining political power. Following Geddes et al.'s (2012) framework, I distinguish monarchies, personalist, party-based, military, and hybrid regimes. These regimes vary according to the degrees of political institutionalization and the ultimate source of authority. The most frequent type of autocracy is personalist, whereas the least widespread in monarchy.

Hybrid regimes such as 'party-personalist', 'party-military', 'military-personalist' and especially tripods such as 'party-military-personalist' (e.g. Mubarak's Egypt before 2011) build additional obstacles not only for empirical testing, but also for the deriving of theoretical expectations, which is more crucial. There are two strategies for coping with this issue of 'non-pure' types – simply omitting them or, alternatively, merging some of the borderline cases as Escriba-Folch and Wright (Wright and Escribà-Folch 2012) have done in such a way that military-personalist and party-personalist regimes fall into military and party-based regimes, respectively. The latter partly solves the problem of the omnipresence of 'personalism' raised by Teorell and Hadenius (Hadenius and Teorell 2007). This captures the main distinctions between different types of regimes and has been used extensively in previous research (Milner and Kubota 2005; Lai and Slater 2006; Davenport 2007).

An alternative typology suggested by Cheibub, Gandhi and Vreeland (CGV) (2007), in turn, focus on the methods by which governments are removed from power. They argue that "[t]he method of removal of the government is no less important for dictatorships. Yet in dictatorships, we know that there is no one institution, such as elections or lottery, which determines the removal and succession of authoritarian leaders. Dictatorial regimes, in fact, frequently succumb to internal disputes over leadership succession" (2010: 84). Frequently, it is the fellow members of the dictators' own regime that cause the leader's fall. For this reason, incumbents tend to build inner sanctums that they draw on to reduce informational asymmetries and coordinate their actions to prevent conspiracies or coups. Thus, regimes can be distinguished according to the characteristics of these inner sanctums. As a result, we get the following typology: democratic regimes may be parliamentary, mixed or semi-presidential, and presidential, while autocracies are divided into three categories: civilian, military, and royal dictatorships[6].

While CGV typology has important advantages such as the absence of hybrid categories and well-defined boundaries between democracies and autocracies, the GWF typology introduces more subtle differentiation between authoritarian regime types and distinguishes between partisan and non-partisan politics. CGV types do not differentiate partisan authoritarianism from non-partisan one, which I assume to be crucial for

[6]The watershed between democracies and non-democracies is taken from the codebook for DD dataset. Dummy variable "democracy" is coded 1 if the regime qualifies as democratic. The conditions to be satisfied are also available in the codebook.

explaining the level of institutiotnalization.

1.3.3 Partisan vs Non-Partisan Politics

The presence of political parties as authoritarian institutions is a well-known fact. As emphasized by Magaloni (2006), Brownlee (2007), Langston (2006), Greene (2007), and Reuter and Remington (Reuter and Remington 2009), dominant parties resolve the 'credible commitment problem' between the political leader and her coalition by reducing the level of uncertainty, providing more predictable and clear rules of the game, and extending the planning time-frame. At the same time, some authoritarian leaders such as A. Lukashenka in Belarus, A. Akayev in Kyrgyzstan before 2005, and Jordanian kings dispense with parties, which obviously reframe electoral politics compared to regimes with parties. The complete political stage is viewed through the lens of strong political candidates, bosses, or 'big men' not affiliated with any formally defined political force.

The absence of political parties poses many problems for researchers and experts in spotting winners and losers without delving into the vicissitudes of internal politics of any given election. In non-partisan elections one can hardly explain which political group turned out to be a winner and all politicians are viewed as scattered autonomous political actors who run on a purely non-programmatic basis.

In an authoritarian context, independent candidates in legislative elections can be those representatives of the opposition who cannot run under their party label – for instance, the Muslim Brotherhood candidates in Egypt who often ran as independents under Hosni Mubarak's rule. Alternatively, some of the independents after having been elected found themselves co-opted into the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) and were labeled 'NDPendents' (Brownlee 2007; Koehler 2013). A similar process was observed in the case of Russian elections of the early 2000s before the introduction of the proportional representation (PR) electoral system, when single-member district (SMD) candidates were forced to accept United Russia party membership (Golosov 2005). Another emblematic illustration of such a phenomenon is Jordan, where independent MPs constitute the majority of the legislature, association with any political party is considered as a black spot in the electorate's eyes, and electoral competition is a contest between potential patrons whose task is to provide jobs and public services for their constituencies (Lust-Okar 2006). In other words, extremely heterogeneous groups of political actors are included in this broad category and caution is required when interpreting the share and role of non-partisan candidates within the authoritarian context.

If legislative elections are held in the context of non-partisan politics, the use of electoral statistics and calculations of victory margins seems meaningless. However, the share of independent candidates may also suggest the level of institutionalization of an authoritarian regime. Party-based regimes are considered the most persistent and stable regimes

while more personalist regimes tend to have narrower ruling coalition and less institutional means of redistribution, and of punishing and rewarding the coalition partners (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003, Geddes 1999). The share of independents serves as a proxy for the spread of non-partisan politics and, therefore, competitive clientelism.

Apparently, political parties often act quite differently from their analogues in electoral democracies and represent weak institutional umbrellas for political elites while being feeble and sometime almost non-existent at the regional and local constituency levels (Hale 2006). Yet, when accepting one of the institutionalist premises that even biased formal norms towards the interests of particular and well-known stakeholders and power groups still possess significant potential for depersonalization and tend to detach from their creators and by sly degrees impose their own logic. In other words, the 'privatization' of political institutions does not fully happen and regimes with weak quasi-party systems are expected to be more institutionalized than non-partisan regimes, thus, to be more capable to serve as channels for goods' redistribution, co-optation, and cadre rotation and, thereby increase the stability of modern authoritarianism.

1.3.4 Dominant Parties and Parties of Power

Another important conceptual point is the definition of dominant parties, which is epiphenomenal for studying party-based regimes. Why do we need to differentiate regimes with dominant parties from the rest of modern autocracies? Firstly, the presence of a dominant party implies a specific mechanism of intra-elite coordination. Dominant parties facilitate monitoring of coalition partners' compliance and ensure cadre rotation.

On a more technical level, the typology by CGV does not reflect the specificity of the partisan politics under authoritarian conditions by pooling all non-military and non-monarchical regimes into the same big basket. Indeed, civilian dictatorships form an immensely heterogeneous set of regimes encompassing such cases as Mexico, Botswana, and Kenya with Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan. The first three are emblematic cases of strong dominant party regimes, while in Russia and Kazakhstan the parties associated with the incumbents have changed once or twice. The Belarusian regime is an instance of non-partisan politics. There is the need to take this variation into account as it tells us about the degree of a regime's institutionalization (Gandhi 2008).

Second, the categorization by GWF contains a box with the 'party-based' regimes and its hybrids. However, a blurred watershed between party-based, party-personalist, and party-military regimes does not fully account for such cases as Russia, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan, where pro-incumbent parties exist, but have almost no discretion over significant political decisions and are not represented in government. The institutional design of such regimes often does not allow the winning party to form the government. For this reason, Geddes's lens qualifies these regimes as purely personalist. On the other

hand, the growing literature on dominant-party regimes has drawn attention to the so-called 'parties of power' that do not influence government reshuffles, but still play an important role in political processes as a strategy of ruling elites to ensure a legislative majority, facilitate legislative drafting, and law passage (Gel'man 2006; Reuter and Remington 2009). At the same time, the party of power provides an electoral machine for the incumbent during electoral campaigns (Golosov and Liechtenstein 2001). Thus, there is a clear conceptual and substantive difference between the familiar dominant parties as defined by Giovanni Sartori and his followers (Huntington and Moore 1970; Pempel 1990) and parties of power. While dominant parties constitute a collective political actor taking major political decisions and launching nation-wide policies, the parties of power serve as complimentary tools of more personalized regimes. Rather than acting on their own account, they decrease the levels of uncertainty for the regime, especially in terms of electoral outcomes and grip over the legislative process. Thus, the key difference with dominant parties is that parties of power dominate in electoral and legislative arenas, but are absent in real policy-making and policy-implementation arenas (Gel'man 2006). Introducing an additional category of party of power would specify the unclear personalist or civilian dictatorships between the regimes with a dominant party (Greene 2009) and non-partisan authoritarianisms.

Finally, going back to the phenomenon of non-partisan politics and independent members of parliament we can use the share of independents in a legislature in order to account for the non-partisan and more clientelistically-oriented nature of elections, and elections where all the seats are allocated through PR systems, i.e. this variable would account for the electoral formula. The latter works also as an important institutional mechanism that may favor the formation of parties following Maurice Duverger's logic or, to the contrary, facilitate more personalized constituency-representation (Golder and Wantchekon 2004).

In this research I employ the typology suggested by Geddes et al. (1999, later - GWF) with Wright's revisions (2008) since it differentiates between partisan and non-partisan politics.

1.4 The Argument in Brief

The role of electoral institutions under authoritarianism is closely bound to an uncertainty problem or the aforementioned 'dictator's dilemma'. Elections help incumbents maintain political coalitions and redistribution policies (Bueno De Mesquita et al. 2005), facilitate monitoring compliance and punishment of noncompliance (Weingast 1996), and maintain political stability by sending signals to the international community that the regime is a reliable and credible partner.

Since political institutions under non-democratic regimes partially compensate for existing information asymmetries and solve the coordination problem among authoritarian

elites, the subversive role of elections depends on the level of overall institutionalization and type of authoritarianism in general (Gandhi 2008). Political parties play a particularly important role in recruiting elites, maintaining cadre rotation, co-option and punishing for non-compliance, therefore I expect lower probability of anti-incumbent consequences under party-based regimes and higher likelihood of unintended consequences under under-institutionalized personalist regimes.

The main threat for both party-based and personalist regimes comes from the electoral arena (Gandhi and Przeworski 2007). More personalist regimes are worse off compared to the party-based ones in terms of preventing mass post-electoral upheavals because they lack efficient channels for co-option and elite rotation. Effective mobilization by organized members of political elites and counter-elites lies at the heart of every massive protest and poor institutions or the lack thereof 'feed' the potential opposition with new leaders.

On the other hand, military regimes and monarchies are becoming a rare specie in the authoritarian jungles. This is why I do not focus on these regimes much. The latter are assumed to be less institutionalized that party-based and personalist regimes, but better equipped with repressive tools to suppress any protest. Following the institutionalist logic, the reason is that the main threat for political leaders comes from family members in monarchies or from fellow-military in *juntas* (Gandhi and Przeworski 2007). Thus, elections in these regimes should play a marginal role without threatening the incumbent.

This study seeks to advance the following claims:

1) Political institutions could still be used as explanatory variables. Highly institutionalized regimes equipped with a dominant party cope better with unintended consequences. Most of "subversions" occur in regimes with less developed party systems;

2) Cooptational capacity of political parties and legislatures can be limited and incurs the incentives for marginalized politicians to engage in anti-regime protests;

3) The variety of personalist autocracies and its heterogeneity still remains underexplored;

4) The causal role of electoral fraud and malpractice in triggering post-electoral protests should not be overestimated. Various aspects of electoral malpractice correlate differently with probability of subversive scenarios. Biased perceptions of political processes impede successful coordination between protesters. 'Objective' reports on scale of fraud and violations do not correlate with the probability of protests.

1.5 Outline of Empirical Analysis

In the first part of empirical analysis I treat elections as causal variables *per se*, where I compare election and non-election-years. In the following analysis of unintended outcomes I treat elections mostly as arenas of political contestation (Ostrom 1998; Levitsky and Way 2002; Brownlee 2007; Schedler 2013). At the micro-level, elections are repro-

duced by the strategic interactions between citizens, the opposition, and ruling parties or incumbents. In the large-N analysis I treat the terms "incumbent", "autocrat" and "ruling party" interchangeably, although in case studies the incumbent as a single actor should be distinguished from the ruling party due to the divergent patterns of interactions observed across countries and the need to accounting for intra-elite divisions.

I stick to the mixed-method research design that allows one not merely to unravel correlations between subversive consequences and other predictors, but to unpack the underlying causal mechanism that connect the cause with the consequence. In other words, this research design aims at making most of the two worlds by combining large-N analysis with a case study. Two methods are combined in such way that regression analysis tests for general hypotheses and correlations between suggested institutions (causes) and subversive scenarios (effects), while the case study is tailored to investigate the causal pathway or pathways that must be present to infer causality (Lieberman 2005). As Seawright posits, "the basis for causal inference is at the heart of the ongoing boom in multimethod research" (2016, 44). Mixed-methods design (sometime referred to as MMR) "must be constructed so that additional methods test assumptions that are generally untested in single-method research" (Seawright 2016: 42).

Along the lines of this logic, the first two empirical chapters test the hypothetical relations between causal variables and outcomes – namely, institutional variety of autocracies and probability of subversive scenarios, while the case of Russia has been selected as a deviant case where unusual relations between institutions and subversion had been detected (see more in Chapter 4). The latter allows me to go beyond establishing correlational patterns and explore the sources of causal heterogeneity and indicate potential flaws in measurement and alternative explanations. Simply put, the quantitative part tests the plausibility of the proposed theory, while the qualitative part 'zooms in' and aims at fixing potential flaws in the model and generating more specific theory.

The empirical analysis consists of the two sections: testing the null hypothesis of whether election time affects the frequency of protests or oppressiveness of a political regime across various types of authoritarianism – personalist, military, monarchies, or party-based, then I proceed with systematic exploration of election-years in authoritarianism and the probability of subversive scenarios conditional on the variety of institutional settings. Lastly, the case study is based on a process tracing technique that presumes rigorous consequential testing of alternative mechanisms that could have lead to the same outcome. The Russian case of post-electoral protests in 2011-12 poses an additional question as to why, given the investment of the political elites in the party system and the party of power – United Russia, which is expected to be the most stable and immune to any unexpected developments – it failed to prevent post-electoral protests. I make use of the process-tracing technique as the main instrument of teasing out the causal mechanism. I outline the advantages of this approach below.

1.5.1 Mixed Methods Strategy

There is a dearth of literature on how to differentiate between various mixed-methods designs, however most of the existing typologies revolve around two – status of a particular method (dominance or parity) and logical sequence (case-study followed by quantitative analysis or vice versa) (Sommer Harrits 2011; Creswell 2013). Following Seawright's account, these differentiations are not that crucial for determining which combination is most optimal. The fundamental problem lies in the fact that "qualitative and quantitative methods are not actually asking the same question, even though they are focused on the same topic", given dramatic differences in epistemology and assumptions about social reality (2016: 46). Therefore mixing the two methods cannot imply triangulation or additional 'robustness checks' (Gerring 2011, p. 385). Instead, some authors emphasize the centrality of the case-selection as an instrument that allows not only the unpacking of the causal pathway, but as a means "to identify patterns and deviant cases, and case studies to point out omitted variables and/or explore causal mechanisms" (Sommer Harrits 2011, p. 5) (George and Bennett 2005) as well as to test assumptions and correct for measurement errors (Seawright 2016, pp. 47-48). The so-called integrative mixed-method design (as opposed to the triangulation approach) provides "a clear accounting of exactly what each method contributes to the final causal inference; this is not the case for triangulation" (Seawright 2016, p. 49).

1.5.2 Gaining causal leverage through process tracing

From the mid-2000s process tracing has carved out a place as a leading tool for teasing causal relations in single case studies (Collier 2011; Goertz and Mahoney 2012; Beach and Pedersen 2013; Trampusch and Palier 2016; Mahoney 2010; George and Bennett 2005)(see e.g. Collier 2011; Goertz and Mahoney 2012; Beach and Pedersen 2013; Trampusch and Palier 2016; Mahoney 2010, 123; George and Bennett 2005). There are a variety of definitions of process tracing. For instance, Trampush and Palier (2016: 4-5) count no less than 18 definitions, most of which differ only stylistically. I use a definition of process tracing as a tool of causal inference in case studies (Beach and Pedersen 2013: 2).

Contrary to the probabilistic logic of statistical analysis, revealing mechanisms implies deterministic relations that connect cause with effects (Héritier 2008, 69). Process tracing is oriented towards opening up the black box of hypothesized causal relations between Y and X (Beach and Pedersen 2013: 49; Trampusch and Palier 2016). Reconstruction of causal mechanism is often indicated as a necessary condition that one needs to state, whether there are genuine causal relations or not. George and Bennett provide a vivid example of a detective story as the baseline for understanding the logic of process tracing (George and Bennett 2005: 217-218; Collier 2011). In the beginning, the researcher (like a detective) must obtain detailed knowledge of context, within which the observed

outcome occurs (as if it is a crime). Once the whole context becomes clear, the researcher should identify potential causes or suspects that brought about the observed outcome. Subsequently, the researcher systematically collects empirical evidence that would testify for some hypothetical mechanisms and against others. Some causes can be contextual, while others may be grounded in existing theoretical accounts and grasp fragments of more general patterns (Vennesson 2008).

Process tracing help tackle problems of endogeneity and spurious associations through the in-depth exploration of a sequence of events and various pieces of empirical evidence from interviews, media reports, memoirs to facts, official statistics, survey data etc.) (Bennett and Elman 2006; Bennett 2010; Collier 2011; Bennett and Checkel 2014, pp. 458,208-209, 824, 20). Both problems could be eliminated through investigation of both on- and outliers (Beach and Pedersen 2013, p. 147). Analysis of deviant cases or outliers suggests alternative operating mechanisms or omitted variables that could be introduced in a quantitative model. Process tracing allows for both theory testing and theory building (Beach and Pedersen 2013, p. 3)[7]. Reliance on Bayesian logic and tests actually limits the set of relevant data and theoretically possible mechanisms (Checkel 2006, pp. 366-367).

Process tracing is based on a series of Bayesian tests that examine the plausibility and weight of each hypothesized cause and underlying mechanism (Van Evera 1997, pp. 30-34). Van Evera distinguishes between four tests, depending on whether a proof satisfies necessary and/or sufficient conditions: the straw-in-the-wind test (the weakest), the hoop test, the smoking gun test, and the doubly decisive test (the rarest and strongest) (Beach and Pedersen 2013; Bennett 2010; Collier 2011; Goertz and Mahoney 2012). Tests are described in more detail by Bennett (2010) and Collier (2011) and are presented in the Appendix.

Thus, exploring the probability of undesired or anti-hegemonic post-electoral consequences, I apply a mixed-method research design that seeks to test the overall patterns through the large-N analysis of competitive authoritarian regimes from 1990 to 2011, while the case-study aims at 'fixing' models through exploring deviant cases and exposure of omitted variables, and the distinction between context-specific and systematically-varying variables.

1.5.3 Units of Analysis

Units of analysis vary from one empirical test to another in order to draw more detailed picture of subversive consequences of elections. In Chapter 2, I provide the preliminary

[7]Like any method, process tracing is not devoid of potential flaws, such as infinite regress in explaining outcomes, lack of parsimoniality (the problem of degrees of freedom) etc. For critical accounts, see (see Bennett 2010, pp. 210-211)(Mahoney 2010, pp. 123-124). On the the hand, Bayesian logic narrows down the scope of relevant sources, hereby solving the problem of infinite regress. One of the serious limitation of process tracing could be the the lack of parsimonious explanatory models and their generalizability (see e.g. Checkel 2006, p. 367)

tests of the role of elections in different institutional environments, where the unit of analysis is country-year and the dependent variable is the frequency of protests per year in sixty-eight regimes from 1990 to 2008. Chapter 3 focuses on election-years and types of unintended outcomes: electoral defeat and post-electoral protests. Chapters 4 and 5 are devoted to the case-study of the Russian legislative and presidential elections, their outcomes, and post-electoral developments. It must be noted that in Chapters 2 and 3 I take into account every single election in the context of an authoritarian regime, which allows for political competition. I exclude 'founding elections' and situations when the recounting of votes takes place. If elections have more than one round, I use the runoff round for presidential elections and decisive round for parliamentary ones.

Chapter 2

The Time of Elections under Electoral Authoritarianism

"I will stop
I will stop at nothing
Say the right things
When electioneering
I trust I can rely on your vote
When I go forwards you go backwards and somewhere we will meet"
— Radiohead, "Electioneering"

2.1 Introduction

For many authoritarian regimes elections are risky. Nonetheless, authoritarian leaders still hold them for a number of reasons: to maintain the ruling coalition and the internal level of support, or to present the regime to the international community as a reliable partner. As Susan Hyde puts it: "information between international actors is similarly asymmetric: states possess accurate information about their own type, but international actors can have difficulty judging whether another state is an undesirable type or so-called lemon" (Hyde 2011, p. 9). Regular and seemingly competitive elections accompanied by a positive observers' report serve as a 'good' signal and open the opportunity for future direct investment, economic aid, or political alliances[1]. The necessity of holding regular competitive elections and the unpopularity of parliamentary systems where incumbents manipulate electoral dates make timely elections an unavoidable evil.

Another theoretical contention is the status of elections as a causal variable. Widespread electoral fraud, intentional discrimination towards opposition and civil society groups,

[1]For more comprehensive overview of why autocracies choose to hold elections see (Magaloni and Kricheli 2010; Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009; Malesky and Schuler 2010)

intimidation of voters, and state abuse of media outlets make minimally competitive elections less efficient for the purpose of democratization. On the other hand, the recent study of mass mobilization as a reaction to electoral fraud and abuse of political rights and liberties after 'electoral' or 'color' revolutions clearly challenges this pessimistic view (Beissinger 2007; Tucker 2007; Bunce and Wolchik 2011). This strand of literature perceives elections as a special event where an incumbent, the opposition, and voters face each other. Thus, elections create a focal point in Thomas Schelling's terms or a particular arena of interaction between these agents and, thus, sometimes might bring about unintended or unanticipated consequences(Schelling 1980). Post-electoral protests were followed by new attempts to establish regimes that are more democratic.From this perspective, elections would constitute a vehicle of possible democratization or a 'subversive institution' that might work against ruling elites under favorable conditions. Moreover, this standpoint attributes an explanatory or causal status to elections as an outburst of mass protest mobilization, while dismissing the interpretation of elections as a 'sham' or mere 'window-dressing'. To put it bluntly, elections – electoral campaigning, voting, polling day, and the aftermath – form an event that breaks the routine and makes political actors constantly adjust their actions and decisions to the electoral schedule, even in autocracies.

Often the truth lies somewhere in between, which is why in this chapter I seek to accomplish a number of things. Firstly, I try to challenge the overly optimistic view of some authors, who assume that elections matter by default and that the electoral period makes the difference due to its intrinsic characteristics. This assumption seems doubtful and requires further empirical investigation before delving into the analysis of electoral or competitive authoritarian regimes. Secondly, I challenge the pessimistic view as well, by showing that under certain conditions elections reveal their 'subversive' or destabilizing potential. Lastly, the very role and significance of elections as a potential triggering event may vary across different types of non-democratic regimes.

Skeptics such as Gandhi, Lust, and Magaloni highlight the role of elections as one of the mechanisms to maintain cadre rotation and redistribute spoils, as well their function as a line of defense against potential political challengers and as an instrument of cooptation (Gandhi and Przeworski 2007; Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland 2010; Lust 2009). Approaching the electoral cycle creates new aspirations and opens a window of opportunity for various groups within the political elite to rearrange current constellations and coalitions and to advance their positions in the political struggle. Even rigged elections may strengthen intra-elite competition (e.g. between various candidates within one ruling party). On the other hand, opposition leaders, dissidents, and civic activists acquire an opportunity to demonstrate to the rest of the citizens that a regime heavily violates their rights and strive to discredit the political incumbent, for instance through exposing procedural violations.

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However, this threat varies throughout the types of authoritarian regimes. Excluding autocracies without competitive elections we inevitably shrink the existing variety. On the other hand, even dealing with only electoral authoritarian regimes, we intuitively understand that Egypt under Mubarak, Belarus under Lukashenka and Malaysia under Mahathir Mohamad differ from each other. Egypt represents a mixture of a regime with a dominant party - National Democratic Party (NDP), personalist leader - Hosni Mubarak who had been in power since 1981, and powerful military. Malaysia under Mohamad is closer to the pure party-based type, while Belarus has inchoate parties and is dominated by a non-partisan personalist leader - Aleksandr Lukashenka. This institutional variety is expected to affect the pre-election calculus by all relevant political actors and to alter the probability of subversive consequences induced by elections.

As Gandhi and Przeworski (Gandhi and Przeworski 2006) posit, the regime survival strategies would depend on the institutional arrangements that are normally designed to maintain the autocrat's dominance. If so, monarchs should be uptight about other family members, the military should fear their fellow 'men with guns' who might run the risk of organizing another *coup-d'etat* (Geddes 1999). In terms of institutionalization, military regimes are the least institutionalized and normally rely on repression and rarely invest in infrastructural power. Monarchies with competitive elections and multipartyism can be counted on fingers (e.g. Morocco or Jordan), their level of institutionalization is usually limited to the will of a monarch. However, the overwhelming majority of electoral authoritarian regimes are civilian regimes that could be divided into personalist and party-based ones. These regimes do differ in their level of institutionalization: party-based regimes are conventionally placed as the most depersonalized regimes with clear rules, even though these rules are designed to maintain the autocrat's dominance (Slater 2010). As long as we believe that even such institutions decrease the level of uncertainty, then the probability of subversive scenarios in a form of protests should be significantly lower. Personalist regimes make a dubious case of co-existing of democratically designed institutions and 'authoritarian' practices'. These regimes are not equipped with dominant parties that manage intra-elite competition, recruiting, and monitoring defections. Hence, they should be in a more vulnerable position as opposed to the party-based regimes. To sum up, more institutionalized regimes such as party-based ones are more immune to

unintended consequences and the time of elections should not make much of a difference, while personalist regimes seat in between underinstituionalized autocracies with all electoral institutions, but without such important safety bets as dominant parties.

In both party-based and personalist regimes, the main threat comes from elections, thus the time of elections should be more dramatic for the incumbent exposing him at least formally in a vulnerable position. Monarchies and military regimes are so different because the threat does not come from the voters, but from either the military conspiracy or family members. Thus, the time of elections should not make a difference in terms of political routine.

In the sample of modern electoral authoritarian regimes there are too few monarchies, this is why I omit them from further analysis.

In this chapter, I discuss possible ways one could go about assessing the relative 'significance' of elections under various contexts, and which indicators can be exploited for this purpose. Then I proceed to test how electoral scheduling differs from between-elections time. I address the issue of endogeneity of election time across different authoritarian regimes. Then, I test unconditional effects of election years in terms of mass and elite contentious politics – protests and repression – as well as conditional effects to different institutional contexts, levels of economic development, inequality, ethnic fractionalization, and other variables. In order to explore the role of election time in authoritarian regimes I use cross-sectional time-series panel data models of the frequencies of protests and repression reported by newswires.

2.2 Effect of elections conditioned by regime type: Protests and Repression

The effect of institutional design should strengthen and specify the effect on election time. The intuition behind is that the 'variety of authoritarianisms' affects the relative weight of elections within various institutional settings – different types of authoritarian regimes accommodate and adapt different political institutions. Differences in institutional settings account for economic growth and investment (Wright 2009), political survival (Geddes 1999), as well as prospects for democratization and democratic consolidation (Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland 2010, p. 83).

The most institutionalized regimes, such as dominant-party systems, tend to use elections as an optimal tool to maintain political coalitions and build the most effective line of defense against potential offenders (Gandhi 2008). In monarchies hereditary succession is a key mechanism of replacing political leaders, therefore, the most dangerous rivals are the monarch's family and kin[2]. Elections seem to play a secondary role in these regimes.

[2]Note that I mean only those monarchies where formally competitive elections take place, political

Elections are important as providers of patronage for local communities. Such patronage is habitually maintained by the competition among local "big men" (Lust 2009). Mass protests are illegitimate by definition and are easily suppressed. I do not expect to see a significant impact of elections in this type of authoritarianism.

Military regimes are the most unstable type of regime, on account of their permanent factional struggle. One of the showcases is Argentina, where successive members of the junta struggled for power within the regime's leadership. In Chile under Pinochet, every branch of the military had its own intelligence service to spy against the others (Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland 2010, p. 86). Geddes attributes this intrinsic instability to the interest structure of this group of rulers, professional guardians, or neutral arbiters rather than that of politicians. Normally they step in when there is turmoil or a threat of state collapse and civil war. Military regimes possess full control over the repressive apparatus, which means that it is likely that they will resort to repressive means in almost every situation. Under harsh repression, mass mobilization is unlikely. Often the military hand over political power to civilian government while remaining at the backstage of political life, only to surface in case of trouble. The military in Pakistan is a classic example. The period of electoral campaigning is considered as potentially risky and I expect that in military regimes control is then tightened when compared to non-election periods and, therefore, protest outbursts seem very unlikely.

If monarchies and military are quite rare among competitive modern autocracies, the most common type are "civilian dictatorships" (Cheibub, Gandhi et al. 2010) or "personalist" and "party-based" regimes (Geddes 1999). Examples of single-party or party-based regimes are the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) in Mexico, the Revolutionary Party of Tanzania (CCM) or Taiwan's Kuomingtang (KMT). Geddes distinguishes between "real: and nominal single-party regimes depending whether the leader has a final say or any collective partisan body (Geddes 2003, pp. 52-53). "Personalist dictators", as Geddes writes, "range from vicious psychopaths to benevolent populists" (2003: 53). The criterion is that the organizations (military, party) supporting the incumbent are not sufficiently institutionalized and are a subject to arbitrary treatment by him or her. In contrast to Geddes, Cheibub, Gandhi and Vreeland do not make any distinction between partisan and personal rule, instead classing the rest of the cases as "civilian dictatorships". These regimes constitute the residual category, which is characterized by the strong rule of a non-military dictator and often the presence of a supporting party (2010: 86-87).

This category is as blurred as it is commonplace, and there is no clear theoretical expectation stemming from this type, given the residual character of 'civilian dictatorships'. My guess is that election time is extremely important for these regimes. The inner sanctums or ruling coalitions are not built on familial ties or a military basis and are larger. Therefore, a considerable part of the ruling coalition is selected through elections. Quite

parties are allowed, and there is a choice of candidates on the ballot.

often one may observe 'secured' presidential elections; in other words, the same person (or in some cases his or her successor) always appears as the leading candidate. Parliamentary elections are more competitive, although the 'party of power' (a weaker version of dominant – or single-party regimes) always occupies the majority of seats. For instance, most authoritarian post-Soviet countries – Russia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kazakhstan – reveal this pattern. The share of votes may slightly change, sometimes, in order to co-opt other political groups (Magaloni 2006; Reuter and Remington 2009; Svolik 2009; Svolik 2012). Electoral formula, the size of districts, and thresholds are adjusted according to the needs of the 'party of power'. Parliamentary elections are less dangerous, thus, they allow for more competition. Normally election time is expected to be important in these regimes and the state is interested in encouraging pro-regime and swing voters.

Repression suffocates electoral turnout and spoils the idyllic image of a civilian dictatorship behaving as if it was a democracy. Moreover, repression is costly in the presence of international observers. Given that, the state will likely tolerate any peaceful protest at the time of elections. I expect to have more protests in election years as opposed to non-election periods. For Geddes's party-based regimes, elections are the prime channel of selecting government, thus, voters react more sensitively to the elections.

As a measure of institutional design type, I use categorical values from the GWF datasets (Geddes, Wright et al. 2012). To account for heterogeneity of personalist dictatorships I also introduce the category of regimes with a party of power.

2.2.1 Protests and Repression in the Period of National Elections

The argument about elections as a focal point or 'special event' that might reshape preferences of actors requires an empirical test. The preliminary analysis shown in this chapter serves as a test of the null hypothesis of whether elections really matter under 'competitive' or 'electoral authoritarian regimes' and if so, to what extent and under which conditions. As mentioned above, unintended consequences may take various forms. Ultimately, I distinguish between the two instances when elections get 'out of hand': electoral failure and massive post-electoral protests. If one wishes to look at the difference between election and non-election periods, obviously, one cannot employ electoral failure and electoral outcomes in general as a phenomenon to be predicted. If there is no election, there is nothing to lose (at least by electoral means). Consequently, one is left with the occurrence and spread of protests as the clear indicator of incumbent's loss of control over the political situation. Moreover, as I have argued above, levels of political repression – tightening of the screws or loosening the grip – indirectly signal a degree of susceptibility to the electoral cycles in authoritarianism.

There is an impressive amount of literature on why people take to the streets. The

reasons vary from harsh macro-economic conditions to more contingent triggers (Davenport 2007; Tilly, McAdam, and Tarrow 2001).[3] However, the task is not to provide an explanation of probability and scale of protest, but rather to focus on those variables whose impact still remains understudied: the timing of elections and the institutional design (sometime I refer to this as 'type of autocracy'). Intuitively, the very fact of holding even minimally competitive elections should have had some impact on domestic politics including mass mobilization patterns.

Given that, one might suggest that election timing also affects the probability and frequency of protests. If elections have become a necessary element of most modern authoritarian regimes, they may create a sufficient pretext for opposition to be mobilized. Following this line of argument, the time without elections should be, *ceteris paribus*, less marked by mass contentious events. I expect to observe peaks in mass mobilization in election-years and downswings in the midterm. However, if the distance between two consecutive elections is too long, the probability of protests may increase due to the absence of any other institutional channel to express mass discontent.

So does the type of authoritarian institutional setting influence the impact of elections on the probability of anti-regime uprising? This problem turns into the following empirical question: do elections have any impact on anti-regime mobilization or repression and, if this is the case, what are the possible covariates of the relative role of elections?

How do we know that the period of the electoral campaign and polling day(s) really do interrupt the political routine in autocracies and become a pole of attraction for both political elites and voters? For democratic countries, this question might sound trivial but in autocracies the situation is not so simple. I chose two indicators that reflect the sensitivity of elites and masses to the period of electoral campaigning: mass protests and political repression. Applying economic terms, the former demonstrates the demand-side of politics by reflecting mass claims, while the latter represents the supply-side, in so far as repression is one of the ways elites and incumbent can maintain their rule.

Firstly, as was discussed earlier, mass protests are extremely costly under repressive regimes compared to more liberal political environments. Thus, if citizens en masse, even given all the incentives to abstain from street politics, still do raise their claims through public protests, it is a strong signal to political elites and the international environment. Second, if we systematically observe more protests during elections, it clearly reflects the significance of elections for voters. In addition, if they do not find the way to make their claims heard by via electoral channels, they may prefer to voice their outrage on the street.

In the era of mass politics, popular legitimacy is a source of stability for any type of regime (Gilley 2007). The reason is simple: popular legitimacy eliminates mass opposi-

[3]For more comprehensive literature overview, see Davenport, C. (2007). "State Repression and Political Order." Annual Review of Political Science 10(1): 1-23.

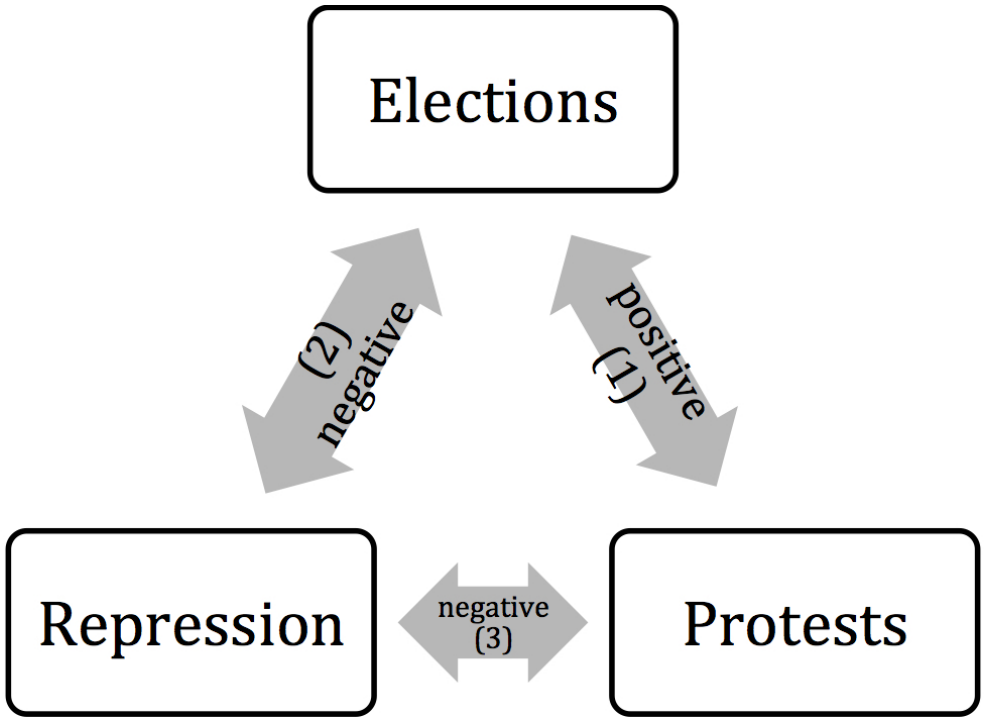
tion as a possible reason for regime collapse. Of course, the need for popular legitimacy is more pressing for democracies because, if they lack it competitive elections can bring to power anti-democratic forces that would terminate democracy. The free expression of discontent and mobilization under authoritarian conditions is hampered by the threat of repression. Closed autocracies do not hold elections and use repression to compensate for deficiencies in popular legitimacy (Wintrobe 2000). Yet, repression can be a deceptive source of stability. This becomes obvious when seemingly stable autocracies experience the "element of surprise" (Kuran 1991) and crumble under suddenly swelling outbursts of mass opposition (Tilly, McAdam, and Tarrow 2001; Schock 2013; Karatnycky and Ackerman 2005; Ulfelder 2005). With respect to repression and legitimacy, competitive autocracies are located somewhere in between closed autocracies and electoral democracies. As autocracies, they use repression to varying degrees to scare people away from an anti-incumbent vote but it is not clear that this always works, so the sheer fact of holding elections still carries the risk of exhibiting legitimacy deficiencies through incumbent defeat.

Elites, in their turn, are also expected to consider electoral cycles with extreme caution and may 'prepare' their electoral constituencies and/or coalition partners by distributing goods, perks and privileges, or by allocating new social programs, budget transfers, target benefits, and the like on the eve of elections or right after an electoral campaign is over. The latter has been extensively explored within the political economy literature and particularly studies of political business cycles (Medina and Stokes 2007; Blaydes 2010; Robinson and Verdier 2013). However, as opposed to their more institutionally restrained fellows in democracies, authoritarian incumbents in average have poorer economies and less effective infrastructure (Przeworski et al. 2000; Acemoglu and Robinson 2005) to feed their coalition and buy off potential opponents [4]. On the other hand, authoritarian incumbents possess considerably more freedom in playing with instruments of repression. As has been discussed earlier, repression takes various forms and may target different political groups in different ways. Given this, changes in scale and targets over time, especially relative to elections, can also provide a comprehensive signal of the relative importance of electoral time for the ruling elites. Perhaps in some cases some systematic or even cyclical patterns of repression can be revealed, which may interact or substitute distributive strategies in political business cycles. Following Fiorina's model (Fiorina 1981), in situations when incumbent would have lost elections due to adverse economic conditions, this shortage of mass support can be remedied with repression in authoritarian regimes, a measure not acceptable in electoral democracies. To conclude, elites are expected to react to electoral cycles in terms of repression levels, one way or another.

Figure 1.1 sketches the correlational arrows to be disentangled in the empirical analy-

[4]This does not fully apply to all autocracies, e.g. Singapore, Russia, and Malaysia have reached a relatively high level of economic development and individual wellbeing.

Figure 2.1: Election timing, repression, and protests: expected correlations



sis. I expect the scale of political protests to escalate in election-years as elections provide potential protesters with a perfect arena - given the most acute social, political and, economic issues are on the agenda and widely discussed, existing tensions are set on edge. Virtually every move by the incumbent, the opposition, or any other visible public actor may provoke a bandwagon effect and reframe the whole electoral situation. On the other hand, the use of blatant and bone-crushing repression appears to be an ambiguous enterprise when international observers are present or important international peers could provide or revoke investment, economic aid, or other benefits conditional upon the conduct of elections (Bhasin and Gandhi 2013; Wright 2009; Ritter 2015). Thus, the intensity and scale of repression is expected to be lower during national elections (2) compared with the periods in between. If election time does not make any difference, we will not find any clear pattern in protest and repression dynamics depending on electoral cycles. Finally, (3) the more repression is used, the fewer the protests should be. Do years of nationwide elections differ from years when there are no elections taking place in terms of contentious politics? I provide a test of the relative weight or importance of elections across types of autocracies and across time.

2.2.2 Repression and Protest: Coming full circle

The relations between repression and protest are deeply endogenous (Davenport 2007; Ritter and Conrad 2016) and there are very few empirical studies that managed to disen-

tangle this issue (Ritter and Conrad 2016). Repression is seen a a cost for any collective action including post-election protest. On the other hand, states also take their previous experience with contentious politics into account and may adjust their levels of repression depending on previous protests (e.g. Slater 2010). Thus, repression can be a predictor of protests and, at the same time, can be a function of protests that held in a country earlier.

Any authoritarian regime is by definition a repressive polity. Scholars assume various relations between the distinct elements of the endogenous political nexus: mobilization, repression and violence. Decreased political repression may spark mobilization by lowering the costs of collective action: if repression escalates, the probability of collective action decreases, since repression is a cost or a negative incentive (Olson 1965; Opp and Roehl 1990; Tilly, McAdam, and Tarrow 2001). Alternatively, extreme state-sponsored violence may fuel mass uprisings when citizens calculate they have nothing to lose (Rasler 1996; Davenport 2007). Thus, the links between mobilization and state-reactions still remain a subject for discussion, as the interaction effects can occur between the timing of elections and repression (Bhasin and Gandhi 2013).

Initial empirical tests have revealed that the use of repression is more effective before elections, but its ability to sustain autocratic rule diminishes immediately after electoral results are announced (Hafner-Burton, Hyde, and Jablonski 2014). Davenport shows that during elections the level of repression tends to be lower and censorship is not that tight (1995). Gandhi and Bhasin, in turn, find that the degree of state-sponsored repression depends on the time period within the election cycle (2013), which is also partly supported by my findings. Repression, especially the targeting of opposition leaders, increases before elections, which has proven to be more efficient in suppressing any potential uprising. However, in the month of the election repression drops to its minimum level, because repression of voters is costly and undermines legitimacy.

Another important remark concerns the different types of regime violence. While Kricheli, Magaloni and Livne (Kricheli, Livne, and Magaloni 2011) draw no line between electoral repression, different techniques or modes of repression, or the regime's repressive capacity in general, Hafner-Burton, Hyde and Jablonski clearly differentiate between pre- and post-electoral repressive action as well as the overall level of violence in a polity (2011). Koopmans, in turn, speaks about two types of repression: institutional and situational that correspond to the violent or non-violent mode of mass mobilization (Koopmans 1997; Koopmans and Rucht 2002). Following this line of argumentation, institutional repression or restrictive formal rules in my view clearly relate to the so-called structural power that Lindblom refers to, whereas situational repression is an instance of instrumental power (Lindblom 1988). Institutional repression is viewed as more legitimate and deeply embedded in the society and voters' perceptions, whereas situational or *ad hoc* repression might be seen as a signal of regime weakening or lack of legitimacy, thus being more

dangerous for the incumbent.

Instead of a single measure of the repressive face of a polity, I created multiple variables where each stands for the repression targeted at specific groups of the population: coalition, mass media, ordinary citizens, opposition groups, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The highest correlation between the repression variables is for coalition and the masses (r=.93), whereas the lowest is for business and NGOs (r=.07). This bolsters the argument that repression does vary across various groups of populations depending on how close they are to the coalition or inner circle, the selectorate (pool of recruitment), and the rest of the population (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003). All correlations are positive. Target groups can differ from one institutional setup to the other. In monarchies and military regimes, the gap between the coalition and the selectorate is narrow, while in personalist and party-based regimes the selectorate constitutes a rather large group of the population. As opposed to other research, this detailed differentiation between the groups provides a more robust and adequate test of theoretical expectations regarding targeted and dispersed repression. To avoid potential endogeneity problems, I use a measure for the year preceding elections.

2.2.3 Hypotheses

This section summarizes the hypotheses to be tested in the chapter. As long as I use two dependent variables - frequency of protests and repression - and the theory suggests diverging predictions for both, hypotheses are formulated in two separate lists.

The null hypothesis suggests that there is no statistically significant difference in terms of protests at the time of elections under various institutional design:

H_0: The frequency of protests do not differ across authoritarian regimes types.

Drawing on theoretical expectations other hypotheses predict more specific relations between election timing and protests:

H_1: In military regimes, electoral cycles have a negative effect on protests;

H_2: In personalist regimes, electoral cycles have a positive effect on protests;

H_3: In party-based regime, election time is associated with little protest or no effect.

2.3 Methods

I use two types of regression analysis: negative binomial regression and generalized regression (GEE)[5]. The dependent variables – demonstrations and protests – are count

[5]I also run panel logit models with dichotomized CNTS data, where the dependent count variable is collapsed into a dichotomous variable. For instance, if in a country A in year X, 10 demonstrations took place, I code it as 1. If the number of demonstrations equals 0, I code it as 0 correspondingly. Logit regression does not account for the time-series within the groups (countries), however, clustered standard errors allow us to control for the within-group variation. Dichotomization of GDELT does not make any sense due to the non-stationarity of data (growth of the number of positive observations over time), i.e.

variables, i.e. the frequency of contentious events per year, and thus have a Poisson distribution. In this case, the most appropriate method for each dependent variable is Poisson and negative binomial regressions (Cameron and Trivedi 1998). However, this Poisson regression has its weak points. One of them is that the maximum likelihood procedure used to derive the estimates and provide the standard errors makes a strong assumption that every subject within a covariate group has the same underlying rate of the outcome. As mentioned above, this also implies that the variability of counts within a covariate group is equal to the mean. Usually this assumption does not hold, and the solution is to run negative binomial regressions, where this issue of a zero-inflated dependent variable is technically addressed. The parameter of the negative binomial distribution is itself considered a random variable whose variation accounts for a variance of the data that is higher than the mean (Gardner, Mulvey, and Shaw 1995). Thus, I use negative binomial models to estimate the effects of independent variables on protests.

The next issue is that in my sample there are cases with no variation in the dependent variables. For instance, there is no protest over all cases during the observed period. It leads to the exclusion of at least 10 cases and suppresses the relevant variation. This can be tackled by resorting to models ignoring country fixed effects (e.g. CSTS estimates), where not all "zero-cases" will be omitted. For the models with control variables, I used the multiple imputation procedure in STATA that allows keeping more observations by avoiding the list-wise deletion of cases if at least one value is missing.

I use panel data analysis in order to test the aforementioned hypotheses. Panel data allow me to control for the variables that cannot be directly observed, i.e. variables that change over time, but not across entities. By doing this, I account for individual heterogeneity (Allison 1994; Allison and Waterman 2002). The data constitute an unbalanced set, which means that the number of years is not the same across panels (countries) and there can be time gaps. In this analysis, I will estimate the coefficients with fixed effects, which is more appropriate to the data under scrutiny. Fixed effects explore the relationship between independent variable and outcome within a country. Each country has its own individual characteristics that may or may not influence the predictor variables. When using this kind of estimation procedure, we assume that something within the individual may affect or bias the predictor or outcome variables and we need to control for this. The results of Hausman's test confirm the choice in favor of the fixed effects against the alternative, random effects model.

I test the hypotheses by means of descriptive and inferential statistics and estimate the models on yearly data. I estimate the traditional panel negative binomial regression models:

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the number of zero-cases is decreasing as time flows.

$$ln(Y_{it}) = \beta_{it} ELECTION_{it} + \gamma_{it} REGIMETYPE + \gamma_{it} * \beta_{it} + \alpha_i + u_{it} \quad (2.1)$$

where the predictor variables ELECTION is the main predictor variable, and the regression coefficients $_{it}$,γ_{it} are to be estimated. $_i(i = 1 \ldots n)$ is the unknown intercept for each entity, i.e. country. Y_{it} is the dependent event count variable where $i = entity$ and $t = year$ (year), and u_{it} is the error term.

One more detail deserves attention. Panel data negative binomial regression accounts for within-case variation, but automatically omits all panels with constant outcomes. This omission might result in biased estimates. For this reason, I used simple (i.e. without panels) negative binomial regression with the clustered standard errors, but this did not affect the robustness of the coefficients.

2.3.1 Tackling the endogeneity of elections in electoral authoritarian regimes

As long as the refusal to hold regular elections – even fraudulent and manipulated ones – seems costly, incumbents will schedule them, and thus regularly expose themselves to the potential threat of overthrow by electoral means. The lack of credible information, intrinsic to any authoritarian regime, reinforces this threat (Schedler 2013). One way for the incumbent to mitigate this problem is to manipulate the electoral schedule as much as possible. They may hold early or snap elections, postpone the elections on the grounds of emergency, or, finally, abolish constitutional term-limits or carry out another constitutional reform in advance that affects the scheduling of the next nationwide elections.

Time is a part of electioneering and political actors often strive to play with the dates of elections in order to boost their chances of re-election and embarrass the opposition or constituencies that would not give them support. The incumbent may choose a moment when the economy is stable or even growing or when a propitious political context obtains, e.g. the presence of external political adversary or heated conflict that helps mobilize political support within a regime. Big events that temporarily and sometimes dramatically redefine political alignments, however they significantly vary across different country-specific contexts and cannot be fitted in a straightforward way[6].

[6]The manipulation of electoral timetabling is by no means limited to authoritarian regimes. The question of electoral schedule and timing of elections in democracies has attracted scholarly attention mostly in the study of democratic parliamentary systems – Westminster systems, in particular – where the prime minister or cabinet can often decide when new elections are to be called (Smith 2004). In democratic systems, incumbents quite often resort to opportunistic use of election dates, especially when the government looks at its best or when it expects to perform worse in the future (Smith 2004: 2). Here I do not mean referendums, because they are completely at the incumbent's discretion and are called at any convenient time for the political ruler or dominant party.

Table 2.1: Proportion of manipulated election timing by regime type (1)*

Manipulating timing	Personalist	Party-based	Monarchies	Military
No	80	65	6	6
%	46.6	63.1	46.2	26.1
Yes	92	38	7	17
%	53.5	36.9	53.9	73.9
Total	172	103	13	23
%	100	100	100	100

Cell entry: number of elections (observations) and within-type percentage
Sample: Geddes et al. 2012 Source: (Nohlen, Thibaut, and Krennerich 1999; Nohlen, Grotz, and Hartmann 2001; Thibaut, Nohlen, and Krennerich 2005; Nohlen 2005; Nohlen 2010), PARLINE (Inter-Parlianetary Union, www.ipu.org).

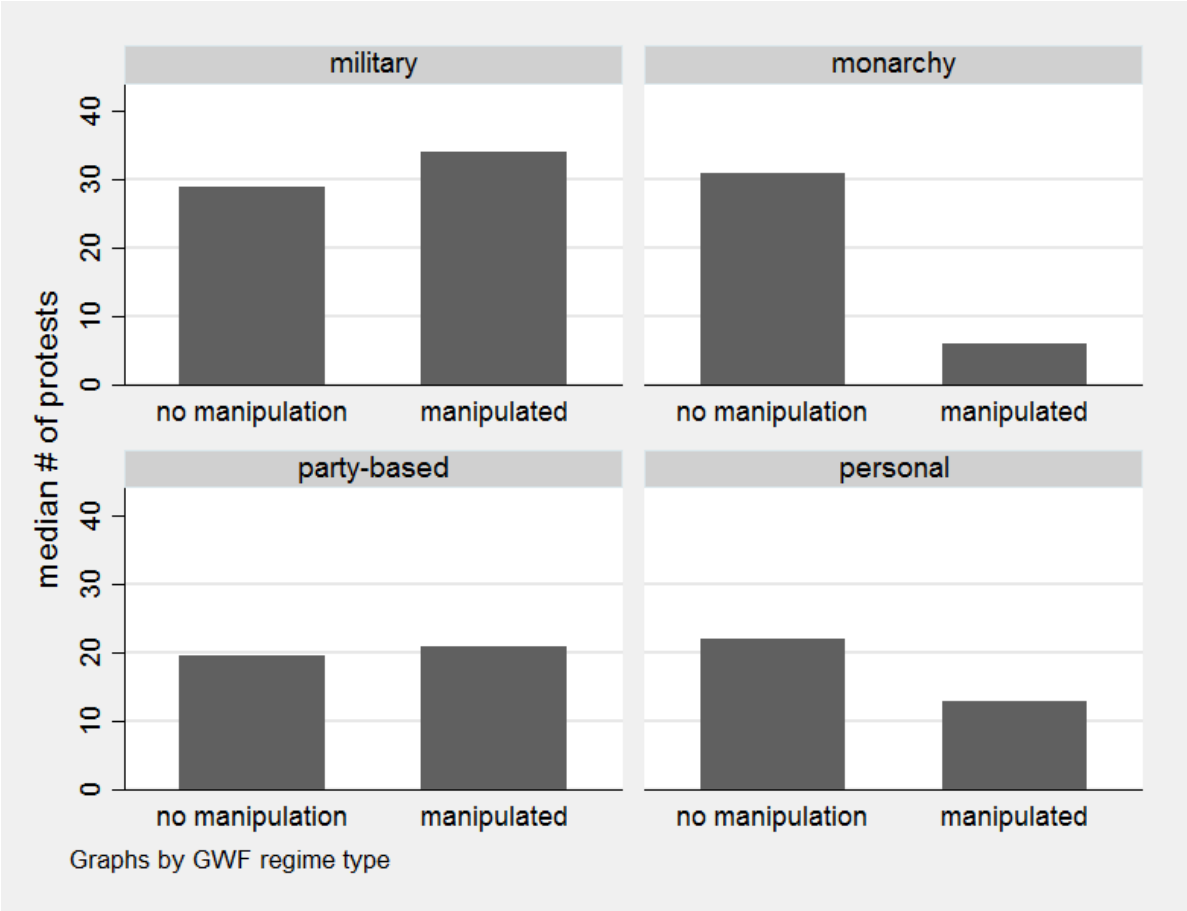
This issue challenges statistical analysis and can lead to biased and unreliable estimates. To address this issue I compare authoritarian regime types in estimating which ones tend to manipulate election timing systematically. I split the sample into subcategories using the typology suggested by Geddes et al. If autocrats under particular institutional arrangements systematically have incentives to manipulate the electoral schedule, it provides use with additional grounds to rethink the sampling procedure.

Table 2.1 present the proportion of elections with manipulated timing by types of authoritarianism. For election an election's timing to be treated as manipulated, there must be evidence that the incumbent postponed or called the elections at least two months early regardless of the pretext, or the constitutional or electoral reforms that immediately affected the time of the next elections. The only exception is elections called right after the unexpected termination of the incumbent's tenure, as happened in Croatia in 1999 after the death of Franjo Tuman, the leader of the ruling Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) or Zambian presidents Mweni Mwanawasa and Michael Sata, both of whom unexpectedly passed away in the 2000s. Death of political leaders creates a genuinely exogenous event. The data are retrieved from the Inter-Parliamentary Union website, whose regular reports contain the formal reason for calling elections. If the elections are called upon the normal expiry of an incumbent's tenure, these elections are considered to be non-manipulated.

From Table 2.1 it is clear that military incumbents manipulate election timing more often than the rest – the ruling elite either postponed or called early elections in 42% of all elections that took place from 1990. While party-based dictatorships rarely engage in rearranging the time of elections – only 11.6% (see third column). Monarchies and personalist regimes lie in between with 54.9% and 53.5% respectively.

This does justice to the institutional approach in the study of political institutions under authoritarianism (Gandhi 2008): more institutionalized regimes such as party-based or even personalist autocracies with quasi-party organizations make less effort to safeguard the most beneficial electoral period.

Figure 2.2: Median frequency of protests by regime type and manipulated election scheduling



N of countries = 64, N of elections = 423, p-value=0.00

There is evidence that in some regimes manipulation occurs more frequently. Thus, military regimes (as the least stable in the autocratic pantheon) postpone or call snap elections as well as redraft the constitutional design after another military coup. Meanwhile, incumbents in party-based or more or less partisan regimes resort to rescheduling less often. Monarchies and personalist regimes engage in manipulative tricks with similar frequency.

To what extent are these manipulative efforts efficient in curbing popular unrest and overall stability? The median numbers of protest as reported by GDELT cross-tabulated by regimes and type of elections (Figure 2.2) provide evidence that the median differences between types are less than 10, so we may conclude that purposeful rescheduling does not seem particularly efficient. In personalist and monarchical regimes the median number somewhat decreases, while in party-based and military regimes this number even slightly increases, i.e. in more institutionalized regimes their median difference turns out to be negligible. The results for monarchies and military regimes should be treated with great caution since the dataset contains only 13 and 23 elections respectively.

In order to test whether the fact of manipulation with election timing has any sys-

tematic effect on the protest frequency, I apply Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney nonparametric test for each group of regimes: monarchies, military, personalist and party-based regimes. If the proportion of protests among non-manipulated elections differs significantly from the one with manipulated elections, one can conclude that the fact of playing with the electoral schedule did affect the probability and frequency of protests, thus the election timing is not exogenous. On the other hand, if the test does not reveal any difference, one can assume the exogeneity of electoral schedule.The null hypothesis assumes equality of proportions in manipulated and not manipulated elections. None of the p-values appeared to be significant at the α -level=0.05.[7]

Therefore, we can assume that in most electoral authoritarian regimes, but monarchies, elections can be treated as exogenous. Monarchies and military regimes are to be excluded from further analysis due to the insufficient number of observations. In other cases, even when the time scheduled for an election is intentionally changed we see that, firstly, the propensity to manipulate with timing depends on the level of institutionalization and, secondly, the efficiency of manipulation varies dramatically across regimes.

2.3.2 Estimation procedure

In order to answer these questions, I use panel data regression analysis of more than 80 regimes from 1990 to 2011 using three samples and various measures of protests and repression. The main dependent variables of interest are the frequency of protests and repression instigated by the incumbent, while the main independent variable is the impact of electoral timing and type of authoritarian regime. I deal exclusively with non-democratic regimes, allowing for the minimal level of competition.

In order to test the effect of elections I use the panel data on protests at the country-level from 1990 to 2011. I distinguish between election- and non-election-years within each country by introducing corresponding dummy variable, as well as time-dummies that indicate a number of years before national elections and after. Thus, t stands for the election-year, when $t+1$ indicate the year after elections, and $t-1$ – the one before the elections. I also introduce the variables "distance from the previous elections" and "distance to the forthcoming elections" to provide more robustness checks, time lags and leads $(t+1, 2, 3 \ldots t-1, 2, 3 \ldots)$ time-variables grasps the cyclical nature of electorally induced protests.

I also include the years of national referendums as election-years. If parliamentary and presidential elections (concurrent elections) or referendums are held in the same year, I code it as a single case. The opportunity to estimate the effect of time on protests and repression allows us to disentangle deeply endogenous links between them and to control for a temporal sequence of events with high precision.

[7]Monarchies (p=0.22), military regimes (p=0.81), party-based (p=0.78), personalist (p=0.09)

The unit of analysis is country-year in electoral authoritarian regimes. The time-span ranges from 1990 to 2011. Data are from the project "Elections across Democracies and Autocracies" (NELDA) (Hyde, Marinov, and Troeger 2012) and data on referendums from the Centre for Research on Direct Democracy (c2d). For a country-year to be included in the study there is a lower and an upper threshold (Mahoney and Goertz 2004). The lower threshold is applied in order to exclude non-competitive elections. Thus, to be included a country must hold elections that meet both of the following two conditions: (a) opposition candidates and parties are legal; (b) there is indeed a choice between at least two candidates/parties on the ballot (Hyde and Marinov 2012: 198). I apply the upper threshold to exclude competitive elections in genuine democracies.

In practical terms, the latter results in the problem of dissecting electoral democracies from electoral non-democratic regimes as there is no clear watershed which is not based on *post hoc* assessments of a regime's performance. The fact that different measures of democracy are highly correlated, means they often produce different and controversial results (Casper and Tufis 2003).

For the sake of simplicity, I apply Geddes et al. criteria to distiguish between the types of authoritarian regime. These rules are simple and meet the replicability criteria. The Geddes, Wright and Frantz's idea is to explore the transitions from one form of authoritarian rule to another (2012). From this perspective, the main problem is to identify the start and end dates of autocratic regimes. "A span of years is coded as autocratic if any of the following occurred, and the same basic rules and leadership group persist in subsequent years: An executive achieved power through undemocratic means and, with his inner circle, established new rules for choosing leaders and policies" (2012).

Aforementioned approaches do not rely on the popular democracy indices of Freedom House and Polity IV. In order to test one of the samples based on these indicators, I use an additional criterion suggested by Roessler and Howard (2006). I exclude country-years in regimes whose scoring on Freedom House's political rights rating is maximally two or whose scoring on Polity's autocracy-democracy scale is at least six in the preceding year[8]. As a result, the overall dataset contains 842 observations in 64 countries[9]. However, regression models are estimated for three different samples to ensure the robustness of estimates.

[8]Freedom House's political rights ratings range from 1 to 7, with lower numbers indicating more political rights and 2 being the cut-off score to consider a country 'free.' The Polity autocracy-democracy rating ranges from -10 (most autocratic) to +10 (most democratic), with +6 being the cut-off point to consider a country as a 'coherent democracy.'

[9]One should note that the panel data analysis takes into account only those cases where there is a variation within a country. This means that all cases with no variation, e.g. no protests over all period under observation, are omitted. Thus, a good deal of relevant variation is suppressed.

2.4 Data and Operationalization

The dependent variables of interest are the frequency of protests and the frequency of political repression. As many scholars lament, there is a dramatic lack of reliable cross-national data on popular mobilization and repression. For this reason, most of the social movement and political violence research focuses on specific case studies, despite the fact that large N analysis "is better equipped to deal with structural determinants rather than dynamic ones" (De La Calle and Sanchez-Cuenca May, 2013).

So far, the most utilized sources on the frequency of contentious events in large-N analyses are Arthur Banks dataset, Cross-National Times-series (CNTS) (Banks and Wilson 2016), and The World Handbook of Political and Social Indicators (WHPS). However, all these datasets have significant disadvantages such as the the absence of data for necessary period of time, limited geographical coverage or data quality [10].

The way out is to use newly available technologies that allow us to generate datasets of world events via automated search engines. There are two big projects – the IDEA framework (Bond et al. 2003) and GDELT (Global Database of Events, Language, and Tone) (Leetaru and Schrodt 2013) – which provide us with the data collected through transparent and uniform procedure from a wide range of newswires in many languages. The IDEA framework uses an automated program to extract information from the first few sentences of news reports and organizes them in a who did what to whom format. Bhasin and Gandhi (2013) note that, "The Reuters news database has over 200 bureaus around the world which allows for extensive coverage across regions. This is a strong advantage over other events datasets such as the Banks' Cross National Time Series Archive that depends on the New York Times with 11 U.S. and 26 international bureaus" (Bhasin and Gandhi 2013: 624). Integrating a unified CAMEO [11] coding system into search engines,

[10]The CNTS dataset provides frequencies of both peaceful and violent forms of protest (i.e. demonstrations vs. riots). Riots are defined as "any violent demonstration or clash of more than 100 citizens involving the use of physical force", and anti-government demonstrations as "any peaceful public gathering of at least 100 people for the primary purpose of displaying or voicing their opposition to government policies or authority, excluding demonstrations of a distinctly anti-foreign nature" (Banks 2012). Despite the fact that this dataset covers all countries within the comprehensive time-span, it has been widely criticized for introducing a 'conservative' bias by not paying attention to salient mass events, especially in those political regimes that were of utmost importance in a given time (e.g. the USSR or former Soviet bloc countries in early 1990s). Earlier versions drew on reports from the New York Times, while the latest version extended the range of sources of data. However, information is still drawn predominantly from English-language media, which perpetuates the incompleteness of information. The coding procedure is not sufficiently clear and straightforward for any other possible issues to be detected. Nevertheless, when combined with other sources, I will use these data for providing additional robustness checks for the empirical tests. The WHPS data cover the incidence of violence and protest all over the world. However, these data encompass the period from 1948 to 1977, which lies beyond the period of interest

[11]CAMEO – Conflict and Mediation Event Observations – is a coding scheme that contains a number of categories and sub-categories that classify actors, the types of their interactions, and their specificity in terms of cooperation vs. confrontation (e.g. countries, the military and civilian population etc.). This scheme is used for automated machine coding. CAMEO employs an extensive taxonomy of countries, actors within these countries, religious, ethnic and linguistic groups, international and governmental organizations, etc. See: http://eventdata.parusanalytics.com/data.dir/cameo.html

the procedure is non-sensitive to coder bias.

A non-commercial version of automatically-collected data is the GDELT framework that follows the same logic as IDEA and uses the same coding system. Like IDEA, it is based on news reports from several news agencies and key mass media, including local media in national languages. As it is indicated on the GDELT website:

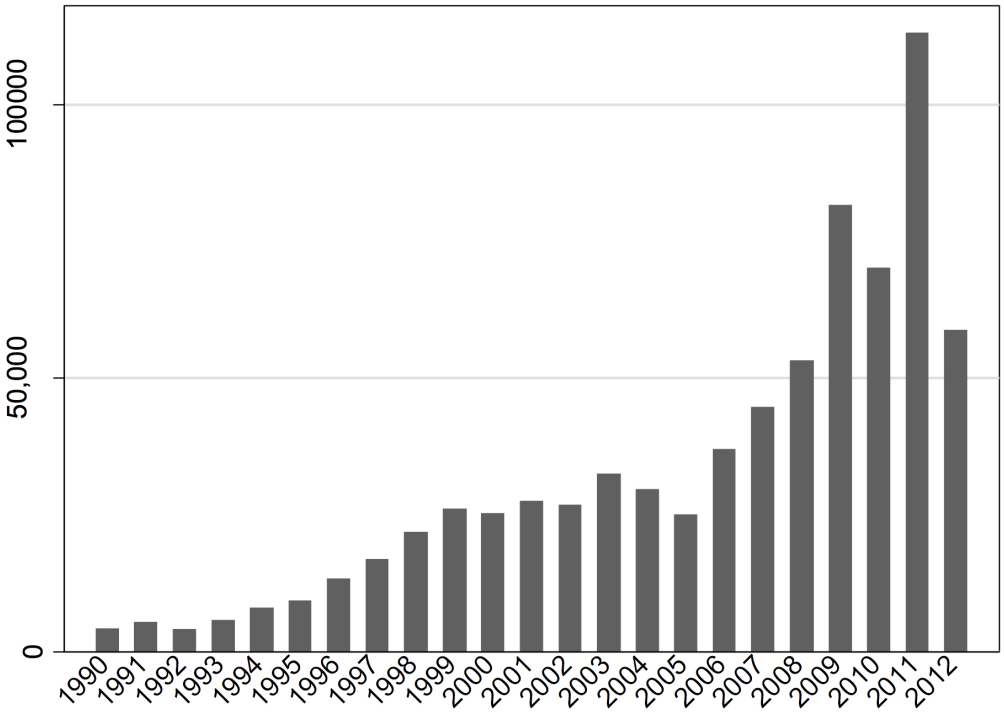
> GDELT relies on tens of thousands of broadcast, print and online news sources from nearly every corner of the globe in over 100 languages dating back to 1979. In addition to a vast array of translated domestic broadcast and print material, the historical backfile of GDELT makes extensive use of AfricaNews, Agence France Presse, Associated Press, Associated Press Online, Associated Press Worldstream, BBC Monitoring, Christian Science Monitor, Facts on File, Foreign Broadcast Information Service, The New York Times, United Press International, and The Washington Post (Leetaru and Schrodt 2013).

These data allow us to distinguish between actors who undertake an action and their targets, which makes the whole analysis much more nuanced and less schematic. Since every event and actor has its own geographical location detected through GPS coordinates, it becomes extremely easy to map them out in time and space.

Obviously, these data do not lack disadvantages. Among the main drawbacks are the cross-temporal exponential growth of messages due the objective occurrence of new mass media and newswires, as well as the proliferation of internet technologies and news sources. Hence, there is a necessity to control for this cross-temporal heteroscedasticity by using weights or introducing time fixed effects (see Figure 2.3). Another challenge is that the same event may attract multiple messages from various newswires. In other words, instead of frequency, the salience of an event is captured. Lastly, the average number of messages can be an artifact of a mass-media outlet's interest and internal policy of a newswire rather than an objective and strict detection of an event. For this reason, I also introduce country fixed effects. In any case, this source proved to be the more complete and systematic, therefore I will operationalize protests and repression based on the GDELT framework. Additionally, to test the reliability of inference, I re-run the same models with the CNTS data and SCAD data for Africa (see Appendix).

Among publicly available data that include manually-coded protest events in authoritarian regimes there is the Social Conflict Analysis Database (SCAD). The dataset contains information on protests, riots, strikes, inter-communal conflict, government violence against civilians, and other forms of social conflict from 1990-2013, covering all of Africa and Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean (Salehyan et al. 2012). The advantage of these data is the availability of sources for every entry and that events are coded manually with a series of inter-coder checks. Unfortunately, the geographical coverage does

Figure 2.3: Frequency of all events reported by the news outlets from 1990 to 2012 in competitive authoritarian regimes



not allow testing of my hypotheses with the overall sample. Nevertheless, I intend to use these data to cross-validate the findings (see Appendix).

Relying on the GDELT codebook, I define the frequency of messages that report protests (demonstrations, hunger strikes, riots, boycotts) for each year in those countries whose political regime qualifies as competitive or electoral authoritarian from 1990 to 2011 (see the Coding details in the GDELT Codebook[12]). Besides, I filtered out the events that qualify for political repression. As GDELT allows the differentiation of actors involved in an interaction (Actor A did something to Actor B), I keep only those examples of repression initiated by state-affiliated actors – government, president, legislature, police, intelligence services and secret police, the military etc.).

Similarly, we have several measures to trace political repression, each of them underpinned by a slightly different conceptualization. One of the most conventional measure of repression is Cingranelli and Richard's Physical Integrity Index which varies from 0 to 8 (Cingranelli, Richards, and Clay 2014). GDELT data, however, allow for more tuned and detailed testing of the hypotheses at hand[13]. I do not use the most conventional indicator – the relative change in Political Rights Index, which is a part of Freedom House

[12]GDELT Codebook v.2.00 as of 19.02.2015. Accessed on 20.08.2016. URL: http://data.gdeltproject.org/documentation/GDELT-Event$_C$*odebook* – *V*2.0.*pdf*

[13]For alternative models with the Physical Integrity Index see the Appendix

democracy measure[14]– since this index is based mostly on electoral outcomes and ex post evaluations. Finally, repression and the probability of protests are claimed to have a U-shaped relationship (Klandermans 1994; Rasler 1996)[15], which goes against the initial theoretical expectation outlined earlier.

2.4.1 Control variables

In order to handle possible omitted variable biases I include control variables. First, the political economy literature focuses on material macro conditions such as economic business cycles. Inflation and unemployment rates are expected to have an impact on the propensity of mass protests, especially given that these issues are usually at stake during the elections (Przeworski 2000; Boix 2003; Acemoglu and Robinson 2006; Pepinsky 2009). Voters tend to punish their governments through elections if the latter perform poorly in socio-economic policy during their term and vice versa (Alesina, Roubini, and Cohen 1997; Treisman and Gimpelson 2001). When the rules of the electoral game are systematically abused by the incumbent or the ruling party, ballot-box retribution becomes an option to voters and if their dissatisfaction is ignored by institutional channels it is likely to be streamed into protest activities. Thus, poor economic performance is expected to increase the probability of post-electoral protests. I use GDP per capita calculated constant in US$ prices in 2005 retrieved from the Penn World Table (Heston, Summers et al. 2012) which has the widest country-coverage. I also included inflation rates, based on annual change in consumer prices available in the World Development Indicators (WDI).

The next important control variable is ethnic fractionalization that might also have an impact on the probability of anti-autocratic outcomes. Ethnic preferences are intense and not negotiable (Rabushka and Shepsle 1972, p. 66) and in a situation of competition for finite resources can undermine political stability and instigate distrust, mutual grievances, and violence (Horowitz 1985). To sum up, higher ethnic fractionalization rates increase the probability of protest and in the context of elections mutual suspicion and even hatred grows even more salient and exaggerated. However, there is another theory that predicts no significant impact of ethnic composition on the probability of protest: instead, ethnicity is treated as an information shortcut and is mobilized by causes exogenous to ethnicity (Kristín Birnir 2007; Laitin 2007). From this perspective, ethnic fractionalization should be insignificant. I have no clear prediction on that matter since there is no consensus in the literature. The most convenient and available measure is the index of ethnic fractionalization or ELF. It shows the probability that any randomly selected pair of

[14]Freedom House reports: http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=351ana$_page$ = 364$year$ = 2010.

[15]Too little or too much repression may produce adverse consequences by triggering mass unrest. In the first case, there is nothing to be afraid of, since the costs of collective action are low. In the second case, there is nothing to lose, because in any case the probability of being repressed is high and, thus, desperate resistance is to be expected (Rasler 1994).

individuals belong to different ethnic groups. The index varies from 0 to 1. Data are taken from Alesina et al. (2003).

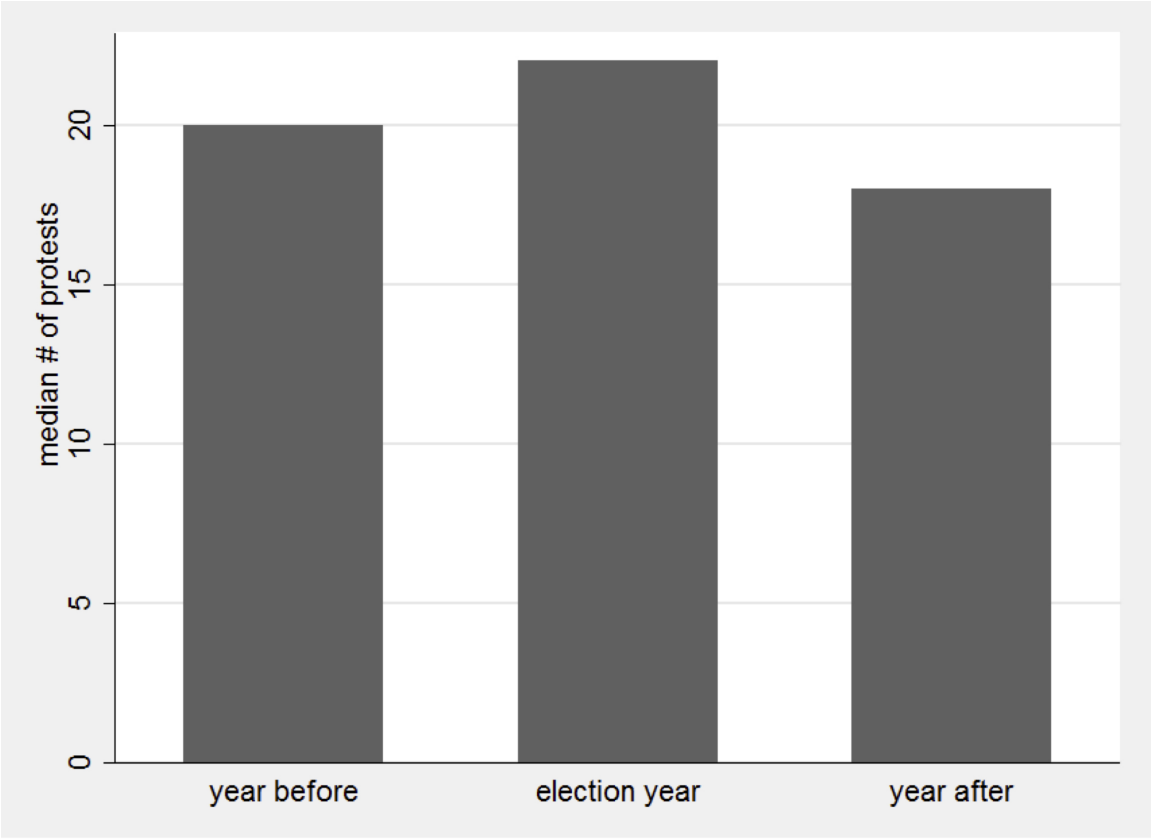
I also add the most popular measure of inequality (the GINI Index) to control for the structural composition of a society in terms of economic fairness and redistribution of income (Boix 2003; Acemoglu and Robinson 2006; Kaufman 2009; Pontusson and Rueda 2010) and their political consequences. There is an important distinction between objective or observed inequality captured by several measures of inequality and subjective or perceived inequality. Acemoglu and Robinson's historical perspective suggests U-shaped relations between economic inequality and protests (political instability) when people seek to balance their economic rights with political privileges (2005). On the other hand, as some research has demonstrated, the correlation between the two is low and the so-called 'tunnel effect' is at work: in societies with higher vertical mobility, the perception of inequality is less dramatic (Treisman and Gimpelson 2001). To begin with, I expect higher levels of inequality to be positively related to the frequency of protests.

The next important structural variable is the share of the public sector in a national economy, as this provides a dictator with more resources to distribute among coalition members as well to buy off political opponents and voters (Greene 2007, Magaloni 2006, 2008). Following the resource-based theory of political domination, I use the share of state-owned enterprises and government investment (Economic Freedom in the World). A large public sector allows an incumbent to distribute patronage jobs, control business, and exploit public agencies as political headquarters during electoral campaigns (Greene 2009:811-812).

To account for the international pressure for democratization – linkage and leverage in the sense suggested by Levitsky and Way (2011) – I use indicators such as international trade (% GDP), foreign direct investment (% GDP), and official development assistance (% GNI) provided by the World Development Indicators database. The spread of internet technologies measures the extent of a country's globalization and inclusion. The internet is also believed to facilitate collective action by providing an additional tool for cooperation and exchanging opinions (Kelly Garrett 2006; Van Laer and Van Aelst 2010).

Lastly, I introduce the share of independent members of parliament to control for electoral formula and the spread of partisan politics in a polity. I present models fitting frequency of mass protests and political repression for each sub-group of authoritarian regime.

Figure 2.4: Frequency of demonstrations and riots before and after elections (GWF)



Source: GDELT, Author's dataset, N=660

2.5 Results

2.5.1 Descriptive statistics

Before delving into regression analysis, it is important to visualize the distribution of protests across time. Figures 2.4 and 2.5 represent the frequency of contentious events the year before elections, in the election year, and the year after elections[16]. The median values of all forms of protest reveal similar patterns: in the election year, the average number of protests tends to increase, while in the following year this number drops and turns out to be lower than before elections. This corresponds with the null hypothesis about the potential of elections to trigger mass protest actions.

In the meantime, I expect this pattern to be more salient in those regimes where elections play a more prominent role as the principal mean of selecting political leaders (as opposed to succession or military coups). These regimes are qualified as personalist and party-based by Geddes et al. Figure 2.5 demonstrates the dramatic divergence between types of institutional design. The most obvious peak is observed in the largest group of personalist regimes and civilian dictatorships, while in the party-regimes this inverted

[16]If a year is simultaneously a year after and before elections, I coded it as year after. These slight changes in coding do not change the overall pattern.

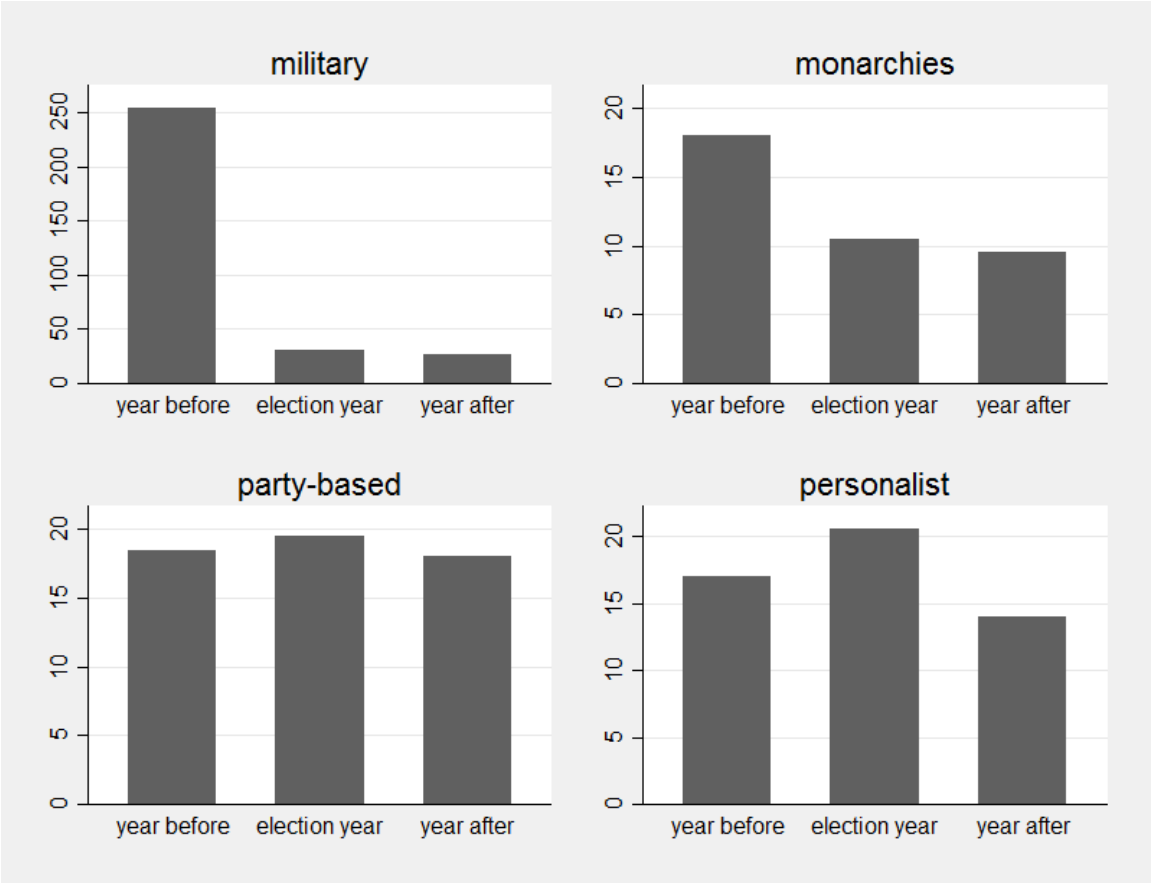
U-shaped pattern is not visible.

In monarchies the pattern appears to be constant since there is almost no variation in the dependent variable, i. e. the level of protest is almost zero and seems independent of election timing. On the other hand, in military regimes the number of protests shrinks in the election-year in the GWF sample. As far as the opposite patterns observed, the types of institutional designs prove to be an important factor that affects the impact of election time. Without controlling for the regime type, the effect of election timing seems suppressed. Figure 2.5 also shows a major increase in number of protest the year before elections in military dictatorships. This phenomenon can be explained by the fact that military regimes are on average, more contentious, and often find themselves teared apart by various groups raising their claims from within their ranks. On the other hand, military regimes are more likely to deploy armed forces in order to crack down on the protests, which would explain a dramatic drop of protest activity during the election years. An alternative possibility is that holding elections in itself is a compromise on the part of the military, aimed at solving conflicts and preventing civil strife. Looking closer at specific elections in military regimes, we find that Pakistan experienced an abnormally frequent protests: 2323 in 2007, on the eve of the elections, and 1986 the following year. This period in Pakistani history was particularly dramatic, as the military regime installed through the 1999 coup led by General Pervez Musharraf began to crumble, and the assassination of the former prime minister and opposition leader, Benazir Bhutto, exacerbated the tensions. In this context, excluding Pakistan from the sample as an outlier would correct the pattern for military regimes.

Party-based regimes are exposed to mass protests to a lesser extent than personalist regimes because they rely primarily on redistribution, not repression. As far as the dominant party is interested in attracting more votes, repression costs them dearly, potentially undermining political legitimacy and suppressing turnout. In monarchies, protests are rare events and if elections take place, the median number of protests drastically drops. This is likely to be the result of skillful manipulation of election timing (see section on tackling the endogeneity of election scheduling). In personalist regimes, the spikes coincide with the year of electoral campaign, which indicates the pivotal role of elections. As long as personalist regimes constitute the most populated category of competitive authoritarian regimes and the most paradigmatic form of modern authoritarianism, this preliminary finding is particularly relevant. The patterns of protests appear to be conditional on the types of authoritarian regime and primarily to the institutional design, whichever way it is conceptualized.

The second indicator of a regime's susceptibility to electoral cycles is the level of repression. In Figure 2.6, I sketch out the frequency of repression before and after the year of national elections as opposed to the year of election. Again, we observe a familiar inverted U-shaped pattern; therefore, we can derive the next set of hypotheses regarding

Figure 2.5: Frequency of repression by election year (GWF)

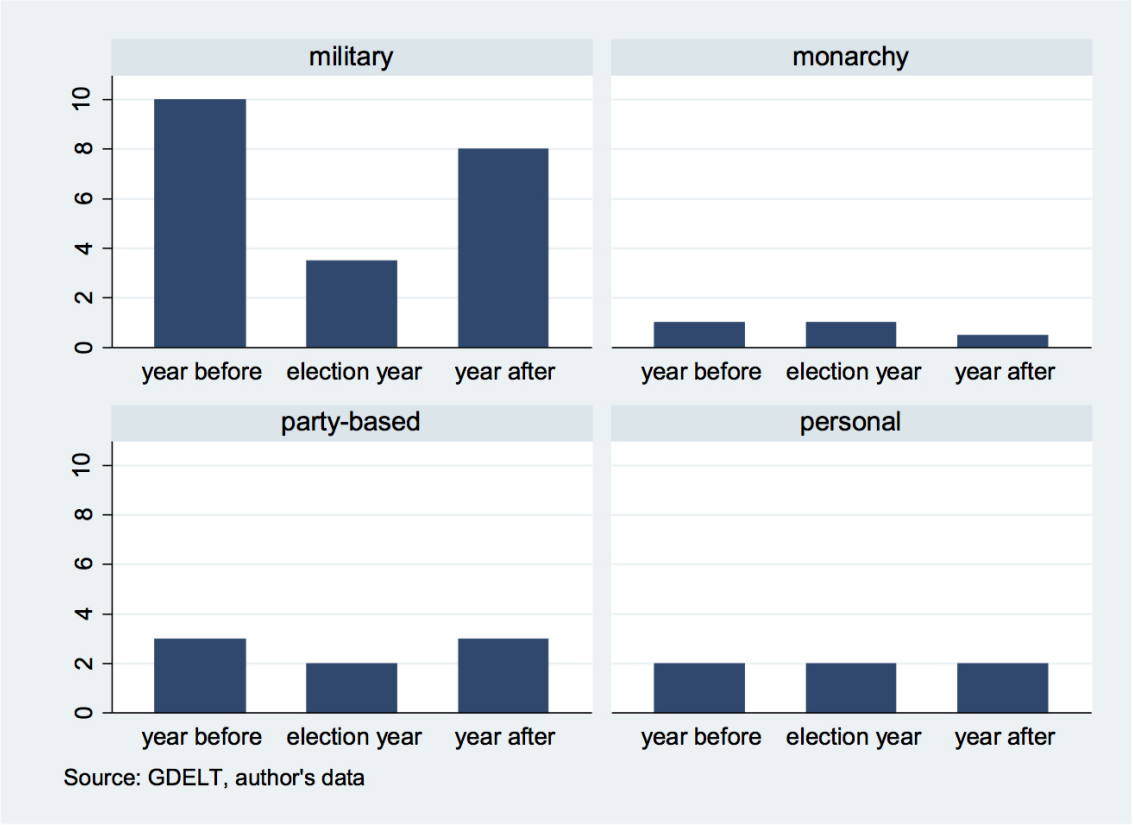


Source: GDELT, author's data; N=660

the dynamics of political repression. At the time of elections, the scale of repression decreases, because – as the existing literature assumes – incumbents are not interested in demonstrating their coercive power at election time, in order to increase legitimacy in front of the international community, potential and actual foreign investors, and partners (Bhasin and Gandhi 2013, Wright and Escriba-Folch 2011).

What happens if we re-produce the same graphs for various institutional contexts? I used two measures of repression – the median number of reported repression by news outlets as registered by GDELT and the CIRI Physical Integrity Index. As Figure 2.6 shows, military regimes repress the most, while the CIRI Index shows a similarly high rate for both military regimes and monarchies. In the year of elections, the scale of repression as reported by GDELT in military regimes dramatically decreases, while in other regimes the difference is nearly negligible. Only in party-based regimes, is there a slight negative change in the year of elections. The CIRI Index captures outright violations of civil rights including torture, illegal detainment, imprisonment, and killing, while GDELT grasps milder forms of oppression such as verbal threats, accusations, and penalties. From this perspective, military regimes resort to a wider variety of repression than other autocracies. Outright repression occurs more often during elections in military

Figure 2.6: Frequency of repression by regime types (GWF)



Source: GDELT, CIRI, author's data, N=609 (GDELT), N=533 (CIRI)

regimes, while monarchies seem to repress less. For party-based and personalist regimes there is no clear pattern.

However, this is a descriptive exploration of the data – the next step is to analyze the hypothesis in a more rigorous and systematic way. The observed patterns may still be a part of random and not significant fluctuations in protests and repression.

2.5.2 Multivariate regression analysis

Specifications 1 and 2 in Table 2.2. are the panel negative-binomial estimates of the GWF sample. Alternative specifications using GLM estimators produce very similar results. Model 1 estimates an alternative operationalization of the time variable – instead of the election year dummy, I plug a variable with three categories standing for the year before election, year of election, and year after election with the reference category of election year. I do not show other time-dummies as most of them are often automatically dropped from the analysis in order to allow the model to run. The estimates with random effects provide very similar results and are available in the Appendix (Table 3). Monarchies and military regimes are dropped from the analysis because there is evidence that the election timing is manipulated in these regimes, i.e. the time variable is deeply endogenous. On

the other hand, there are too few monarchies and military regimes to be have sufficient within-group variance to estimate.

Apart from the main election time and regime type effects, I include interactions between the time-dummies and regimes. Regime first-order effects reflect the overall exposure to experience protests, while interactions tell us whether the time of elections alters the propensity of mass mobilization for each of the regime types. The size of a country's population is believed to affect the frequency of protests, which justifies its inclusion in all the models. Table entries are odds ratios[17] that means the ratio of odds of risk factor of some outcome with and without some treatment, in our case – elections and regime types. The p-values are to be interpreted with great caution, as I analyze the population data and not a representative sample.

As I show in Table 2.2, the effect of election time is rather strong and remains robust throughout the models – the odds ratio of the protest-event count increase is 1.2 times higher at the time of elections. In the years that precede and follow the elections, the risk is somewhat lower relative to the time of elections, so the odds of protest decrease – by one count – is around 30%. In terms of substantive profiling, the effect is significant, but rather small.

In party-based regimes, other things being equal, the frequency of protests is on average higher than in personalist regimes - the odds ratio increases by 12-53%. Personalist regimes constitute a reference category. However the coefficient is sensitive to the specification of a model and is not robust.

The interaction effects are not statistically significant, i.e. the estimation is not precise and these results cannot be generalized. Lastly, the period of elections does not seem to have any effect on the odds ratio of protests in party-based regimes (models 1 and 2) – the odds ratio slightly increases for the year after elections and is negative for the preceding time. Party-based regimes differ from personalist regimes only in terms of the average frequency of protests, but not the election timing. But the direction of a hypothesized relationship between party-based regimes and exposure to protests at the time of election goes in line with our expectations. The odds of additional protests in party-based regime during the year of national election are 4% lower.

In Table 2.3, I present the models fitting frequency of protests conditional on elections, frequency of repression, and institutional design[18]. Model 1 is a baseline model that does not contain variables with repression. Models 2-3 contain interaction effects between the time-dummies and repression. I use the two alternative measures of repression: the CIRI Physical Integrity Index for Model 2, while in Model 3 I adopt a more specified GDELT measure: frequency of repression towards opposition, NGOs, coalition, and masses. To

[17] One can interpret negative odds ratios in percentages by taking a reciprocal and subtracting by one.

[18] For cases where there are two national elections in a row – for instance, parliamentary elections in 2000 and presidential in 2001 – 2001 is treated as the election year and not as the year that follows the elections.

Table 2.2: Effect of election timing on the frequency of protests, conditional on the regime type (panel negative binomial estimates) Dependent variable - frequency of protests

Variables	Model 1	Model 2
Year of election	1.24***	
	(0.10)	
Election−1		0.86
		(0.09)
Election+1		0.74***
		(0.06)
Party-based	1.53***	1.12
	(0.21)	(0.18)
Election−1#Party-based		0.93
		(0.15)
Elections+1#Party-based		1.20
		(0.16)
Year of election#Party-based	0.96	
	(0.11)	
Pop	1.00***	1.00***
	(0.00)	(0.00)
Pop(logged)	0.87*	0.87*
	(0.07)	(0.07)
Constant	2.63	0.32**
	(3.65)	(0.16)
LogLikelihood	−2565.68	−1932.52
BIC	5307.66	4040.89
N	685	534
N of countries	48	48

Tables entries are odds ratios, standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

capture brutal violations of political liberties and human rights, I use the CIRI Physical integrity index in its linear and squared forms to account for potential U-shaped links between repression and protests.

We observe a decrease in the odds ratio of protests the year of election in all models. The year of election increases the odds of an additional protest by 24%-31%. The estimates are robust and consistently significant. Squared repression decreases the odds ratio of risk of an additional report on protest *ceteris paribus* by 2%, which means that when repression takes on extremely high or low values the odds of an additional protests are slightly lower. Among the GDELT measure of counts of repression events, only repression against the opposition is significant: a one unit increase in repression of coalition increases on average the risk of another protest by 1.06 times or a risk of an additional protest 6%. This

effect is robust and statistically significant. Repressing opposition leaders in the year of elections would cost a miniscule decrease in the odds ratio of additional protest. The estimates for the civil society and NGOs are not significant in terms of p-values, but still reveal consistent patterns.

To what extent does the frequency of protests depend on election timing and political repression altogether? Repression event in the year of election has no relation to the risk of another protest event (see Model 2). However, there is a significant main effect of repression on the frequency of protests: when repression takes on extremely high or low values, the odds ratio of another protest occurrence increases by 4-6%.

Exploring a more nuanced measure of repression in terms of target groups (see Model 3, Table 2.3), we find that repressing the coalition, civilian population or NGOs does not add much to the chances of additional protest. On the other hand, there is a weak connection between the odds of protests and frequency of repression. Each additional repression toward the political opposition increases the odds of protests by merely 6%. On the other hand, repressing opposition in the year of national election seems to decrease the odds of another protest by 3%. Repressing NGOs in the year of elections slightly decreases the odds of an additional protest (by 7%), while repressing civilian population may even decrease the odds or protest (by 1%). However, these coefficients failed to reach statistical significance and the effect is small.

How do odds of protests change depending on election timing? The regression estimates look rather inconclusive and sensitive to the sampling procedure. Meanwhile a one-unit increase in repressing NGOs one year before the elections decreases the odds of another protest 1.33 times. Repressing civilians before the elections lead to inconclusive results: estimated in models 5 and 6 are positive, but in models 7 and 8 they are negative. When repression of the civilian population decreases slightly, the odds of protests in the year after elections decreases. The take home message is that repressing NGOs in the period before and after elections seems efficient in terms of preventing mass protests. Sending negative signals to coalition members before the election can also be a good strategy to avoid protests, while doing the same after the elections or even during the electoral campaign would have the opposite effect. Unfortunately (for autocrats), there is no recipe for how and when it is efficient to use repression towards the opposition and citizens. The CIRI data suggest only preliminary repression may increase the propensity to take to the streets.

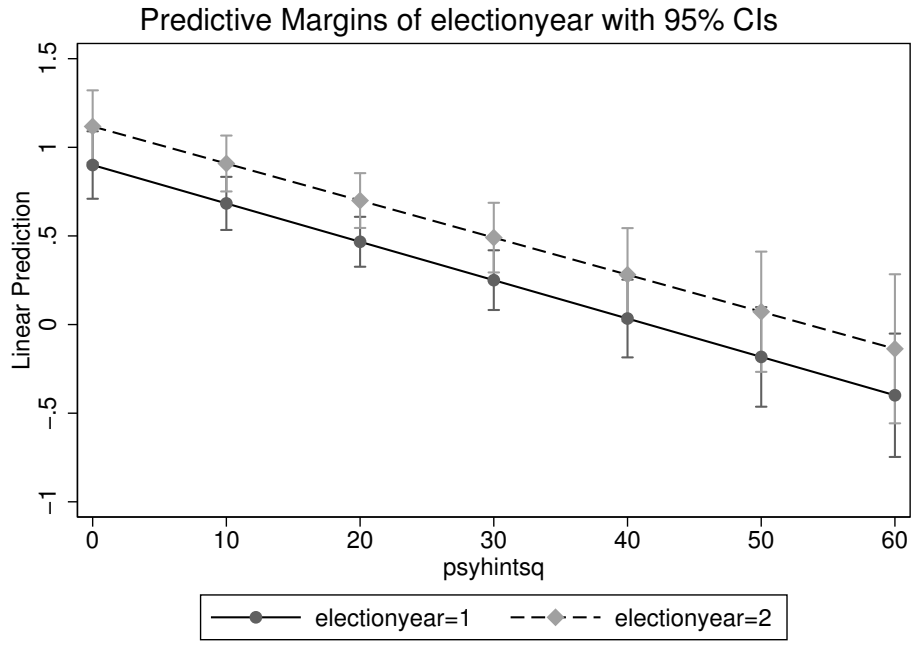
What we observe is that in the subset of personalist and party-based authoritarian regimes the year of elections is robustly and significantly associated with higher odds of mass protests. On the other hand, we do not find statistically significant evidence that personalist regimes are more exposed to more protests at the time of elections. But, once again, the odds of additional protests in party-based regime during the year of national election are 4-12% lower.

Table 2.3: Protests by repression and regime types

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Year of election	1.24***	1.31***	1.25**
	(0.10)	(0.13)	(0.11)
Party-based regimes	1.53***	1.48**	2.00***
	(0.21)	(0.23)	(0.27)
Elec.year#Party-based	0.96	0.88	0.96
	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.12)
Coalition repressed			1.00
			(0.01)
Elec.year#Coalition			1.00
			(0.01)
Civilian pop. repressed			1.01
			(0.013)
Elec.year#Civilian			1.01
			(0.02)
Opposition repressed			1.06***
			(0.02)
Elec.year#Opposition			0.97*
			(0.02)
NGOs repressed			0.96
			(0.15)
Elec.year#NGOs			0.93
			(0.266)
CIRI Index^2		0.98***	
		(0.00)	
Elec.year#CIRI Index^2		1.00	
		(0.01)	
Population	1.00***		
	(0.00)		
Population (logged)	0.87*	1.22***	0.98
	(0.07)	(0.09)	(0.06)
Constant	2.63	0.017***	0.20
	(3.65)	(0.02)	(0.22)
LogLikelihood	−2565.68	−2013.76	4821.40
BIC	5307.66	4198.53	−2308.13
N	685	563	608
N of countries	48	42	47

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Figure 2.7: Predictive margins for protests conditional on the level of repression and election timing



The predictive margins for protests conditional on the time of election (see Figure 2.7) demonstrate that the odds of protests are higher in the year of election, while still depending on the level of state-sponsored repression. The impact of repression conditional on the time of elections is the same for each regime type. Higher levels of repression (squared) is negatively associated with the protest frequency.Extremely low and high levels of repression may produce more protests.

In Table 2.4 I test the full model and alternative models fitting the protest counts in electoral authoritarian regimes. Model 1 presents odds ratios for all potential alternative predictors that may account for the protest frequency: social diversity and fractionalization (Model 2), international linkage and leverage (Model 3), and economic wealth and state capacity (Model 4). Obviously, the models do not present the only possible operationalization of alternative explanations, however I employ basic specification for the sake of clarity. I intentionally do not include the time and institutional predictors to compare alternative explanations that do not involve theorizing of election timing and authoritarian institutions. In order not to lose observations when at least one value of a control variable is missing, I use imputation of missing data through the multiple imputation procedure in STATA (Royston, White, and others 2011).

The year of elections remains significant and increases the risk of having an additional protest by approximately 20-26%. In party-based regimes the odds ratio of one additional protest is 1.29 lower, than in personalist. However the coefficient is not significant, i.e. it still describes the sample, but cannot be generalized.

Among the predictors that reflect the social composition of a particular regime, a one-unit increase in religious fractionalization that varies from 0 to 1 turns out to be a correlate that boosts the odds of more protests by 3.2 times, while ethnic and linguistic fractionalization are not statistically significant.

Surprisingly, few of the linkage and leverage predictors proved to be significant and robust enough to affect the frequency of reported protests. The number of internet users per 100 people enhances the odds of having another massive protest by 1.02. It may be the case that in societies with more tech-savvy citizens it is costlier to blatantly violate human rights as long as the news uncontrollably spreads all over the globe. Foreign trade and economic aid (ODA) have no effect on the frequency of protests. The only robust predictor is the share of foreign direct investment in a country's GDP: one percent increase leads to 1% increase in the odds of another protest. As we see, the effect is rather small in size. Economic linkage and inclusion of a regime into international networks as well as membership in international organizations perhaps plays a considerable role in regime transitions, however international involvement does not seem to play a decisive role in fueling domestic pro-democratic uprisings.

At the same time, other economic predictors seem to contribute to the scale of protests: more inequality does not entail more risk of another protest action (OR=1.00, Models 1 and 4), while positive economic growth hamper the odds of uprising (OR=0.99 and OR=0.98 in Models 1 and 4 respectively). The effect of GNI per capita is highly significant, but negligible in size (OR=1.00, Model 2). A size of public sector also does not contribute much to the explanation of protests in authoritarian regimes (OR=1.00, Model 2). Thus, economic growth and level of economic development are the only correlates of protest frequency, however, the effects are fairly small.

Having looked at the alternative models, one can conclude that election timing have a larger effect on protest frequency compared with those other predictors. Only religious fractionalization, internet proliferation, foreign direct investment, and economic growth are important structural factors that one should take into account in discussing the scale and probability of anti-regime upheavals.

In Model 1 (Table 2.4), I pool the alternative explanations. The effect of election time is the strongest and becomes even larger. The main and interaction effects of the institutional design (party-based regime) fail to achieve statistical significance, but the sign of the effect goes in a predicted direction: the risk of protests in party-based regime after elections is lower. But there are more protests in party-based regimes. Perhaps, they are better in containing mass protests. The number of protests decreases with a one-point increase in the CIRI Physical Integrity Index that varies from 0 to 8, which corresponds to the initial idea that repression shies potential protesters away.The effects of economic growth and foreign direct investment remain significant and robust.

Bottom line, we see that time and institutional predictors - although sensitive to

model specifications - at least partially explain the intensity of protests under authoritarianism. As opposed to alternative explanations, my approach remains robust and is likely complimented by other important structural variables, such as religious fractionalization, internet proliferation (Ritter and Trechsel 2014), and size of the public sector (Greene 2007, Stokes 2005).

2.6 Conclusion

Modern authoritarian leaders must hold regular and at least minimally competitive elections in order to meet international standards. At the same time, elections force incumbent elites to undertake systematic measures to ensure an electoral victory. Nevertheless, the time of electoral campaign influences the political dynamics and, thus, may unleash either already existent accumulated grievances or serve as a pretext for mass mobilization. This factor is particularly important in the cases of blatant electoral fraud, intimidation of voters, opposition, and civil society organizations because at this time performance legitimacy is most at risk. On the other hand, the very fact of holding nationwide elections has different meanings in different institutional settings. In this chapter, the results of the descriptive statistics and the panel data analysis have specified the role of elections on undesired outcomes and the link between regime types. For the sake of overview, the main empirical findings are summarized in Table 2.5.

First, all kinds of autocracies suppress the probability of mass mobilization, be it peaceful or violent. However, the analysis of panel data reveals a positive association, which is, however, not regular across various regime types when controlling for election time. Elections regularly challenge the incumbent by increasing the odds of mass protests and affect the repressive strategies of incumbents. The very role of elections differ across various forms of authoritarian role. As long as the timing of elections is deeply endogenous in the monarchical regimes, the inclusion of these cases would produce biased estimates in further analysis. However, the very fact that the time of elections are systematically manipulated in these regimes reflects the marginal role of elections as the main channel of acquiring political power. That said, this gives us grounds to claim that institutional design matters in term of endogeneity of election time. Strictly speaking, given the endogeneity of election time and scarcity of observations (e.g. the military regimes), we cannot draw any conclusion regarding how election time affects the odds of protests. But we know that incumbents manipulate electoral schedule in monarchies and seem to be successful in preventing protests (see Figure 2.2). Differences in median numbers of protests in manipulated and non-manipulated elections for party-based and personalist regimes are not significant; even if there is any bias, it produces more conservative estimates.

Second, elections are conducive to the mass protests in both personalist and party-based regimes. However, party-based regimes experience more protests on average with no

Table 2.4: Frequency of protests by regime types and election timing, with control variables

Variables	Model 1:	Model 2:	Model 3:	Model 4:
Year of elec.	1.26***	1.20***	1.20***	1.22***
	(0.09)	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.07)
Party-based	1.29			
	(0.22)			
Y.of elec.#Party-based	0.89			
	(0.10)			
Foreign Trade,%	1.00*		1.00	
	(0.00)		(0.00)	
ODA,%	1.01		1.00	
	(0.01)		(0.01)	
FDI,%	1.01**		1.01**	
	(0.01)		(0.01)	
Internet	1.00		1.02***	
	(0.00)		(0.00)	
Gini	1.00			1.00
	(0.01)			(0.01)
Public sector,%	1.00			1.00
	(0.00)			(0.00)
ΔGDP	0.98***			0.98***
	(0.01)			(0.01)
GNI pc	1.00***			1.00***
	(0.00)			(0.00)
GNI (logged)	1.04			1.06
	(0.09)			(0.08)
CIRI Index (repres.)	0.90***			
	(0.02)			
Ethnic frac.	0.60	0.48		
	(0.19)	(0.32)		
Linguistic frac.		1.23		
		(0.78)		
Relig. frac.		3.20***		
		(1.12)		
Population		1.00***		
		(0.00)		
Population(logged)	1.29***	0.89	1.14**	1.38***
	(0.10)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.09)
N	580	724	724	580
N of countries	40	50	50	40

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 2.5: Summary of the hypotheses tested

No.	Hypothesis	Status
1	H_0: The frequency of protests do not differ across authoritarian regimes types.	Rejected
2	H_1: In military regimes, electoral cycles have a negative effect on protests;	Election timing is endogenous
3	H_2: In personalist regimes, electoral cycles have a positive effect on protests;	Partly confirmed
4	H_3: In party-based regime, election time is associated with little protest or no effect.	Partly confirmed

relation to election time. This implies that party-based regimes are better equipped to deal with regular mass protests and containing them. Taking into account that the interaction term of the election year and type of regime has a negative sign, although not statistically significant, it still points in a predicted direction. Thus, there are no strong grounds to claim that party-based regimes are not sensitive to election cycles in terms of protest activity, although we can argue that the military and especially monarchical regimes differ a lot from civilian autocracies. Hence, the link between the spread of institutionalization and departure from discretionary and personalized rule to more depersonalized forms is not a linear one: party-based regimes constitute the strongest fortress against mass rebellions, while personalist regimes are in a more vulnerable position.

Third, the strength of the electoral schedule on the frequecy of protests depends on the level of institutionalization of a political regime. Less institutionalized regimes such as monarchies and military regimes with narrow coalitions and selectorates are less exposed to the mass upheavals due to various reasons. In royal regimes, we observe that election time is largely manipulated by the incumbent, therefore it is not surprising that there is less political unrest and even less repression. Military leaders (as opposed to monarchs) do systematically increase the general level of repression on the eve of elections, so that there are fewer protests after elections. On the other hand, there are to few observations to draw any conclusive inference. Elections, as a way of selecting political leaders, do not produce a focal point for political actors including opposition and civic organizations has found some firm empirical ground.

Fourth, party-based and personalist regimes have proved to be the most perceptive form of the institutional setup: the frequency of protests robustly increases at election time, and the effects of preventive repression seem not that crucial.

Lastly, structural predictors have demonstrated their effect on the frequency of protests. The impact of annual economic growth is the most robust universal predictor of protests and repression: it alleviates protests and 'substitutes' repression. On the other hand, levels of economic development are replaced by rates of economic growth in predicting the number of protests. More protests are associated with slower or even a negative rate

of economic growth. People's expectations regarding their economic wellbeing prove to be relevant associates of mass unrest. The incumbent's failure to meet these expectations may entail undesired outcomes.

As far as institutional design shapes political actors' incentives, in further analysis I stick to the most widespread type of authoritarianism – civilian dictatorships that significantly overlap with personalist and party-based regimes. In order to homogenize the sample, I will therefore focus exclusively on these types of authoritarian regimes, excluding military and royal dictatorships.

Chapter 3

Correlates of Subversive Effects: Exploring Post-Electoral Scenarios

3.1 Introduction

Legislatures, political parties, and elections form a line of defense for autocrats against the opposition and protesters (Gandhi and Przeworski 2007). Legislatures serve as a tool of co-optation and distribution of spoils, while dominant parties or parties of power resolve the 'credible commitment problem' between the political leader and his/her coalition by reducing the level of uncertainty by providing more predictable and clear rules of the game (Reuter and Remington 2009). Therefore legislatures in which the ruling party has a majority should doubly secure the incumbent's chances to remain in power even after competitive elections.

While most of the evidence on electoral authoritarian regimes draws on the showcases of dominant-party regimes (e.g. Pempel 1990; Magaloni 2006; Greene 2009; Brownlee 2007), the overwhelming majority of modern autocracies are personalist regimes that tend to last longer (Geddes 2003). Personalism *per se* is the opposite of institutionalization, where institutions imply de-personalization, or a lesser degree of discretionary power and its arbitrary use. Thus do electoral authoritarian regimes that are more personalist possess a similar margin of safety? We know that some authoritarian leaders such as Aleksandr Lukashenka in Belarus, Askar Akayev in Kyrgyzstan before 2005, or the Jordanian monarchs dispense with parties, which obviously reframes electoral politics when compared to the regimes with parties. The political stage is viewed through the lens of strong political candidates, bosses, or 'big men' not affiliated with any formally defined political force (Hale 2006). Yet, one of the institutionalist premises is that even biased formal norms towards the interests of particular stakeholders and power groups still possess significant potential for depersonalization. This may occur in a form of 'lock-in' effect or 'instruction sheet' in a situation of high level of uncertainty. In these cases, the rules

tend to detach from their creators and impose their own logic.

3.2 Hypotheses

When elections can go wrong for an authoritarian leader or dominant party? The existing literature provides a number of explanations and possible causal mechanisms at work. The logic of existing models resembles the logic of the democratic transition literature, when the sources of an outcome stem from either structural long-term factors or contingent decisions and strategies by political actors (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986). However, the phenomenon of subversive scenarios does not necessarily is not synonymous to further liberalization and democratization. The incumbent can suppress the protests or turn the clock back and declare the victory of the opposition illegal. For instance, Serbia in 1999, Cote-d'Ivoire in 2000, and Gambia in 2016. This is why I focus on narrower explanations that deal with elections and their aftermath.

The first variable that accounts for the probability of subversive scenarios is the amount of electoral malpractice committed by the incumbent including fraud, violations, vote buying, and threats that distort the outcome and, thereby, reassure the incumbent's victory. The second variable is the institutional settings of a particular authoritarian regime (see the discussion in Chapter 2) and the level of institutionalization of a particular regime.

The effect of electoral malpractice on the probability of subversive effects is considered as crucial for the occurrence of post-electoral unrest and destabilization (Norris 2014). However its effect on peaceful turnover remains ambiguous. Some literature suggests a positive association by emphasizing the importance of electoral fraud as a trigger for protests where elections serve as focal point and solves the collective action problem (Tucker 2007; Kuntz and Thompson 2009; Bunce and Wolchik 2011; Norris 2014). From this perspective, the unique feature of elections is that the whole country experiences the same grievance at the same time: "stealing the results creates an "imagined community" of millions of robbed voters" and encourages an overall mobilization (Tucker 2007, 260). Other authors stress the importance of changes in electoral integrity (Beissinger 2007; Beacháin and Polese 2010), which signal the regime's infrastructural strength to the opposition and voters, through a worsening or improvement in electoral integrity[1].

However, the level of objectively committed fraud that can be diagnosed by electoral forensics (Kalinin and Mebane 2012; Myagkov, Ordeshook, and Shakin 2005) does not immediately translate into mass unrest or public discontent on behalf of the opposition. Not every single fraudulent election leads to subversive scenarios, it is rather a part of

[1]There is also no agreement whether it should be a relative improvement that signals liberalization of a regime and more opportunity for political change, or outrage with worsened voting procedure according to the theories of procedural fairness (Sedziaka and Rose 2015).

the authoritarian routine. This brings the question of why and when electoral malpractice trigger protests or other forms of subversion? There is an emerging literature that emphasizes the difference between the actual level of fraud and its *perception* by voters (Ansolabehere and Persily 2008; Volkov 2012). In order to feel outraged by the extent of committed fraud, one has [2], i.e. *to know* how election fraud looks like and to expect it to occur. For example, Bunce and Wolchik (2010) emphasize the decisive role of civil society groups, NGOs and mass media (if there is any access to independent media) to inform the voters about possible violations. I assume this preparatory stage to be crucial for a collective action to occur. These considerations lead me to differentiate between 'objective' and 'subjective' or perceived electoral malpractice. On the other hand, the literature on authoritarian survival tells us that the ability to maintain high voting records either preserves the unity of the elite and shies the opposition away to its political ghetto or has no clear connection to the propensity of intra-elite splits.

The first hypothesis is:

H1: Higher levels of perceived electoral malpractice increase the probability of subversive outcomes (challenges from below), and decrease the probability of intra-elite splits and peaceful turnover.

As I discussed it the previous chapters, the institutional design as well as the overall level of institutionalization define the incentive structure for political actors and make certain outcomes more likely than others. As long as we think of institutions as the rules of the game, we assume that even authoritarian politics *to a certain degree* is restrained by institutions. The formal rules of how the power is transmitted to the next ruler constitute the main line of tension between political actors. Family members and direct offsprings are the main candidates in the monarchical succession, party functionaries of the party head office are the ones to take power in case the incumbent's inability to exercise it anymore. The military officers makes the pool of future candidates in *huntas*. However, only in two types of regimes elections seem to be the main channel of acquiring political power: party-based and personalist regimes.

Given that monarchies and military regimes are excluded from the analysis due to the endogeneity of elections and their low significance, the remaining set of regimes still does not present a homogenous group of authoritarianisms. The common feature of these regimes is that elections and voters' endorsement is the main formal source of political power. One way to grasp the variety of institutional settings is to retain the differentiation between party-based regimes and personalist ones (Geddes et al. 2012). Drawing on previous research, party-based regimes are considered as highly instituionalized and capable of containing internal conflicts though a more efficient compliance monitoring and system of punishment and rewards (Gandhi 2008, Magaloni 2006). These regimes mostly rely on a collective decision-making and are more efficient in decreasing the transaction

[2] to be prepared to observe it

costs. While more personalist regimes tend to have a narrower ruling coalition and less institutional means of redistribution, or of punishing and rewarding the coalition partners (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2005). Personalist regimes are less institutionalized in a sense of depersonalization and, thereby, undermining the existing rules. These regimes are highly dependent on the incumbent's will and should be less efficient in preventing elite defections and subversive scenarios.

On the other hand, as I was discussed in Chapter 1, there is a large share of personalist regimes that do have weaker versions of dominant parties, which I coined 'the parties of power'. Thus, there is a variety of electoral personalist regimes that can be placed on a continuum with more or less partisan politics. Political parties operate as a tool to decrease transaction costs, therefore one can conclude that parties of power also serve as important instrument solving credible commitment problem in authoritarian politics (Aldrich 1995; Brownlee 2007).

As long as there are only party-based and personalist regimes in the sample, although it would be mistaken to claim that these regimes are identical in terms of how institutions can prevent subversive scenarios. The very term 'personalism' suggests that there is a lack of institutionalization or clear formal rules. In this sense these terms are the two extremes of the same continuum on which autocrats vary in the degree their discretionary power is constrained. This is why I introduce a concept of institutionalization that should negatively correlate with the probability of subversive scenarios.

The concept of institutionalization cannot be measured directly, this is why I use a proxy - the share of independent candidates. This number indirectly indicates the level of institutionalization of an authoritarian regime, because the presence of political institutions such as political parties theoretically increases the likelihood that the incumbent power is at least partially restrained by other political actors. The share of independents serves as a proxy for the spread of non-partisan politics and demonstrates the number of MPs who are not affiliated with any established political party and all political alliances become more fluid and formed on an *ad hoc* basis.

As noted in the literature, party-based regimes more successfully handle potential ruptures by monitoring and co-opting rivals and dissidents. Therefore, regimes with a more established party system and ruling party are expected to possess immunity against undesired outcomes as soon as party institutions serve as a tool that decreases uncertainty and facilitates co-ordination. Thus, more institutionalized regimes are less exposed to subversive effects. The second hypothesis is therefore as follows:

H2: The bigger the share of independent members of parliament (MPs), the higher is the probability of subversive effects.

3.3 Methods

The analysis of anti-incumbent electoral outcomes implies the study of outright electoral failure – which constitutes a genuine outlier event under authoritarian settings – as well as relative electoral losses in the form of decreased vote and seat margins. Here I use the electoral failure or victory of the ruling party or president as a binomial indicator. 'Subversive' outcomes are measured through electoral statistics and calculated as the percentage difference between the winner and the top runner up. I use electoral statistics from the Inter-parliamentary Union, IFES, and Dieter Nohlen et al. handbooks on elections around the world. Post-electoral protests are operationalized as a dichotomous variable. For both variables, I retrieve the data from the Elections across Democracies and Autocracies (NELDA) dataset (Hyde and Marinov 2012). The latter has reliable data on electoral victory and incidence of post-electoral protests.

As a measure of electoral malpractice to estimate the probability of electoral defeat, I use an index based on NELDA indicators: Before elections, are there significant concerns that elections will not be free and fair? (NELDA 11); Were opposition leaders prevented from running (NELDA 13); Is there evidence that the government harassed the opposition (NELDA 15); In the run-up to the election, were there allegations of media bias in favor of the incumbent? (NELDA 16). I create the index of electoral malpractice based on NELDA variables using factor analysis (principal component) with varimax rotation (Chronbach's alpha = 0.45). This index aims at grasping several aspects of electoral malpractice at various stages of the electoral cycle (Norris 2014).

To estimate the effect of electoral malpractice on the probability of post-electoral protest I use a disaggregated measure instead of an index to allow for differentiation between 'objective' reports on fraud by observer missions – Was the opposition harassed? (NELDA15), Was there any fraud reported by Western monitors? (NELDA47) – and 'subjective' indicators such as perceptions by wider citizenship through mass media – Was there any significant bias in favor of incumbent? (NELDA16). It is important to note that perceptions of fraud may tend to be trigger protests more efficiently than reports by international observers that may be not trustworthy enough or simply inaccessible to ordinary citizens (Kelley 2012). As a study by Bhasin and Gandhi shows, if state-sponsored repression is decreasing, there is more of an opportunity for information to flow to citizens through informal means, because the state is not restricting it (2013).

The unit of analysis is competitive elections in autocratic regimes. I examine all of the elections that took place in the twenty-one years from 1990 to 2011. Data come from NELDA (Hyde and Marinov 2012). One of the advantages of this dataset is that it has specific variables, indicating whether there are immediate protests after the elections and whether they are related to electoral integrity or their outcomes. Arthur Banks' Cross National Time Series (CNTS) data do not tell us anything about the exact time of a

protest (before or after elections). The point is critical for the analysis; this is why I use NELDA variables that more accurately document post-electoral protests.

For an election to be included in the study, it must meet a lower and an upper threshold (Mahoney and Goertz 2004). The lower threshold is applied in order to exclude non-competitive elections. Thus, in order to be included, an election must meet both of the following two conditions: (a) opposition candidates and parties are legal; (b) there is indeed a choice between at least two candidates/parties on the ballot. The upper threshold is applied to exclude competitive elections in genuine democracies, as it is nonsensical to examine the subversion of autocratic rule where such rule does not exist. Incumbent electoral defeat in democracies cannot be interpreted as an act of opposition against autocracy. Thus, only elections in the regimes that do qualify as having taken place in an autocracy are included. I use the sample that corresponds to the criteria outlined by Geddes et al. (2014). As a result, the dataset contains 319[3] elections in 71 countries, which occurred under electoral authoritarian conditions that conform to the minimal requirements of competitiveness. The incumbents lost 44 of these elections and 80 have been followed by mass protests immediately afterward.

The unit of analysis is election-years in competitive authoritarian regimes. I use as a dependent dichotomous variable the occurrence of post-electoral protests. The coding procedure is available in the NELDA codebook. In order to analyze these outcomes, I employ logistic regression analysis with clustered standard errors by countries. The combinations of these post-electoral protests and electoral outcomes (victory or failure) form four types of scenario that form a categorical dependent variable and the estimation procedure is generalized ordered logistic regression analysis (Agresti and Kateri 2011). To avoid potential omitted variable biases I include typical socio-economic controls, levels of ethnic fractionalization, and inclusion in international networks.

An analysis of unintended outcomes and the probabilities against the 'normal' scenario presented in this chapter proceeds as follows. The first section is devoted to the theoretical expectations regarding post-electoral protests and post-electoral scenarios. In this part, I depict the possible explanatory variables that might account for this variation. In the second section, I provide the estimates of the logistic regression of the probabilities of post-electoral protests, and the estimate of a generalized ordered logistic regression predicting the likelihood of each post-electoral scenario.

3.4 Post-electoral Protests

One quarter of the elections under authoritarian conditions have been immediately followed by mass protests (80 of the 319 elections studied). Protests are a more common

[3]There are 326 cases, but for some of them there are missing or unclear values on protests or electoral defeat.

Table 3.1: Proportion of protests by components of electoral integrity

	Protest	No protest	Total # observations	% of protest
Boycott by opposition	4	45	49	8.2
No boycott by opposition	47	126	173	27.2
Fraud reported by Western observers	9	46	55	16.4
No fraud reported	26	72	98	26.5
Concerns that elec. will not be free and fair	38	85	123	30.9
No concerns	14	81	95	14.7
Media bias	13	80	93	14.0
No media bias	32	78	110	29.1

form of subversive effect than electoral defeat. Mobilization under authoritarianism is the only observable sign that voters are unhappy with the current situation in their country. Since no rational dictator is keen to deal with mass unrest, this outcome is a clear symptom that something went wrong. I include only those protests which are election-related, whether concerning their outcomes or the way they were conducted. Table 3.1 shows the proportion of elections followed by protests based on electoral malpractice indicators: boycott by opposition, fraud reported by international monitors, concerns regarding electoral integrity, and significant pro-incumbent media bias. The share of protests differs depending on type of electoral malpractice. Boycott by opposition decreases the share of massive protests by 2.5 times (8.2% versus 27.2%, Pearson chi2 = 7.79, Pr = 0.01), while elections with detected fraud by Western observers (e.g. OSCE, IFES) do not dramatically differ (Pearson chi2 = 2.06, Pr = 0.15). Preliminary concerns regarding the quality of elections seem to increase the number of protests: the proportion is twice as larger (Pearson chi2 = 7.7, Pr = 0.01). Media bias in favor of the incumbent decreases the odds of post-electoral protests (Pearson chi2 = 6.67, Pr = 0.01).

These preliminary findings tell us that objective assessments of electoral integrity such as reports by international observers play a smaller role in triggering protests, compared with subjective judgments or even anticipation of electoral malpractice. If there were significant concerns that elections would fall short of being free and fair, the odds of protests increase considerably. Other components of the NELDA index (opposition prevented from running and opposition harassed) did not reveal any significant results. The *perceived* level of fraud has a stronger mobilizing potential, rather than objective reports by election monitors on the number of detected violations at the polling stations. If the regional administration and electoral management bodies fail to control or do not wish to 'clear' the electoral field beforehand, and as a result exclude civic associations and parties from observing elections, this may serve as a signal that there is an opportunity

window for the opposition to mobilize. The decision to boycott elections means that the marginalization of an opposition has reached a critical juncture when elections are not viewed as a legitimate tool of acquiring political power. At the same time, an opposition that decided to boycott elections automatically positions itself outside of the legal playing field and moves away from the median voter in a country. As long as perception of electoral integrity loses its relevance, the value of mobilization with the purpose to claim back stolen votes seems redundant.

Table 3.2 presents the results of multivariate regression analysis of the odds of post-electoral mobilization. Models 1-4 are the estimates with control variables, while models 5-8 provide estimates for unconditional effects of electoral malpractice. Models in odd columns show the estimates for the 'subjective' measures of electoral malpractice such as anticipation of fraud (NELDA11), media bias (NELDA16) or boycott by opposition because of anticipated fraud (NELDA14). Even columns present the estimates for 'objective' reports on the level of electoral fraud by internationally recognized monitors (NELDA47). Lastly, models 1-2 and 5-6 are the estimates for Geddes, Wright and Frantz's (GWF) sample and models 3-4, 7-8 are for the Cheibub, Gandhi and Vreeland (CGV) sample. Table entries are unstandardized b-coefficients with clustered standard errors by countries.

Remarkably, structural determinants such as fractionalization, economic development, inequality, and globalization are less useful in explaining post-electoral protests than more contingent and actor-based variables. However, the overall explanatory power of the models shown above is low: the full model is able to account just for 20% of the whole variation.

It is interesting that negative assessment of electoral integrity does not seem to have any connection with the probability of protests. The link is negative and not statistically significant. Harassment of opposition increases the log-odds of protests in model 1 by 1.09, and preventing the opposition from running is also positively related with the probability of protests (although, not significantly). Concerns that election will not comply with free and fair standards predictably increases the log-odds of protests by 1.14-1.25, while pro-incumbent media bias operates in the opposite direction by decreasing the chance of protests by 0.71-1.31 log-odds. The effect of opposition boycotts becomes less pronounced, but is still robustly negative.

Repression consistently decreases the odds of protests. Economic growth and the share of independent MPs are positively associated with the probability of protests, although the effect is small and insignificant. The effects of ethnic fractionalization and globalization are also close to zero.

Table 3.2: Probability of post-electoral protests (NELDA): Multivariate models

Variables	Model 1 S	Model 2 O	Model 3 S	Model 4 O
Presidential elec.	0.24	0.22	0.19	0.18
	(0.45)	(0.47)	(0.39)	(0.39)
Electoral victory	−0.92	−1.66*	−0.51	−0.68
	(0.93)	(1.01)	(0.69)	(0.72)
Concerns (n11)	0.35		1.14***	
	(0.52)		(0.43)	
Opposition prevented(n13)		0.18		0.18
		(0.60)		(0.60)
Opposition harassed(n15)		1.09*		1.09*
		(0.63)		(0.63)
Media bias(n16)	−1.31**		−0.72	
	(0.58)		(0.43)	
Boycott by opposition(n14)	−1.99*		−1.24*	
	(1.05)		(0.63)	
% of independent MPs	0.01	0.02		
	(0.01)	(0.01)		
CIRI^2(*repres.*)	−0.02	−0.02		
	(0.02)	(0.02)		
ΔGDP	0.04	0.01		
	(0.02)	(0.02)		
Gini	−0.02	−0.02		
	(0.05)	(0.05)		
GDP ppp pc (logged)	−0.01	0.06		
	(0.38)	(0.41)		
Ethnic frac.	0.42	0.60		
	(1.30)	(1.26)		
KOF Global. Index	0.03	0.02		
	(0.03)	(0.04)		
Population (logged)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
N	140	119	180	151
$PseudoR^2$	0.17	0.10	0.11	0.02

Robust standard errors in parentheses. Constant terms are suppressed.
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

3.5 Predicting Scenarios: Evidence from the Generalized Ordered Regression Analysis

I assume that every incumbent prefers to win elections without any protest actions that would put the legitimacy of the electoral results in peril. The optimal tool to determine the correlates of these different ways that elections can 'get out of hand' is the generalized ordered regression analysis, which allows me to estimate the probability of every scenario relative to the 'normal' flow of post-electoral events (Brant 1990; Agresti and Kateri 2011). As soon as the proportional odds assumption is violated, I use the class of ordered logit models with less restricted assumptions such as unconstrained partial proportional odds models (gologit2 procedure in STATA) (see Williams et al. 2006).

In Table 3.3, I show the estimates for the competing explanations of subversive electoral outcomes: the electoral malpractice (integrity) model, the pre-electoral repression model, the institutional model, and the structural determinants model. Each two columns present the odds ratios of making the transition from one category to the next level of subversiveness. Odds ratios with values above one display positive change, while those from zero to one show a negative change in the odds ratio. Robust standard errors are reported in parentheses. To control for cross-temporal non-stationarity in the models that estimate the effect of repression, I include weights that account for the total number of events per year and country.

Interpretation of the odds ratio after ordered logistic regression is not as straightforward as for linear or even logistic models. First, there is no 'base' category as is assumed for multinomial logit output. The gologit results make up a series of logistic regressions where in the first panel, there are the odds ratio of making transition from the category 0 (peaceful turnover) to 1, where category 1 stands for all other categories – challenge from below (1) and stabilization (0). The second panel shows the odds ratio of making the transition from the challenge from below scenario to any of the remaining outcomes – peaceful turnover or stabilization. As soon as the assumption of equal proportions is not met, the odds vary from one panel to another. For example, a one unit increase in the index of electoral malpractice causes a fivefold increase in the odds ratio of making the transition *from* this scenario to *either* stabilization or peaceful turnover. The most significant predictors are the degree of electoral malpractice and pre-electoral repression. Among structural variables, only economic inequality is a significant estimate for one of the scenarios.

For the sake of visual simplicity, I produced the predicted probabilities of each scenario depending on the level of electoral malpractice in Figure 3.1 to allow for more straightforward and intuitive interpretations. The graphs are located according to the degree of subversiveness from left to right. I start with the most widespread and most likely scenario – pro-incumbent stabilization – the probability of which increases with worsened

Table 3.3: Estimating the probability of post-electoral scenarios (multinomial logit regression)

Variables	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	PT	CB	PT	CB	PT	CB	PT	CB
CIRI^2(*repres.*)			1.02	1.03				
			(0.05)	(0.02)				
Repres. of the coal.			1.80***	1.26**				
			(0.39)	(0.12)				
Repres. of the opposit.			0.84	1.00				
			(0.09)	(0.08)				
Repres. of voters			0.85	0.97				
			(0.14)	(0.07)				
NELDA Elec. Mal. Index	5.09*	1.99***						
	(4.54)	(0.46)						
Concerns(n11)	1.56	0.30***						
	(1.22)	(0.14)						
Presidential					0.60	0.76		
					(0.35)	(0.76)		
% of indep.MPs					1.07	0.99*		
					(0.05)	(0.01)		
Logged GDP							0.73	0.93
							(0.27)	(0.20)
ΔGDP							1.06	0.99
							(0.06)	(0.02)
Gini							1.02	1.05**
							(0.05)	(0.02)
KOF Global. Index							0.97	0.98
							(0.03)	(0.02)
Ethnic frac.							0.06	0.46
							(0.14)	(0.38)
N	129		176		228		206	
$PseudoR^2$	0.12		0.15		0.04		0.05	

Standard errors in parentheses. Constant terms are suppressed. Weights applied. PT-peaceful turnover, CB-challenge from below.
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

electoral integrity. Committing electoral fraud turns out to be an extremely efficient tool to prevent any subversive effects. The odds of post-electoral protests remain the same until the values on electoral malpractice take on their medium and high values, starting from 0.3 in the NELDA Electoral malpractice index. The probability of peaceful turnover drops sharply at low values, but after the value of 0.5 there is almost no effect.

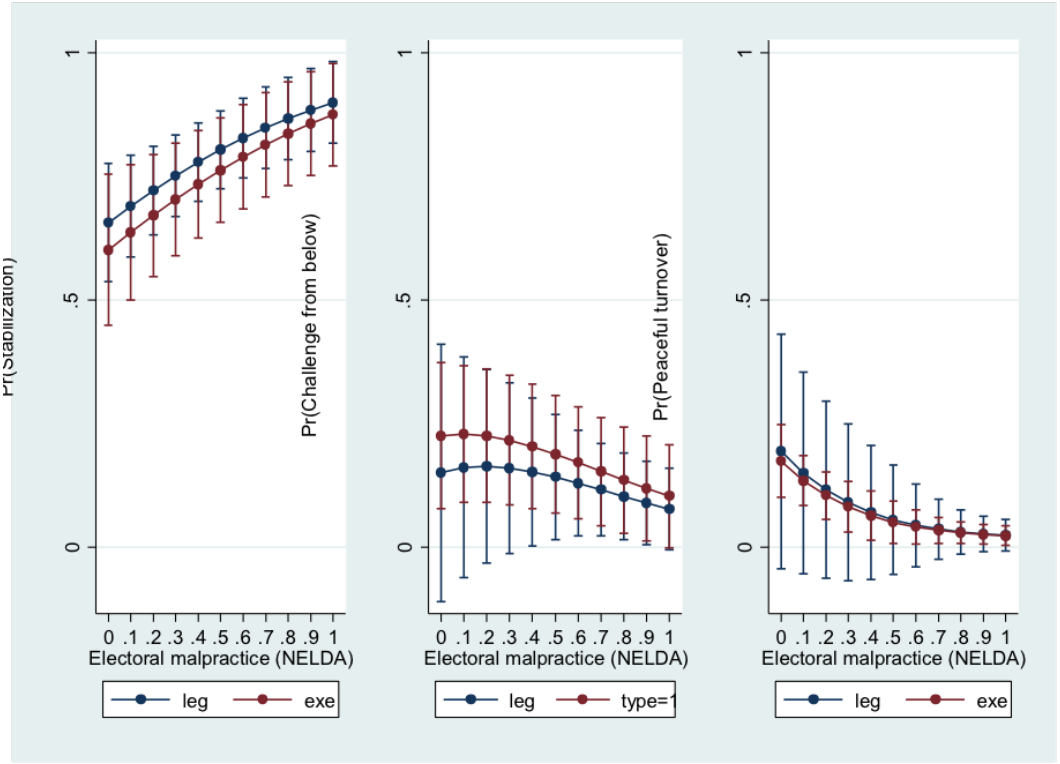
Although the probability of challenges from below is slightly higher for presidential bids, the overall difference between presidential and legislative elections is negligible. Protests may spring up after both presidential and parliamentary elections with equal probability[4]. The latter leads us to the conclusion that there is actually a great deal of electoral uncertainty in authoritarian regimes. Both subversive scenarios are equally unlikely. However, marginal utilities of electoral malpractice differ: intensive use of fraud seems to make the scenario of peaceful transition of power by elections more distant. From a strategic point of view, the lack of electoral integrity facilitates the incumbent's survival in power, but cuts off the lines of retreat in the long run.

Figure 3.2 shows the predicted probability for various frequencies of repression or media reports on repression of members of the ruling coalition. Surprisingly, changes in repression of the coalition do not have any systematic effect on the probability of stabilization. On the other hand, a one unit increase in the repression count leads to a significant decrease in the probability of post-electoral protests, while it increases the odds of peaceful turnover. The effect tends to be greater after reaching the median values in repression and then clearly leads to subversive outcomes. In other words, too much repression of the inner circle endangers the incumbent, by increasing the chances of internal splits. Having 10 prominent repression events per year implies a 22-23% probability of intra-elite split. The latter may spur further transition either to more democratized regimes as the elites may have preferences to decrease the level of uncertainty by establishing rules according to which their status and perks are secure. After 4-5 salient instances of purges on average per year, the incentives to coordinate against the incumbent become more evident. According to Bueno de Mesquita et al., it is not advisable for dictators to over-repress the coalition as it is the only type of repression that at some point may turn into intra-elite ruptures, conspiracies, or even coup-d'états.

Preventive repression of the political opposition signals to other anti-regime groups that at the election time that the ruling elite intends to leave no opportunity window for them during the electoral campaign. Moreover, timely repression effectively prevents opposition groups from mobilizing voters. International peers tend to observe an electoral campaign within a rather limited time-span, so a wise incumbent is expected to make the regime more stringent in advance to avoid international scandals. However, excessive

[4]Narrower confidence intervals for executive elections tell us that the estimates for the peaceful turnover scenario are more precise, but the probability of this scenario through presidential elections is less likely to happen. Hence, the average probability of any subversive outcomes is below 30% that ranges from 0 to 45%.

Figure 3.1: Predicted probabilities for post-electoral scenarios by the electoral malpractice and type of elections



repression can ultimately undermine the incumbent's position.

Figure 3.3 shows the predictive margins for repression of civilian populations, measured by event counts per year holding other variables constant. The effect of mass repression on the chances of the stabilization scenario is somewhat faint. The challenge from below scenario is extremely unlikely: the odds sharply drop as repressive event counts decreases. Negative predictions after the value of six are out-of-sample predictions and make no sense from a mathematical point of view, hence must be disregarded[5]. Repressing civilians seems to be quite an efficient way to scare voters away from the streets, but at the same time the odds of peaceful turnover skyrockets from 5% to 25%. This scenario implies the logic of democratic transition as described by O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986) when some elite groups defect in fear of excessive purges. If this oppression is combined with civilian repression, anti-incumbent mobilization becomes much easier. In this sense, the 'democratization by elections' scenario becomes more probable through an incumbent's miscalculations of repressive strategies. Findings for the effect of repressing the opposition show a similar pattern, but the probability of protests drops at a much greater rate, while the odds of peaceful turnover increases.

[5] "The usefulness of non-parallel regression models is limited to some extent by the fact that the lines must eventually intersect. Negative fitted values are then unavoidable for some values of x, though perhaps not in the observed range. If such intersections occur in a sufficiently remote region of the x-space, this flaw in the model need not be serious" (McCullagh and Nelder 1993, p. 55).

Figure 3.2: Predicted probabilities for post-electoral scenarios by repression whose target is the ruling coalition

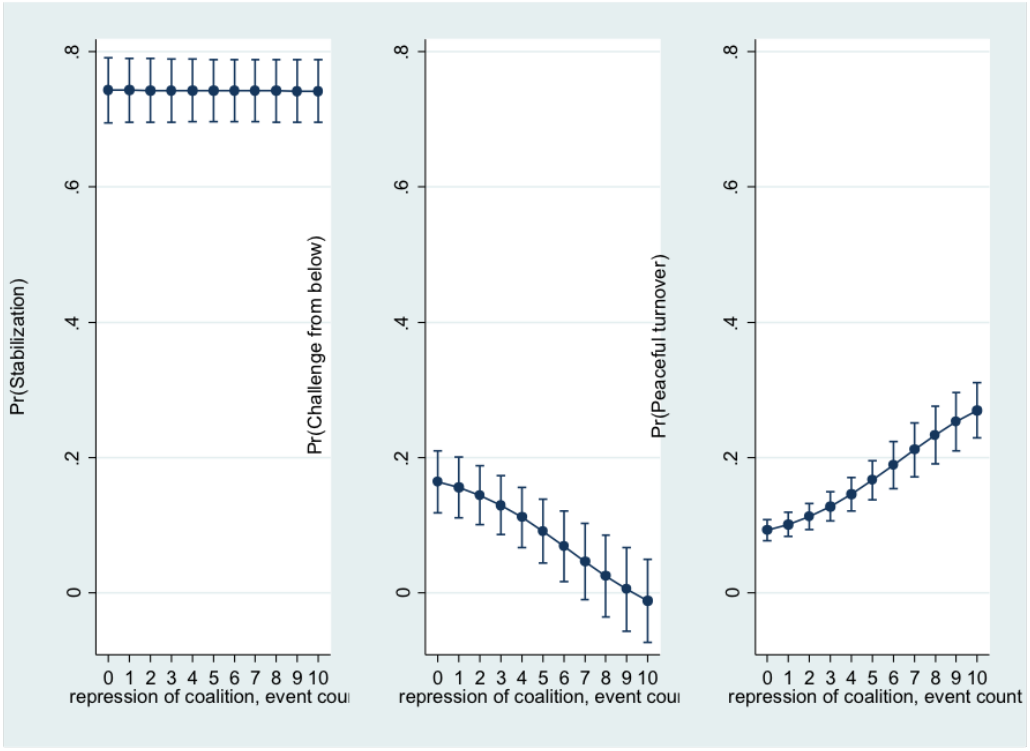


Figure 3.3: Predicted probabilities for post-electoral scenarios by repression whose target is the civilian population

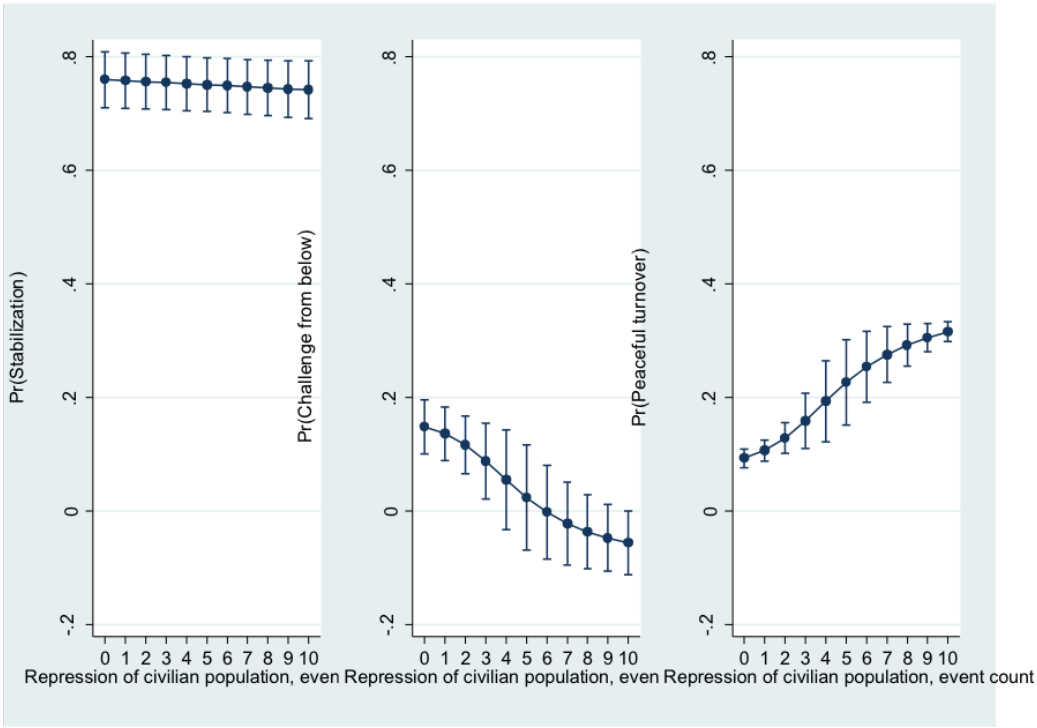
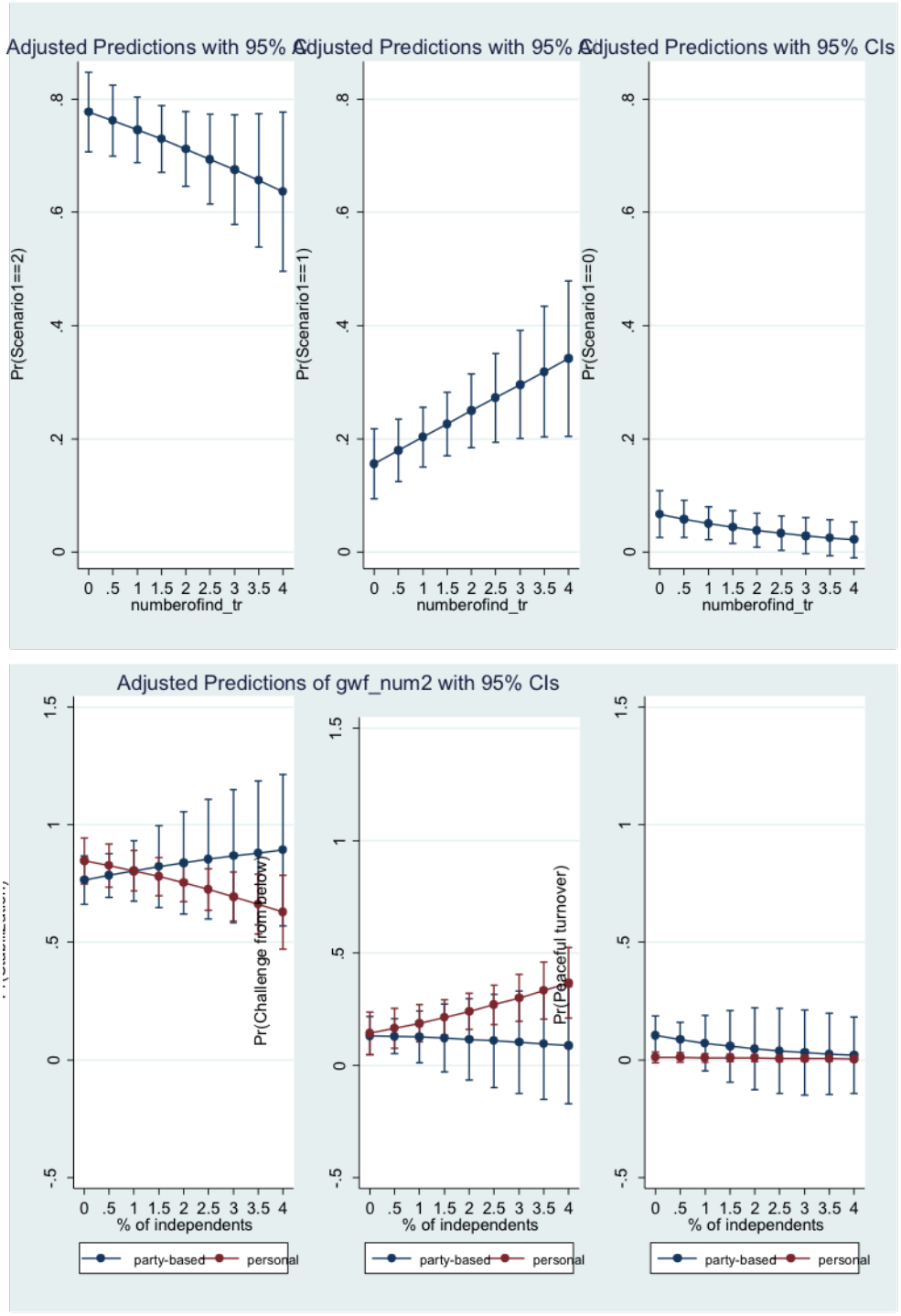


Figure 3.4: Predicted probabilities of post-electoral scenarios by share of independent MPs (logged): 'pure' effect (upper pane) and effect conditional on the type of elections (lower pane)



In Figure 3.5, I present the predicted probabilities for each scenario by the share of independent MPs. The left-hand side of the graph shows the predictive margins for the logged independent variable, while the right-hand side displays the same predictions, but adjusted by the type of authoritarianism (whether the regime is based on dominant-party rule or is a personalist de-institutionalized regime). The number of independent MPs (or partisanship of a legislature) has almost no impact on the probability of the peaceful turnover scenario, while an increase in the number of independent parliamentarians is associated with a dramatic fall in the odds of the pro-incumbent scenario. The association is statistically significant only for the challenge from below scenario and has a non-linear relationship. The effect is robust and large while moving from completely partisan legislature to 30-40%. From there the effect is large, but insignificant.

Introducing the regime type into these models presents a bit of an overlap with the share of independents, as in party-based regimes there should not be independent legislators by definition, or at least there should be very few. On the other hand, party-based regimes, according to the same definition, are those regimes where the ultimate power of decision-making belongs to either the autocrat or party leadership. Despite the weakness of statistical estimates in terms of their generalizability, there is a remarkable change in the causal direction for the 'pro-incumbent scenario' and 'the challenge from below' story: for party-based regimes, the subversive effect of a non-partisan legislature vanishes. Authoritarianisms with a highly-institutionalized party system are immune to this challenge compared to personalist autocracies. At the same time, the probability of post-electoral protests increases by around 20-25%, whilst the effect for party-based regimes remains weak.

The initial intuition that single-member district (SMD) systems and independent MPs bolster the accountability (or perverse accountability) between the constituency and candidate, while more partisan and mostly party-list systems tend to lose any connection with voters does not seem to hold true. Distributing places within the closed party-lists is an efficient tool to share perks and benefits, co-opt potential allies, and reward loyalty, while dealing with a crowd of independents becomes a more complicated task for the incumbent. A large number of independent MPs perhaps reflects the lack of any institutional mechanism of co-optation for moderate opposition and career advancement for ambitious politicians. However, the mechanism has to be studied more deeply.

As for structural constraints, only economic inequality shows some significant effect. Higher inequality is positively associated with the pro-incumbent scenario. Negative or stagnant economic growth lowers the probability of the pro-incumbent scenario, whilst boosting the odds of 'the challenge from below' scenario, which is supported by relative deprivation theories. However, the confidence intervals are quite large, so the variance is too great to produce any predictions with a high level of certainty. Meanwhile the effect for electoral turnover is almost absent, besides the decreased likelihood at the extremely

negative values on economic growth. International linkage strongly decreases the probability of pro-incumbent outcomes – an increase in the KOF Globalization Index from 20% to 90% induces a fall from 80% to 55%, while the probabilities of both subversive scenarios show only a slight upturn of about 5%. The latter partly confirms the linkage and leverage theory suggested by Levitsky and Way (2010), however its explanatory power and the effect size are smaller than expected.

Finally, ethnic fractionalization does not seem to have any effect on the probability of subversiveness of elections. Higher levels of ethnic fractionalization somewhat increase the probability of peaceful turnover. Obviously, fractionalization *per se* does not transform into this scenario, it rather enhances the odds by serving as fertile soil for further politicization of ethnic cleavages (Laitin 2007). This finding highlights the trade-offs for the incumbent when deciding whether and when to repress different population groups . Repressing all groups lowers the probability of protests, but on the other hand, enhances the subversive potential of the elections. The general direction of pre-electoral repression is relatively similar; however, its size diverges at different values. Hence, finding the right mix under incomplete information and given the varying structural and contextual factors constitutes a genuine challenge.

Personalist incumbents are the most vulnerable to popular uprisings and less likely to secure a peaceful transition from his/her rule to a successor or a democratic regime. The probability of democratization by elections in personalist regimes appears to be an unlikely scenario. A regime equipped with an institutionalized party has less odds of anti-incumbent outcomes, particularly a 'challenge from below', while the effect is less significant for the odds of peaceful alternation. Presidential elections create more opportunities for peaceful turnover, as they do not allow for any compromise solution and power sharing. Thus, presidential elections form a greater challenge and make a better focal point than legislative elections (Norris 2009).

3.6 Conclusion

To conclude, I return to the question: when do elections support autocratic rule and when do they play the role of 'subversive institution'? This chapter presented four major scenarios, though the distribution of observations across these scenarios is far from even. Pro-incumbent effect without protest appears to be the norm for authoritarian systems, while other post-election scenarios constitute deviations. The most common of these is the predictable pro-incumbent scenario, which I have labeled authoritarian stability. However, there are two other important deviations: peaceful democratization or turnover (defeat and no protests) and challenge from below (victory with protests). The last scenario is a residual group with odd cases, where both electoral defeat and post-electoral protests occur; I tentatively label this scenario as political destabilization.

The most likely subversive scenario is the challenge from below, which was the focus on the first section of analysis. This chapter finds that repression and an anticipated level of malpractice predict the probability of post-electoral demonstrations. Electoral malpractice and strategic manipulation increases the formal number of ballots cast for the incumbent, whilst this effect turns negative for the fourth scenario, when too much manipulation without proper conflict-solving mechanisms within the elite jeopardizes authoritarian rule. Linking these regularities, we conclude that the institutionalization of party system – especially the ruling party – with electoral malpractice provides important insights into the subversive potential of elections under authoritarianism. Structural factors still shape the intervals within which various scenarios are more likely, but only a few – inequality and globalization – reveal statistically significant associations with post-electoral scenarios. Thus, the probability of subversion by elections or their challenge by tens of thousands of voters on the streets is mainly shaped by contingent interactions and strategic decisions.

This chapter also presented two major hypotheses: first, that the variety of post-election scenarios would depend on types of electoral malpractice, and second, that it would reflect the level of regime institutionalization, measured by the number of independent candidates.

Responding to the first hypothesis, this chapter demonstrates that different aspects of electoral integrity are linked with post-electoral scenarios in various ways. The options from the menu of manipulation that distort the perception of politics affect the odds of coordination between protesters. While 'objective' reports on the level of electoral integrity rather affect the real electoral outcomes and are not related with the probability of protests. Perception and anticipation of fraud play a more crucial role that 'real' fraud. There is a lack of reliable comparative data on electoral malpractice that would go beyond the binary assessments based on election monitors' reports, which potentially induces a great deal of noise and measurement error.

To respond to the second hypothesis, the evidence in this chapter shows a non-linear relation between the level of institutionalization and likelihood of post-electoral subversion. In other words, the subversive role of elections depends on the nature of political representation and co-optation under authoritarianism. In general, in regimes with insufficiently institutionalized party systems particular attention is required in calculations of pre-electoral strategies. Contingent variables play a more crucial role in triggering protests rather than structural determinants. Parties of power do not possess capacities to address the claims advanced by voters. Either fully institutionalized dominant party systems or deeply-rooted and highly co-optative non-partisan SMD systems are better equipped to embrace the challenges from the voters and the opposition.

This chapter also considers the other structural factors that may influence the probability of various post-election scenarios, including level of economic development and

economic growth, inequality, globalization, and ethnic fractionalization. However, only inequality and globalization reveal statistically significant associations with post-electoral scenarios. This suggests that subversion is mainly shaped by contingent interactions and strategic decisions. Putting all the findings mentioned above together, each scenario occurs with a different likelihood. To date, peaceful turnover has been the most popular scenario analyzed by the students of democratic transition. Democratization by electoral means (stunning elections) is more likely under specific socio-economic conditions, though repressive strategies are also crucial for electoral outcomes, repression of the opposition and the ruling coalition in particular. Moderate, targeted repression of the ruling coalition protects the incumbent from losing power, while too much repression produces destabilization. 'Democratization by election' takes place either in more affluent regimes, or regimes that experience considerable international leverage or are subject to some form of political conditionality. The most likely type of subversive scenario is challenge from below', shaped by more contingent factors and interactions between the perception and anticipation of fraud and institutional settings.

Chapter 4

Russia's Stunning Elections of 2011-12

"Saint Petersburg, after the elections to the State Duma and Regional parliament, a school building hosting a polling station. Two 10-year-old schoolgirls are passing by a table with the electoral results: - Look, United Russia – the party of swindlers and thieves! - Yeah, only A.'s mom voted for United Russia. - (grinning) Oh, A. has always been a jerk! Then both move away, giggling...

Honestly speaking, United Russia has gained slightly more than 30% of the votes. The party, hated by everyone, can resort to the force of the stick. The party, despised by everyone, can rely on the sweetness of the carrot. But what can the party do when it is made fun of even by children?"

— (From Vladimir Gel'man's blog entry "Out of the mouth of babes or a post-scriptum of yesterday's voting" posted on December 5, 2011)

4.1 Introduction

On September 24, 2011 another issue of the popular Russian late-night satirical TV show *Projectorparishilton*[1] aired. Four hosts – Ivan Urgant, Garik Martirosyan, Aleksandr Svetlakov, and Aleksandr Tsekalo – all winsome gentlemen in their mid-thirties, popular showmen who got together from the different TV channels to discuss newspaper headlines and banter about the goings-on in politics. The format was very close to the German *7 Tage, 7 Köpfe* show and was, in large part, emblematic of the very end of Dmitri Medvedev's presidential term – often described as a period of political 'thaw'. One of the hosts picked up a highlighted article 'The Right Cause will run for the elections' from the

[1]The show's name refers to the famous 1980s Soviet TV show 'Projector of 'Perestroika' – a talk show devoted to current events on Soviet television during the time of Perestroika. The use of Paris Hilton's name was allegedly used to symbolize bad taste. Therefore the show was not supposed to be a serious analytical program, rather an entertaining late-night show.

paper *Novye Izvestiya* and read the excerpt aloud:

> Garik Martirosyan: But without Mikhail Prokhorov. Two 'Right Cause' [RC, a Russian liberal political party] conventions took place almost simultaneously. One was held at the Center of International Trade, another one – in the Russian Academy of Science. The first one suspended Mikhail Prokhorov from duty and decided to run without him. (...) It went viral that Mr. Prokhorov looked stunning as party leader and that he allegedly spent 800 mln on the RC... Rubles, Sasha! ... did not go waste. In the RC meanwhile, some expressed the willingness to give back the money. Is it possible that the money won't be given back in Russia?! (laughing) (...)

Ivan Urgant: And I'm convinced that they will give the money back! ... Let me read it for you:

> Just before the meeting, the delegates were in good spirits. Having listened to the first ten names from the party list the delegates started whispering. It seemed that the list had taken them aback. Where are the sponsors?! Who's gonna finance the party?! (...)

The banter continued, as the presenters slated Mikhail Prokhorov openly:

> Sergey Svetlakov: Wait-wait, the right wing people did have a real chance to get together. Somehow! Prokhorov is a serious person... Urgant: (...) All is fine now. Look. No scandals, no suspense. Prokhorov is gone. No politics! It's over. Let's go back to our dugouts! (...) Svetlakov: Now I feel very... very sorry for Prokhorov. Really... They [the liberals – MZ] had a real chance! Martirosyan: (interrupts) Serezha! It's Prokhorov who should feel sorry for you! The guy has 15 billion euro, he owns the New Jersey Nets [since 2012, the Brooklyn Nets]. And you? The master of the drugstore in Zelenograd [a Moscow suburb]. Look at him! (Laughter up front). He feels sorry![2]

There are several moments in that show that would be simply impossible in Russia today – political discussion on the premier public channel, expressing sympathy to the opposition (even in a comedy show), and even voicing some hard feelings regarding the lack of real opposition. In all fairness, it has to be added that the Right Cause party was by no means a genuine bottom-up liberal political organization, but rather represented another Kremlin-inspired 'political project', not unlike the ruling United Russia party and its more left-wing analogue Just Russia (Wilson 2005; Golosov 2005). Mikhail Prokhorov, a Russian billionaire, initially agreed to lead the new party, but then after a series of

[2]Prozhektorperishilton. Accessed on 01.04.2016. URL: http://www.1tv.ru/prj/hilton/vypusk/10837

scandals left the project. Thus, the lacuna on the liberal side of the Russian political spectrum remained unfilled.

If the Just Russia party succeeded somewhat in attracting left-wing voters, thereby splitting the vote for the rival Communists (KPRF) and co-opting some of the moderate opposition, the RC project never even took off. For instance, one notorious MP in the current Duma, Elena Mizulina, whose ultra-conservative 'patriotic' draft laws against 'gay propaganda' and the ban on adoption of Russian orphans by foreigners are well-known, joined Just Russia in 2007 after having left Yabloko (Apple), one of the oldest liberal opposition parties in Russia[3]. Other examples are Irina Yarovaya who defected from Yabloko and Aleksey Mitrofanov who came from the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR)[4]Mitrofanov, Aleksei. Deputat Gosudarstvennoi Dumy RF shestogo sozyva. Lenta.ru. Accessed on 05.06.2016. URL: https://lenta.ru/lib/14160954/. Another case is Boris Nadezhdin, one of the RC leaders whose carrier demonstrates the failure of the RC to co-opt and accommodate moderate politicians and electors (so-called systemic liberals or sistemnye liberaly). Nadezhdin quit the RC in 2011 in order to become an electioneering agent for Sergey Mironov, the Just Russia party leader, and tried to run in primaries for the 2016 State Duma elections[6]. One way or another, a chink in the regime's system of defense remained unfilled, as this top-down liberal project seemed to have failed in the electoral market. A number of moderate politicians and their loyal liberal electorate were left out in the cold. Nonetheless, this episode went almost unnoticed and got lost in the shuffle of subsequent developments.

Why should one care about a political party's failure? The RC episode remains relevant to the extent that authoritarian regimes strive to co-opt potential and moderate opposition (Gandhi and Przeworski 2007; Magaloni 2006; Reuter and Robertson 2014) with such top-down projects as political parties. If regimes with dominant parties can accommodate ambitious career-oriented politicians by admitting them to party primaries or through other channels and then systematically advancing their careers – as happened in the PRI in Mexico and the KMT in Taiwan (Langston 2006) – then personalist regimes usually cannot offer potential office-seekers institutionalized channels of upward mobility. The carrying capacity of these channels in personalist regimes seems to be significantly lower in the absence of merit-based procedures.

In the case of the Russian political regime, Vladimir Putin and his team from early 2000s undertook a comprehensive set of measures directed at strengthening the state's infrastructural capacity, the 'power vertical' (*vertikal' vlasti*), taming the oligarchs and – last, but not least - strengthening political parties at federal and regional levels. Appar-

[3]Elena Mizulina: kak menialis' vzgliady i sfera interesov deputata. 13.07.2015. Open Russia. Accessed on 05.06.2016. URL: https://openrussia.org/post/view/8501/

[45]ff

[6]Nadezhdin, Boris. Byvshii predsedatel' posmoskovnogo otdeleleniia partii "Pravoe delo". Lenta.ru. Accessed on 05.06.2016. URL: https://lenta.ru/lib/14161067/

ently, this policy aimed at institutionalizing United Russia – a merger of the Moscow-based bureaucrats' party Unity (*Edinstvo*)[7] and the Homeland-All Russia block (*Otechestvo-Vsya Rossiya*, OVR) backed by regional governors and local political hegemons, including Moscow's then-mayor, Yurii Luzhkov. This new party was dubbed "the party of power" (*partiya vlasti*) (Golosov and Liechtenstein 2001; Remington 2008) and aimed at securing support for the new presidential candidate Vladimir Putin during his first election campaign in 2000.

The political-party reforms included the following steps: introduction of a system of proportional representation at the federal level (Federal law as of 11.07.2001 "On political parties" amended on 21.07.2005), an increase in the electoral threshold from 5% to 7%, tightening the requirements for party registration (regional branches no less than in half of the Russian regions, strict membership requirements), introduction of proportional representation system at the regional level (no less than half of the regional legislature, FL as of 2002) (Kynev 2006). Thus, the parliamentary elections of 2007 were held according the PR electoral formula, ultimately eliminating independent MPs (i.e. regional strongmen backed by their constituencies). It did not come as surprise that United Russia obtained a constitutional majority in the parliament in 2007 that allowed for passing literally any bill with only token debate. United Russia as well as other parties proliferated into the regional legislatures and restructuring and to some extent unifying the political landscape across the country. Legislative elections of 2011 were the second elections that followed the same electoral formula. However, these did not go off. The logic goes as follows: more institutionally-developed authoritarian regimes seem to carry insurance against such subversive outcomes as post-electoral protests as it has been shown in previous chapters. If the 2007 elections went relatively smoothly for the ruling elite, 2011 proved to be a genuine challenge.

What followed were the largest mass protests since the fall of USSR, with tens of thousands of people taking to the streets in the center of Moscow, on Sakharov Avenue (Prospekt Sakharova), on December 24, 2011. Their main grievances centered on the handling of legislative elections by the authorities. The protesters called for freedom for all political prisoners, dismissal of the head of the Central Election Commission, Vladimir Churov, investigation of cases of fraud and new parliamentary elections (Ross 2016, p. 1). A series of smaller protests and performances followed until the presidential elections on March 4, 2012, but by autumn the wave of protests had seemingly died out.

Many observers describe these protests through the lens of the failed 'color' revolutions that have been unfolding in the post-Soviet space, having labeled this as a 'winter' or 'snow' revolution (Oates 2013). Russian protests have posed a genuine problem in a sense

[7] *Edinstvo* or Unity is an electoral coalition initially called MEDVED (bear in Russian) lead by Sergey Shoigu. This coalition or izbiratel'nyi block was created to back up Vladimir Putin at his first presidential election run, in 2000 (Remington 2008; Wilson 2005, pp. ,117-118).

that against the overall tendency across electoral authoritarian regimes when the degree of dominant party's development and its proliferation into political life of a country normally decreases the odds of protests events after elections even if they fell short of international standards. In terms of party system institutionalization and its co-optional capacity, these elections constitute an outlier.

How does co-optation through party of power and its satellites help prevent protests? A diverse and abundant body of literature on social movements and mass contention claims that for a mobilization to be successful there should be different preconditions in place including low probability of repression (Rasler 1996; Carey 2006; Boudreau 2009), sufficient resources such as time, knowledge and working networks (Brady, Verba, and Schlozman 1995), and allies from the elites (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996, p. 27). As McAdam et al. put it, there are four elements in the political opportunity structure that facilitate further mobilization: 1) the relative openness of the institutional political system; 2) the stability in elite alignments; 3) the state's capacity and repression, and; (4) the presence or absence of elite allies. Students of democratic transitions make a similar claim that elite ruptures are necessary and could be supported by mass protests (Rustow 1970; O'Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead 1986). Thereby those politicians or peripheral members of the ruling coalition can significantly contribute to the success of any bottom-up protest. Another important element is the group of voters who are or could be attached to those elite groups that turned out to be excluded and deprived of political representation. Those moderate or even loyal liberal voters could become a fertile ground for the For Fair Elections movement and formed a critical mass during most rallies that took place in December 2011-May 2012.

These preliminary considerations serve as the point of departure for the answers as to why the share of party members in the national legislature failed to prevent post-electoral protests? Is there any linkage between the legislature's composition and the probability of protests at all? Were there any context-specific factors that reverted the suggested causal relationships? These are the questions I attempt to answer in the two case-study chapters. This chapter provides a brief context of Russian protests as well as the rationale for the Russian case as an outlier and its heuristic value for refinement of the model developed earlier. Then I proceed with the analysis of current literature that speaks to the reasons, forms, and repertoire of the Russian December protests. The argument I propose to address these questions is developed in the next chapter.

4.2 Context

In 1999, Vladimir Putin – a former KGB colonel and close ally of incumbent president Boris Yeltsin – came to power as prime minister, and after successful military and anti-terrorist campaigns in the Republic of Chechnya was quickly elected president. The

Russian political regime established in 1991 obviously cannot be considered as full-blown democracy, since unprecedented political and economic decentralization and centripetal movements in national republics, accompanied by financial and criminal turmoil, have led the country to the brink of collapse as a political entity. For this reason, political centralization was seen as the primary task of the new president and his administration. In 2003, in order to secure a supportive majority for President Putin's initiatives to consolidate political power and maintain stability ("the vertical of power"), a new party of power, United Russia, was created.

Although the macroeconomic stability had been achieved by the mid-2000s, democratic reforms were rolled back, especially after the abolition of gubernatorial elections in 2005. Repressive party legislation was introduced by the ruling elite in 2002 and 2005, as was electoral engineering and the extension of the presidential term from four to six years. Since 2007 international organizations monitoring the quality of democracy have qualified Russia as an autocracy (Polity IV Country Report 2010)[8].

According to the BBC, the Russian parliamentary elections to the federal legislature – the State Duma – in December 2011 resulted in:

> the biggest protests since the fall of USSR... As many as 50,000 people gathered on an island near the Kremlin to condemn alleged ballot-rigging in parliamentary elections and demand a re-run. Other, smaller rallies took place in St Petersburg and other cities. Communists, nationalists and Western-leaning liberals turned out together despite divisions between them. The protesters allege there was widespread fraud in Sunday's polls though the ruling United Russia party did see its share of the vote fall sharply [9].

According to the official results by the Central Electoral Commission, the party of power, United Russia, gained a majority of seats in the State Duma (238 out of 450 seats). Still, its officially reported vote share was below 50%, and in some big cities even well below 30-35% (Central Electoral Commission 2011).

For the first time accusations of mass electoral fraud has become the driving force of the protests. As Denis Volkov documents, the mobilization for the rallies consisted of pre-planned events by election observers and the opposition, many voters declared their intention to cast a vote of protest, these actions and spreading the evidence of fraud went viral and received attention and support from wider public (Volkov 2015, p. 38).

Among the major protest events most of them took place in Moscow. The very first rallies were carefully pre-planned by the oppositional Solidarnost' movement spearheaded by Garry Kasparov, Boris Nemtsov, Ilya Yashin on December 5, 2011 at Chistye Prudy.

[8]For more comprehensive overview of the Russian political regime see Hale 2014, Gel'man 2015, McFaul 2015.

[9]Russian election: Biggest protests since fall of USSR. BBC News. 10.12.2011. Accessed on 3.03.2017. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-16122524

Several prominent persons such as writers (Boris Akunin), musicians (Yurii Shevchuk), poets (Mikhail Efremov), civil activists (Alexei Navalny) and election observers (Golos, Citizen Observer) expressed support and joined the meeting (Volkov 2012; Volkov 2015). The massive rallies on Bolotnaia Square and Sakharov Avenue, held on the 10th and 24th December respectively, attracted tens of thousands of people. Some observers believed that this unexpected wave would soon decline, and that the New Year holidays would take the heat out of the popular unrest; others, on the contrary, predicted growing pressure from the citizens could have even lead to the resignation of the current political elite, or, more precisely, the prime minister Vladimir Putin and his allies[10]. Those hoping for reforms and future democratization were enthusiastically spreading invitations via the internet and social networks to take part in the upcoming peaceful march on February 4, in Moscow. The political elite responded by promising a whole package of political reforms – the reintroduction of gubernatorial elections, the facilitation of the political parties registration procedure, and a change in the electoral system 2011)[11].

These protests differed from any earlier ones in several respects. The rallies were dominated by the middle class and those who were well-off in terms of income and life opportunities (Levada Center, Ross 2015:3, 77-96, Robertson 2013). Another important feature is that this time protesters advanced political claims as opposed to earlier anti-monetization rallies in middle-sized cities in 2005 (Volkov 2012; Robertson 2013). Finally, the protests comprised mostly voters living in capitals – Moscow and Saint Petersburg – and young or middle-aged people who had obtained higher education degrees (Levada Polls 2012). These traits make the protesters non-representative and distinguish them from the rest of the Russian population (Smyth, Sobolev, and Soboleva 2013; Ross 2016).

As analysts note, by fall 2012 there was a decline in frequency and number of protesters. Treisman writes: "The number of demonstrating in Moscow each month [fell] sharply – from 210, 000 in December 2011 to 5,500 in July 2013 (according to opposition reports), or 57,500 to 2,000 (according to the authorities)" (Treisman 2013, p. 13). Protests by and large faded away by June 2013 and the political crisis in Ukraine that unfolded in November 2013 followed by the ouster of then-President Viktor Yanukovich and the annexation of Crimea by Russia put an end to the post-election wave of mass mobilization. Political approval and electoral ratings of Vladimir Putin and United Russia skyrocketed up to 80-88 per cent according to the Levada enter monthly polls reflecting the phenomenon widely known among political scientists as the 'rally-round-the-flag' syndrome (Gel'man 2015; Groeling and Baum 2008, pp. 117,). This occurred in spite of the steep economic downturn, dramatic decrease in per capita income, falling oil export prices, currency devaluation, and voters' declining purchasing capacity (Aleksashenko et al. 2009; Zubarevich

[10]More on the protests and repertoires see (Volkov 2012; Ross 2016; Yerpyleva and Magun 2014)

[11]Russia: Medvedev urges bold political reforms. BBC News. Accessed on 3.03.2017. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-16299093

2013; Gel'man 2016).

The protests of 2011-12 seem to have inspired large strata of previously passive and depoliticized citizens. However, the colors and direction of this politicization remain unclear and have proven to be conditional on other factors. As the scrupulous analysis of the oppositional and pro-regime rallies by Smyth et al. shows, "both sets of activists incorporated social and personal claims into a bundle of factors that reflect their sense of civic duty" (Smyth et al. 2015: 65-66). Both groups of protesters expressed their concern with the current developments and the state of the political system. Robertson, in turn, argues that we observed an emergence of a new political cleavage between relatively well-off Moscow and St Petersburg citizens and the rest of Russia, which is poorer, more traditionalist, and pro-regime (2012).

On the other hand, these protests heavily affected the way the political regime has developed since then. Vladimir Putin's third term in power was marked by a resolute reaction and a tightening of control over mass media, including state channels, websites, blogs,and newspapers (Gel'man 2015, pp. 55,62); restricting the sources of funding for NGOs and introduction of a label of 'foreign agent' for those receiving support from abroad; imposition of a ban for publicizing the number of fatalities in peacetime, and; abolition of the supremacy of the international courts' verdicts (including the European Court of Human Rights) in Russia (Gel'man 2015: 141). The list of counter-measures can be easily continued, but the main lesson that the regime seemed to have drawn from the wave of contention is the protection and preservation of the regime by all possible means. These protests clearly demonstrated the weakness of electoral authoritarianism in Russia and the regime's internal deficiencies and gaps in infrastructural power. In this case I think Henry Hale's notion, expressed in his piece back in 2006, that most of the post-Soviet regime had drawn the wrong lessons from the wave of post-election protests by clearing the already feeble structures of civil society and barely functioning feedback mechanisms, is telling (Hale 2006, pp. 27-35). These measures deprive the incumbents of any safety cushions and possibilities of peaceful regime transition and increase the odds of violent ways of expressing political grievances in case of crisis.

4.3 The Puzzle of Russian Post-election Protests

Some observers see the Russian events of 2011-2012 as being part of the earlier wave of 'color' or 'electoral' revolutions in Serbia, Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan, some of which succeeded in toppling incumbents and pushing democratization processes forward. On the web, the promising name of the 'winter revolution' is being passed from one blog, tweet, or article to another. Quite unexpectedly Russia has given a real gift to political scientists, having provided an excellent example of the subversive or unanticipated consequences of the existing institutional settings: a 'façade' election which suddenly got out

of hand, at least from the dictator's perspective.

This case has posed some conceptual issues such as: why did these protests take place when they did rather than earlier? The timing of these events seems puzzling in its own right, since the previous elections were also marred by procedural violations. Nor do the elections of 2007 and 2008 look better in this respect.

Another puzzle is that this election, in fact, was a 'normal' one according to the recent Russian electoral standards. The expected and predictable level of fraud (some even claim that there were slightly fewer mass falsifications and other procedural violations than in previous elections), the ban on the opposition parties and organizations, the usual media bias on the part of the central Russian channels and the organized pressure from the local and regional administrations had all taken place before. More or less routinely, the Russian opposition organizations and unregistered parties were trying to mobilize protest voting, calling their supporters to tick any box for any party on the ballot paper provided it was not United Russia (nicknamed the 'Party of Swindlers and Thieves'). Voters were used to the fact that 'non-official' opposition leaders, such as the PARNAS with Boris Nemtsov[12]. Vladimir Ryzhkov, Mikhail Kasyanov, and others, are systematically detained by the police, deprived of equal access to the mass media, and until recently did not enjoy widespread public support. Given the weak mobilizing capacity of the opposition and unlikely 'diffusion effect' of the electoral revolutions, what has triggered the subversive potential of elections in this case?

As Vladimir Gel'man claims the causes of the Russian "stunning elections" remain insufficiently explained: "While they are not considered a kind of *deus ex machina*, most analysts tend to be deterministic in their ex post explanations" (Gel'man 2015: 133). Most of the literature envisages the protests as unavoidable and pre-determined, while I would rather emphasize their contingent nature as we saw in previous chapters.

4.4 Rational for case-selection

How does the case of Russian post-election protests contribute to the overall theory of subversive effects of elections under authoritarianism? As the literature on the mixed-methods research design suggests, case-studies compensate for the gaps in more general models based on large-N analysis and help fix the following issues (Collier, Seawright, and Munck 2004, pp. 56-57):

1) identification of possible errors in outcome variable or measurement of protests,

2) finding omitted variables and sources for causal heterogeneity, such as why the share of independents is associated with opposite effects,

[12]Boris Nemtsov was assassinated on February, 27th, 2015 in Moscow on Bolshoi Moskvoretskii Bridge in the vicinity of the Kremlin.

Table 4.1: Predicted probabilities of post-electoral protests in Russia

Predicted Pr, %	Actual protest	year	Type of election	% of independents	Media bias	Boycott Full or partial
NA	No	1995	Leg	17.11	No	Yes
10	No	1996	Exe	17.11	No	Yes
17	No	1999	Leg	23.33	Yes	No
40	No	2000	Exe	23.33	Yes	No
14	No	2003	Leg	14.90	Yes	No
35	No	2004	Exe	14.90	No	No
26	No	2007	Leg	0	No	No
10	No	2008	Exe	0	No	No
26	Yes	2011	Leg	0	No	No

Source: Author's calculations.
NB! The estimated model (see Chapter 3) is
$ln(p/(1-p)) = -1.02 + 0.03\beta_1 - 1.15\beta_2 - 1.60\beta_3 - 0.53\beta_4 + e$, where p is the probability of post-electoral protests, β_0 is an intercept, β_1 – number of independent MPs in legislature, β_2 – significant pro-incumbent media bias (nelda16), β_3 – boycott by opposition, β_4 – party-based regime according to Geddes, e – error term.

3) potential confounding variables that could alter direction of the causal arrow (internal features of party organization?), and

4) pathway or mediating variables that carry out the effect under investigation.

Regression analysis has proven to be instructive in terms of probabilistic relations; however, it leaves the causal mechanism between the macro-phenomena unexamined. Moreover, models produced this way carry little in terms of explanatory power. The latter can be particularly frustrating given the fact that we deal with the population data, i.e. all existing electoral authoritarian regimes.

Revealing causal mechanisms allows for tackling some of the regression models' limitations, thus providing insights into: 1) identification of possible errors in outcome variable or measurement of protests; 2) finding omitted variables and sources for causal heterogeneity, why the share of independents are associated with opposite effects; 3) potential confounding variable that could alter the causal arrow direction (internal features of party organization?), and; 4) pathway or mediating variables that carry out the effect under investigation. Taking all this into account, Russian elections of 2011 are not, strictly speaking, an outlier, but a case with extreme values on the dependent variable, which means that there were many more protests in 2011 than the theory would predict.

Table 4.1 presents the predicted probabilities of post-electoral protests in Russia, as compared with actual protests that occurred only in 2011 and 2012. According to the model, the riskiest elections in terms of mass mobilization took place in 2000, which might sound counterintuitive. However, we have to keep in mind that we talk only about the probability of an event that *per se* is highly contingent and volatile. If we forget for a while the actual outcome of the 2000 presidential bid, we could easily describe them as

especially dangerous: the incapability and 'lame duck syndrome' of Boris Yeltsin and low public profile of his unknown successor, Vladimir Putin, clearly boded ill for the stability of the political scene. The massive media coverage of the dramatic fight against terrorists as well as the ongoing military campaign in the Chechen Republic, however, effectively dashed the hopes of potential challengers. The war in Chechnya seems to have constituted the contextual factor that consolidated the electorate around the future president, whose 'rally around the flag' effect was amplified by powerful mass media tycoons (Lipman 2005).

In turn, when we compare the legislative elections of 2007 and 2011, it is striking to see that the predicted probabilities of protests are identical (26%), while other predictors remain similar. Thus, we can reasonably conclude that we miss contextual factors (as was the case of 2000 elections), omitted a crucial variable, or mis-specified the concept of institutionalization. In next section, I propose a mechanism that provides answers to these questions.

The Russian 2011 legislative elections seem deviant in terms of **unusual relations between the share of independent parliamentarians and probability of protests, i.e. between the level of institutionalization and the odds of subversive effects**. As the model outlined in Chapter 3 predicts, a higher share of independent MPs indicates less partisan and more personalist regimes and, therefore, fewer channels of citizens' and potential elite co-optation. Higher level of party system institutionalization should be negatively associated with the probability of mass post-election protests. In Russia these were the second federal elections held according to fully proportional representation system and, thereby, contradicts the causal arrow suggested by the model. In terms of other predictors, Russian protests fit 'the regression line'. The very connection between institutional features and share of independents and post-electoral protests still requires further investigation and poses a genuine puzzle: how do elite-based institutional regulations such as parties of power (or dominant parties) and electoral formulae translate into the mass politics?

Another advantage of the theory-building perspective is that the Russian case highlights the causal path, mediating variables and, thereby, potential links between the two macro-phenomena – institutional arrangements and protests (Mayntz 2004; Frieden 1999; Héritier 2008). Institutional arrangements here encompass the federal legal regime for political parties (Federal law N67 as of 2005) and the electoral system (Federal law on the Basic guarantees of electoral rights of the citizens of Russian Federation as of 2002 amended in 2005). The new law regulating the functioning of political parties was introduced in 2005 under the public pretext of strengthening political parties. The mixed-member electoral system (MMM) was supplanted by fully party list (PR) system with the threshold of 7%.

Deeper scrutiny of the Russian protests and causal reconstruction from the institutions to the mass mobilization passing through a chain will shed more light on the causal paths

and micro-mechanisms in operation (Heritier 2008, Vennesson 2008). Process-tracing technique suggests the necessity of dissecting systematically varying variables across the cases and some contingent context-specific factors (Benett 2005). Finally, given "the extreme value of Y" or the probability of protests, this case would help us to find additional factors that account for the emergence of protests that differ from context-specific factors and may be added to the large-N analysis. Lastly, an in-depth analysis provides more insights into the measurement and operationalization of such complex macro-phenomena as 'institutionalization' and 'subversion'.

4.5 Perspectives on Russian post-electoral protests: Usual suspects

A newly-emerged literature on the Russian protests and post-election contention in general provides a good deal of insight on potential causes and mechanisms. In 2012-2014 dozens of scholarly papers flooded the journals, seeking to offer readers their views on what happened in a regime where civil society was conventionally seen as feeble, disoriented, and incapable of collective political actions and highly mobilized 'administrative' capacity to maintain the necessary level of political support. For some observers the protests came as a surprise, while others claim that the protests were planned and well-co-ordinated.

The occurrence of Russian protests resembles an over-determined event, much as if it were inevitable. The very logic resembles like the *Murder at the Orient Express* story by Agatha Christie where every single suspect committed the crime. Among the most popular explanations among domestic and international observers is the decisive impact of socio-economic modernization followed by corresponding cultural changes that highlighted the specific role of the rising urban middle class (Belanovskiy and Dmitriev 2011; Gel'man 2013)[13]. Others stress the impact of information technologies and social networks (Twitter, Facebook, *VKontakte*) that facilitated further 'connective action' (Gel'man 2015; Enikolopov et al. 2013). Gel'man, for instance, claims that the protests resulted from the whole causal whirlpool of various factors starting from "major shifts in public demands in the political market which are the results of exogenous shocks" and efficient "cooperation among opposition" (Gelman 2015:113). However, in the end he concludes, "without denying such possibilities, one should note that none of these factors, alone or in combination, can explain why at certain critical junctures some regimes survive and other do not" (2015:116). Therefore, there is still a lack of parsimonious explanation that disentangle the deeply endogenous nature of any contentious event and accounts for the probabilistic nature of subversive electoral effects, trying to avoid *post hoc* statements.

[13] "My stali zhadnymi I podozritel'nymi". Sociolog Eduard Ponarin o tsennostiakh rossiyan I ikh videnii schastia. 14.12.2015. Lenta.ru. Accessed on 05.06.2016. URL: https://lenta.ru/articles/2015/12/14/happy/

The existing literature on post-election protests focuses on the causes and correlates of collective actions as well as its consequences (democratic transition, regime concessions, or repression), protesters' profile, and mechanisms. For the sake of clarity, I grouped the exiting literature into five clusters: 1) electoral fraud as a trigger, 2) international dimension and diffusion effects, 3) modernization effects; 4) contentious politics and political opportunity structure, and 5) political institutions.

4.5.1 Protest triggered by electoral fraud

Previous scholarship on post-electoral protests has emphasized the importance of electoral fraud for triggering protests and elections as a focal point that solves the collective action problem and facilitates co-ordination (Kuntz and Thompson 2009; Bunce and Wolchik 2011; Norris 2014). Kuntz and Thompson note that in authoritarian regimes - even if rigged - provide the regime with formal legitimacy, as citizens still believe in their ability to affect the political process. Outright fraud and vote stealing demolish one of the main pillars of the regime (2009, 51). Procedural violations spur resentment, which would not have occurred in situations where expectations of proper procedure were unjustified to begin with. A study by Tucker shows the importance of major electoral fraud for electoral revolutions ('stolen' elections) (2007). Those living under authoritarian regimes share discontent with the existing regime because of corruption and civil rights discrimination.

However, expression of this discontent in everyday circumstances usually incurs high costs and is unlikely to accomplish anything. In the context of fraudulent elections, however, the cost-benefit calculus changes. Tucker distinguishes between two types of fraud: minor violations, which are perceived by potential protesters as having little impact on electoral outcomes, and major violations, which, conversely, are believed to be outcome-changing. It is the evidence of major electoral fraud that increases the odds of success of individual participation, simultaneously decreasing its costs. The makes protests more likely (2007). A distinctive feature of elections is that they belong to the category of events where the whole country experiences the same grievance at the same time: "Stolen elections do [this]: stealing the results creates an 'imagined community' of millions of robbed voters" (Tucker 2007, p. 260), thereby encouraging an overall mobilization.

However, there remains the question of why not every rigged election brings about protests. Some studies suggest that it is not the absolute level of malpractice that affects the probability of mass outcry, but rather a noticeable change in the level of electoral malpractice/integrity from previous elections that makes a real difference (Beacháin and Polese 2010). That said, there is no agreement on whether it is relative deterioration or improvement in electoral integrity that creates more opportunity for mobilization. Beissinger also links voters' indignation with the absence of a previous practice of falsification, which results in voters' surprise and frustration (2007). An incumbent's deposition

becomes more difficult after his oath and receipt of a legitimate right to run the country; this is why regimes are more vulnerable during electoral campaigns, when the threat of repression is low (Beissinger 2007; Bhasin and Gandhi 2013). On the other hand, changes in electoral integrity may have the opposite effect depending on the type of authoritarianism: in a closed regime an increase in electoral integrity unleashes the probability of protests, while in more contested autocracies it is a relative decrease in electoral integrity that drives them (Goldsmith et al. 2012).

From this perspective, the Russian elections constitute a puzzle that to a large extent contradicts these theoretical expectations. According to many expert accounts, the elections of 2007-8 were by no means cleaner in terms of electoral integrity (Kalinin and Mebane 2012; Bader and Ham 2015), which implies that a relative increase in electoral integrity seems to ease mass unrest in big cities. On the other hand, the Russian political regime in 2008-2011 was still an example of a contested autocracy, rather than of a hegemonic one (Freedom House 2012). Given this, we must address more context-specific factors, beyond the systemic correlates of protests such as repression and electoral malpractice that could also lead to mass resentment.

As long as the real level of electoral fraud is hidden from observers, what matters are *the perceptions* of procedural justice and substantive fairness (see Sedziaka and Rose 2015). It is the public unveiling of electoral fraud that triggered mass outrage and pushed to the streets even those who did not have any previous political experience. Despite the fact that this fraud had been anticipated and, in the end, did not considerably differ from violations in previous elections, as Volkov argues, "It is not the fraud *per se* that has become news and a revelation, but rather *aggravated attention* to this issue and the particular actions undertaken by an active part of the society, the minority" (2012). The latter serves as a critical addition to current literature on the consequences of electoral malpractice.

4.5.2 Protest as a result of international influence and diffusion

One more piece of literature deserves scholarly attention in an attempt to explain political change in Russia and the role of the protest movement – theories which stress the role of transnational diffusion, international linkage, and leverage. By the same token, I cannot ignore the increasing role of the internet technologies in spreading politically relevant information, articulating claims, creating and transforming identities or even organizing collective action.

Mark Beissinger develops an approach to the study of electoral revolutions as *modular political phenomena*, in other words, "action based in significant part on emulation of the prior successful example of others" (2007:259). He specifies two models of elite response to modular processes: the defection model and the learning model.

Within the modular democratic revolutions that have spread across the post-communist states, prior cases of revolutionary success have encouraged a widespread transnational borrowing of revolutionary modes of confrontation, inciting action where it otherwise would have been unlikely." (...) However, we have also seen that the effect of modular phenomena on political outcomes varies depending on how established elites among later risers react to modular processes—whether they choose *to co-opt modular processes* and defect, or whether they *learn lessons from the model's iterative character* and take measures to prevent its further spread by imposing additional institutional constraints (the italics are mine) (Beissinger 2007:273).

Russia is a perfect example of the learning model, where political elites handled the possible political unrest, first, by mobilizing the pro-Kremlin youth (Nashi; Going with Putin, created in opposition to the movement, Going without Putin); second, launching a large-scale mass media campaign; third, creating original political doctrines (former Deputy Head of President Administration Vladislav Surkov's concept of 'sovereign democracy', or *suverennaya demokratiya*), and, finally, adopting well-planned institutional adjustments (introduction of proportional representation in the parliament, the abolition of gubernatorial elections, etc.). However, these events cannot be explained exclusively by the post-communist space diffusion, since the impact of the 'color revolutions' is distant. Maybe the Arab Spring and the fall of Hosni Mubarak in Egypt and Ben-Ali in Tunisia have produced a shared perception of the possible amongst an already desperate opposition and civil society? The parallels between the Egyptian regime and its logic of economic survival are often depicted in internet discussions and analytical blogs. The demonstration effect might be contagious, but it is extremely difficult to establish a clear causal mechanism linking these two blocks together. Nevertheless, I would not discard the claim that the opening up of the global political opportunity structure may shift the perception of politics and the role of citizens in the decision-making process. These could have served as remote role models; however, the references to these events by political activists, protesters' slogans, interviews, and other narratives are virtually absent.

Incumbents, in Levitsky and Way's words, "often sweat", because of the existence of meaningful – even if systematically violated – democratically-designed institutions (Levitsky and Way 2010). Levitsky and Way in their theoretical account bring back elections as the trigger for the 'color revolutions' and pinpoint the role of the strength of the country's ties to the West, as well as the strength of the incumbent regime's autocratic party or state. "Strong linkage or dense economic, political, and social ties with the United States and Western Europe create overwhelming obstacles to authoritarian consolidation by increasing the extent to which Western powers are willing to invest in regime change" (Way 2008:60). Russia as an instance of competitive authoritarian stable equilibrium, even if economically connected with democratic countries, possesses enough state capacity to prevent any considerable influence from the West (Levitsky and Way 2011). A

Russian law introduced in January 2006, "On Introducing Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation", prevents any considerable foreign funding of political and non-governmental organizations. NGOs that fail to comply with stipulated requirements could be denied registration and be subjected to severe penalties. The legal provisions allow authorities:

> "to deny registration to any organization whose "goals and objectives... create a threat to the sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity, national unity, unique character, cultural heritage, and national interests of the Russian Federation"; demand proof of residency from those founding an NGO, bar foreign nationals or stateless persons without residency in Russia from doing so, and similarly bar any individual whom state agencies, at their discretion, deem to be "undesirable"; prohibit, on vaguely defined grounds, the implementation of programs of foreign NGOs or the transfer of funds to their local branches" (Freedom House Factsheet 2011).

It must be noted that then-President Dmitry Medvedev introduced amendments that significantly improved this ambiguous legislation, but only after November 2012, when the new law of foreign agents (a derogatory term for internationally funded NGOs) had been adopted.

Civil society groups such as Golos, Citizen Observer, Doktor Liza by Elizaveta Glinka, Movement for Protection of Khimski Forest (*V zaschitu Khimkinskogo lesa*), *RosPil* by Alexey Navalnyi constituted the core of the movement For Fair Elections, while political parties proved to be rather weak and unorganized compared with their counterparts elsewhere in Eastern Europe (Howard 2008). Several NGOs readily accept public funding in exchange for its stability and non-prosecution (Evans 2012; Evans 2015). Most of the NGOs operate as government agencies or GONGOs rather than as autonomous organizations (Tarasenko 2015). Clearly, the opportunities for proper canvassing and outdoor campaign were extremely limited, which goes against Bunce and Wolchik's claim that there was a great deal of exported protest techniques and transnational learning (2010).

Notwithstanding the low probability of the decisive role for foreign actors, the Russian political regime seems to have sufficient endogenous sources for political change. Besides, this approach rules out elections and political institutions at large from the set of explanations, arguing that fraudulent elections are only one of many deficiencies in pseudo-democracies (Hale 2006; Levitsky and Way 2011). Addressing electoral shortcomings and changing top leadership does not transform many features underpinning hybrid and authoritarian regimes. Just as elections do not automatically produce democracy (the so-called electoral fallacy; Schmitter Karl 1991), neither does improving electoral integrity. According to the logic of the electoral fallacy, electoral revolutions are too narrow to address the full range of issues holding back democratization in hybrid and authori-

tarian regimes (Kalandadze and Orenstein 2009:1404). Most of these scholarly accounts address political regime changes or democratization, rather the origins of post-election protests. Moreover, a majority of successful post-election revolutions occurred not in genuine established authoritarianisms, but unstable and corrupt electoral democracies (e.g. Bulgaria, Ukraine). Thus, this literature addresses the effects of post-electoral protests and pays little attention to the mechanism of mobilization and its causes. The wave of protests in the context of the post-communist space seems suspiciously late, given the absence of significant international linkage and leverage.

4.5.3 Protest as developmental disease

Modernization, as Seymour Lipset put it, is a multidimensional phenomenon consisting of economic development and per capita economic growth but at the same time "all the various aspects of economic development — industrialization, urbanization, wealth and education — are so closely interrelated as to form one major factor which has the political correlate of democracy" (Lipset 1960, p. 41). Very often, especially in case of late industrializers such as Russia, political modernization unfolds at a lower speed and existing political institutions cannot accommodate the growing number of political demands (Huntington 2006). At the individual level, voters who have fulfilled their economic needs at some point start claiming for more political rights and liberties and democracy (Inglehart and Welzel 2005). From this perspective, political protests function as a developmental disease that sooner or later must be cured by further political liberalization. This bundle of explanations is far from uniform and different analysts stress structural factors such as relative deprivation after the 2008-9 financial crisis, the emergence of a new middle class in Russia, the rise of post-modern values (so-called 'hipsters', creative class), and finally, spread of internet technologies.

4.5.4 The internet

As to the role of the internet, new technologies of instantaneous communication, social networks and blogs, I would refrain from arguing that they have led to the protests, but it is hard to deny that they facilitated the co-ordination among participants by constantly sharing information about the detained, riots, possible provocations etc. According to a survey by the Levada Center from December 2011, 66% of protesters mentioned internet as the main source of information about the upcoming meetings, especially *VKontakte* ('In Contact', the Russian analogue of Facebook or MySpace) (Levada Center 2011). Furthermore, 9% of respondents received up-to-date news from the opposition radiostation 'Ekho Moskvy' (Moscow's Echo). Some experts have even posited a scenario of a bloggers' revolution, driven by advanced and younger constituencies' uncontrolled, snowballing reaction to the clumsy actions of the authorities. In this particular case,

today's instantaneous communication technologies could come in useful for organized action. The events of the recent Arab Spring, combined with a number of successful internet campaigns (Aleksey Navalny's anticorruption website 'Rospil'; an anti-United Russia campaign branding the chief pro-Kremlin force "a party of swindlers and thieves") put the government on alert, increasing the risk of an escalating confrontation between the authorities and the bloggers (Lipman and Petrov 2011, p. 613).

White and McAllister, relying on evidence from regular surveys, claim, "the media did indeed play a major role in shaping the public's views about the fairness of the election" (White and McAllister 2014, p. 79). The audience of TV channels tends to view elections as fair, in contrast to those regularly obtaining information from the internet, who expressed more critical assessments of election integrity (2014:79). Reuter and Szakonyi also provide empirical evidence drawn from the online survey that particular social media – Facebook and Twitter – helped increasing political awareness, while Russian-language analogues, *VKontakte* (In Contact, VK) and *Odnoklassniki* (Classmates) being the most popular applications did not produce any politicizing effects (Reuter and Szakonyi 2015). VK has 190 million of registered users, and *Odnoklassniki* 45 million users worldwide, while in Russia Facebook encompasses about 9 million users, and Twitter, 4.5 million (see for more detail White and McAllister 2014:77). Scherbak and Koltsova (Koltsova and Shcherbak 2015) underline a crucial role of the blogosphere in boosting non-systemic opposition ratings. At the same time, an increase in pro-opposition posts in LiveJournal shows no links with support of parliamentary opposition – the CPRF and Just Russia.

On the other hand, Enikolopov et al. tried to tackle potential endogeneity problems – perhaps more people with specific political leanings preferred certain social networks thereby generating a problem of self-selection and reversed causality (Enikolopov et al. 2013). They approached the problem by using the instrumental variable approach and placebo tests and found that "protests were more numerous in places with higher *VKontakte* penetration; however, the effect of fractionalization of social networks, i.e. in places in which market shares of leading social networks were more evenly distributed, was less pronounced" (2013). The authors emphasize that the underlying cause is social pressure, not the co-ordination power of social media as suggested by most of the literature (Reuter and Szakonyi 2013, White and McAllister 2014, Scherbak and Koltsova 2013).

Given the fact that the number of internet users has dramatically increased (by 26 per cent) since 2007 (White and McAllister 2014:77), the risk of effective spread of information and evidence of election fraud has grown correspondingly. On the other hand, as Lonkila (Lonkila 2016) points out that internet has its sinister side and "can undermine the privacy and security of individual citizens, with potentially grave results for opposition protesters in authoritarian countries" (...) "social network sites (SNS), paradoxically enable increasing political awareness and new forms of mobilizing opposition as well as formerly unimaginable forms of state control and monitoring on citizens" (2016:1-2). However,

a series of consecutive actions by the government to take control over the cyber space occurred as response to the protests were not widespread before 2011. internet serves as a double-edge sword and as Gunitsky puts it, authoritarian regimes exploit the online media in order to endure its resilience through the mechanisms of counter-mobilization, pro-incumbent discourse framing, preference divulgence, and elite co-ordination (Gunitsky 2015). To sum up, we see that even those studies that found a significant causal relationship still argue that internet and social networks operate as a mediating variable that interacts with more substantive factors. On the other hand, as social capital has its dark side, the same holds true for the social media and internet resources as providers of politically-relevant information.

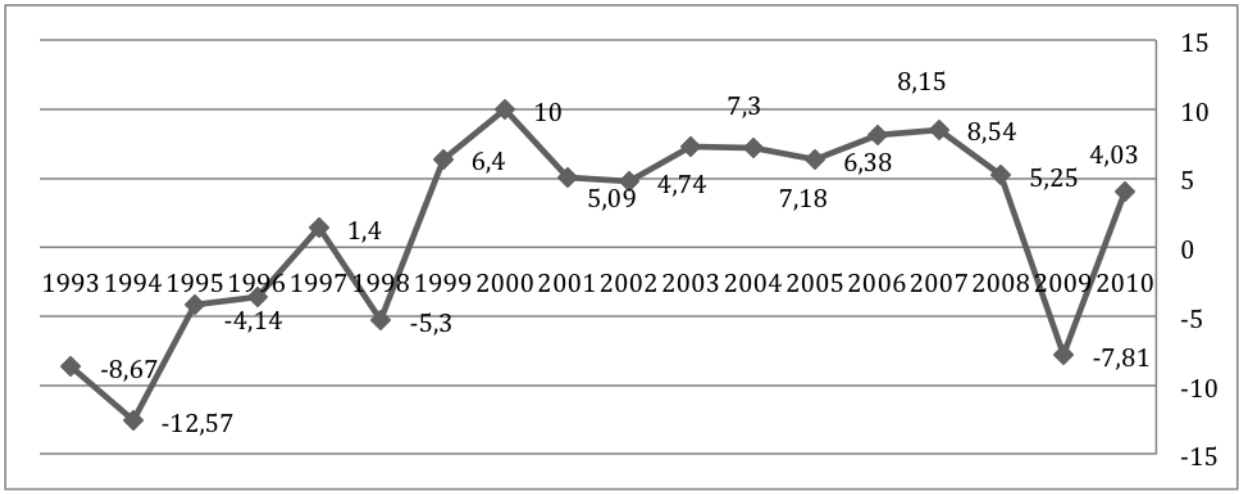
To conclude, the role of the internet and particularly popular bloggers as a caste or a new incarnation of the intellectual class would seem to merit further investigation. Hypothetically, cyberspace could be an incubator for future leaders or at least a decent alternative to a politically discredited television. Nevertheless, social network spaces (SNS), the blogosphere and internet channels, and news outlets should be considered as mediators that could amplify the scale of protest actions. Moreover, it would be as naïve to assume that the protests were a result of Facebook, as it would to conclude the Russian revolution of 1917 occurred because of telephones and the telegraph service.

4.5.5 Financial crisis

At the same time, socio-economic explanations emphasize the role of popular discontent due to unfulfilled expectations, prompted by the economic growth and stagnation after the financial crisis of 2008–2009. This logic of argumentation lines up with the relative deprivation theory elaborated by Robert Merton and, in more sociological terms by Karl Polanyi, with a focus on its economic aspect (Merton 1938; Mendell and Salée 1991). A relative decrease in personal wealth is perceived more acutely than absolute economic deterioration. As it can be seen from Figures 4.1 and 4.2, macroeconomic indicators reflect the dramatic fall of the economic growth in 2007 and its recovery in 2010. Referring to more individualized indicators, we observe the clear stagnation in GNI per capita since 2007 even before the world financial crisis.

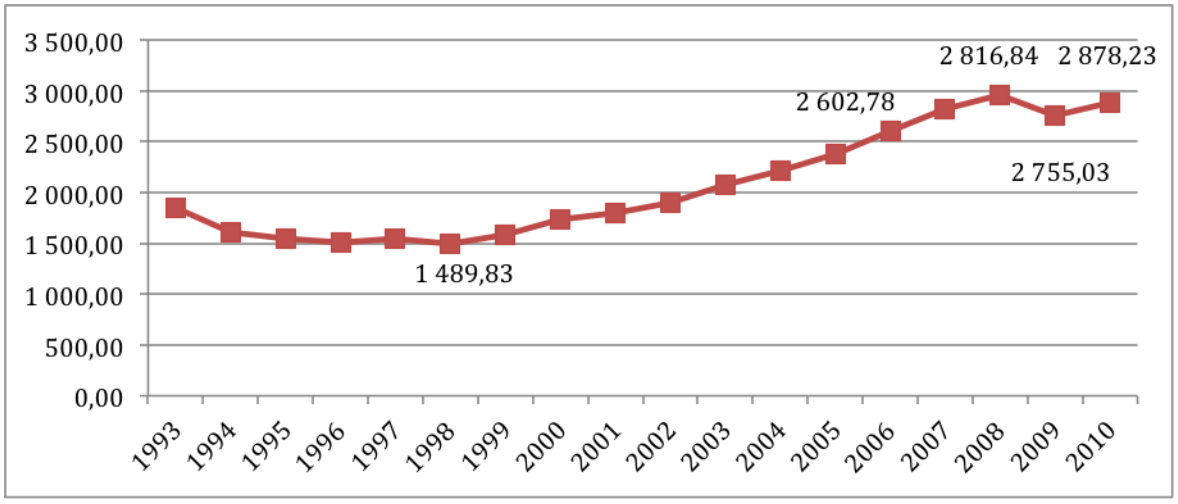
Some analysts mention the crisis of power legitimacy and the recent financial crisis among the main driving forces of the protests. On the eve of the elections there was a considerable decrease in the rankings of United Russia and the ruling tandem of Putin and Medvedev, and experts link this shift to the consequences of the financial crisis and the public demand for changes (Rogov 2011), including from elite groups (Belanovskiy and Dmitriyev 2011). This group of theories focuses on the dynamics of the social classes and the upturn in the economic wellbeing of the 2000s based on the increase in oil and gas prices and macroeconomic stabilization. As seen in Augusto Pinochet's Chile, "economic

Figure 4.1: GDP Annual Growth in Russian Federation, in %



Source: World bank

Figure 4.2: GNI per capita change in Russia since 1993 in constant 2000 US$ prices



Source: World bank

growth can inadvertently undermine autocratic rule by creating an urban professional class that clamors for new political rights"[14]. This claim is consonant with Barrington Moore's classical statement that the bourgeois is fundamental for the emergence of stable and viable democracy (Moore 1966). This gives a reason to some observers to claim that "Today we just proved that civil society does exist in Russia, that the middle class does exist and that this country is not lost," one of the protesters said [15].

Studies of Russians' responses to economic crises have led to somewhat controversial results. Rose, McAllister and White claim that the 2008-2009 crisis did not have any impact on Vladimir Putin and Dmitrii Medvedev's political support (Rose, Mishler, and Munro 2011). The "sociotropic economic evaluation" or a belief that the national economy has improved in the last years had a positive correlation with the evaluation of democratic development of the country: "In Russia, by contrast [to what happened in established democracies in 2008-2009], Putin maintained his high levels of popularity and our results show that he largely escaped any blame for the crisis" (White, Royston, and Wood 2011, p. 493). In contrast, Chaisty and Whitefield show a considerable effect of the financial crisis of 2008-2009 on Russians' political attitudes, particularly those who were affected by the crisis: "While it is true that Russians have had limited political choice and have displayed a deep capacity to adapt to severe economic crisis, this does not mean that the economic crisis did not leave any political scars" (Chaisty and Whitefield 2012, p. 201). Finally, Treisman analyzing presidential ratings comes to the similar conclusion that Russians have always evaluated political leaders primarily based on the objective economic indicators, rather than charismatic leadership or cultural specificity (Treisman 2011).

The financial crisis of 2008-9 did not hit Russians as heavily as the rest of Europe, however in 2010-11 a number of experts revealed inherent tensions and the absence of opportunities to express emerging discontent (Belanovskiy and Dmitriev 2011, Pepinsky 2012, Volkov 2015). As Treisman demonstrated, the governmental and presidential ratings co-vary with respondents' assessments of the economic situation (2011). However, electoral ratings do not represent a fully-fledged mechanism of political responsibility attribution in case of crisis. The problem of responsibility attribution and provision of feedback under authoritarianism remains unresolved. To put it simple, voters do not punish autocrats because they either steal elections (Schedler 2006, Levitsky and Way 2002) or use state machinery for repression, censorship, electoral fraud, and propaganda (Schedler 2013).

[14]Boosted by Putin, Russia's Middle Class Turns on Him. The New York times. 11.12.2011. Accessed on 2.03.2017. http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/12/world/europe/huge-moscow-rally-suggests-a-shift-in-public-mood.html

[15]Defying Putin;s Party Draws Tens of Thousands. Th New York Times. 10.12.2011. Accessed on 3.03.2017. http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/11/world/europe/thousands-protest-in-moscow-russia-in-defiance-of-putin.html

It is likely that the macroeconomic stagnation produced the disaffection with existing policies and the elections have just provided a pretext for expressing it. However, as mentioned above, all the slogans of protesters and the opposition's public appeals are concentrated exclusively on the political dimension, and the economic agenda seemed to be of no particular importance. Possibly economic changes are better viewed as background or structural conditions, which favor particular types of political actions, but do not directly trigger them. However, regarding the election as simply a means or a channel of uttering discontent seems lopsided and still does not provide us with the answer as to why exactly these parliamentary elections have produced so dramatic popular uprising in big cities, especially in the context of citizens' political silence in the stable and prosperous 2000s?

4.5.6 Middle Class

According to recent Russian surveys, a typical participant of the protests was not a politically marginal young man with uncertain future and radical left or right political leanings, but a person with quite pronounced middle class attributes and rather moderate and clear political requests. For instance, the All-Russian Center of Public Opinion Studies (VTSIOM) reports that on December, 24 64% of participants were men, usually younger than 45 (62%), with a university degree (70%), employed in the private sector (44%) and of relatively high or middle income (56%). The main reason respondents cited for taking to the streets is the disagreement with the results of the State Duma election (32%), the second significant reason is to protest against the current political regime (15%), and, thirdly, 12% of the protesters merely wished to demonstrate their civic position [16].

However, one can disagree that they represent one particular social group or class. Moreover, there is no agreement whether these people can be qualified as middle class in the traditional sense or as a 'new working class' ('office hamsters' as they have been labeled in the Russian-speaking internet). Some scholars such as Rueschemeyer see the working class as "the most consistent pro-democratic class, the landed classes as the most hostile to democracy, and the bourgeoisie or middle classes as inconsistent or ambiguous" (Collier and Adcock 1999; Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens 1992, pp. 10, 270). Regardless of these terminological controversies, most of the analysts dub these protests as the middle class upheaval. Usually it is assumed that middle classes accumulate wealth and thereby prefer rule of law and clear democratic procedures of political accountability in order to protect their material wellbeing (Acemoglu and Robinson 2008).

The criteria of possession to the middle class in Russia are vague and its size ac-

[16] Mitinguyuschie v Moskve: kto, zachem... Inosmi.ru. 27.12.2011. Accessed on 3.03.2017. http://inosmi.by/2011/12/27/mitinguyushhie-v-moskve-kto-zachem-i-kak-vyshel-na-prospekt-saxarova-v-subbotu/

cording to different estimates varies from 25% to 60% (Ross 2015:77-78). According to Mareeva's study, the size of the Russian middle class has grown from 29% (core of the middle class – 11%) to 33% (15% core) in 2011 and 42% (16%) in 2014 (Mareeva 2016). Among the prerequisites of the middle class are completed tertiary education, professional and non-manual occupation, income level, and self-identification (Ross 2015:78). The Russian middle class proved to be extremely heterogeneous and different in terms of its support for democracy and protests, depending on whether they belong to the economic (entrepreneurs, managers), political (government officials), or cultural and educational clusters (academics, analysts, writers) (Gill 2010; Ross 2016, pp. 5,80). As Ross argues, "a key defining feature of the middle class is its state-dependence. One explanation for the strong support for United Russia and the Putin regime is that fact that over 50% of the members of the middle class (and 68% of the core), work in the state sector" (2015:93). Thus, the middle class chooses its political leanings based on the main source of its income. Statistics of the social stratification in Russia testify against the hypothesis of the middle class as the driving force of protests, rather it was a part of this middle class (Volkov 2012).

Again, the main drawback of this explanatory logic is that the features of social classes are too blurred and contemporary social structure in Russia hardly fits into this theoretical framework. Moreover, given the fact that the socio-economic structure has not changed since the previous electoral cycle of 2007-2008, it is even more mysterious, why these social groups did not respond to the frank violations and political manipulations by the ruling elite. To conclude, the socio-economic structure has been more constant than it may seem to be.

4.5.7 Emancipative values

Another set of explanations comes from post-modernization studies, for instance the findings of Inglehart and Welzel, which draw on cross-section and time-series survey evidence (2005). A dominant pattern of social values is closely, but not linearly, associated with economic growth. If for modernizing societies materialistic values are of crucial importance and citizens are still able to sacrifice democracy in exchange for economic wellbeing and stability, for the so-called post-materialistic societies the values of self-expression force out the complex of survival values with general orientation to economic prosperity and maintaining the political stability. The comparative study of culture through the prism of the modernization paradigm focuses on the ecological properties of cultures. Within this framework, Inglehart and Welzel stress the role of 'human empowerment', which is "a threefold process of human empowerment that advances (a) the opportunities, (b) the resources and (c) the motivations of people to raise their voices and express shared concerns" (Welzel, Inglehart, and Klingemann 2003).

Self-expression or, more specifically, emancipative values[17] imply an active citizen position, tolerance and responsibility, and are in evident contradiction with any kind of non-democratic regime. If a society is experiencing growing levels of emancipative values, an incumbent needs a more elaborate system of manipulation or, conversely, more large-scale repression to stay in power. The dominance of survival values makes voters more consumerist and less 'citizen-oriented', which in a particular constellation of macro-economic conditions may lead to a relatively stable political equilibrium (Inglehart and Welzel 2010).

The rise of emancipative values leads to higher probability of non-violent protests (Welzel and Deutsch 2012), including post-election protests in cross-sectional perspective (Zavadskaya and Welzel 2015). Studying the 'ecological' effects of how the social prevalence of values affects protest reveals that (1) "the prevalence of emancipative values lifts people's protest above the level that their own emancipative values suggest (elevator effect); (2) the prevalence of these values enhances the impact of people's own emancipative values on protest (amplifier effect)" (Welzel and Deutsch 2012:465). It must be noted that emancipative values encourage only non-violent protest given its powerful incentive to resist any forms of violence and anti-humanitarian appeals. Does this argument apply to the Russian protests?

Unprecedented economic growth in the first decade of the twenty-first century induced the emergence of the middle class and satisfaction of the basic survival exigencies, on the other hand, did the Russians on average become more post-materialist and emancipative? As Eduard Ponarin, ponders,

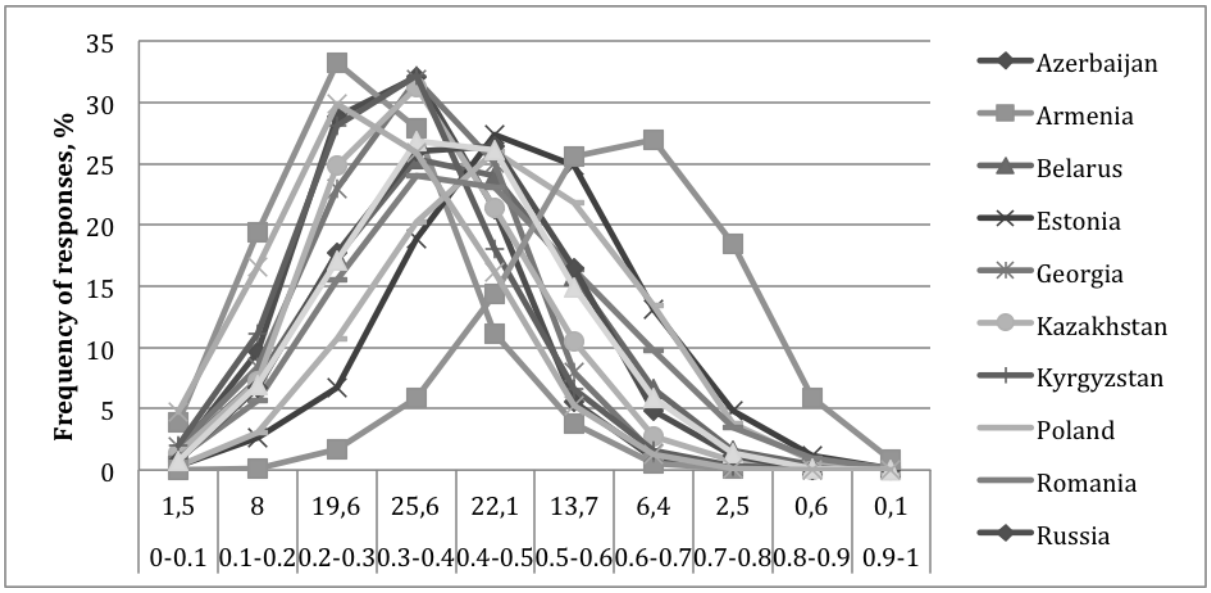
> Political activities in 2011-12 in the capitals were also related [with the growth of post-materialist values] and an educated middle class that Putin may be said to have brought up himself. But instead of gratitude they took a fancy for more freedom and voiced criticism. But this is, once again, a minority. The majority of Russians are happy and well fed [18] .

Compared to other post-Soviet and post-Communist countries, the distribution of emancipative values in Russia repeats the values landscapes of Ukraine and Belarus with the mean values located at 0.4-0.5 (see Figure 4.3). Most of the Russian population scores relatively low on emancipative values, while Slovenia's mean value is 0.6-0.7. Armenia and Uzbekistan are the lowest on the scale. Thus, all the three countries (Belarus, Ukraine, Russia) should be equally prone to subversive effects and post-election protests.

[17]For more on the concept of emancipative values, see Welzel and Deutsch (Welzel and Deutsch 2012). The Emancipative Index is close to the concept of the Post-Materialist Values Index, however does not contain measures of political participation that would allow one to dissect the effect of values on the mode and probability of protests.

[18]Me stali zhadnymi i podozritel'nymi. Lenta.ru. 14.12.2015. Accessed on 3.03.2017. http://lenta.ru/articles/2015/12/14/happy/

Figure 4.3: The spread of emancipative values in post-communist countries: Russia in a comparative perspective (cross-sectional data for 2010-14)



Source: World Values Survey // http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSOnline.jsp.
Selected sample: Armenia 2011, Azerbaijan 2011-2012, Belarus 2011, Estonia 2011, Georgia 2014, Kazakhstan 2011, Kyrgyzstan 2011, Poland 2012, Romania2012, Russia 2011, Slovenia 2011, Ukraine 2011, Uzbekistan 2011 (18,322)

Kyrgyzstan and Georgia that had underwent the wave or even waves of color revolutions seem to share emancipative values to a lesser extent than Russian society. At the first glance, there is a connection with the regime type and democracy, while the mechanism how emancipative values lead to protests remains empirically underexplored.

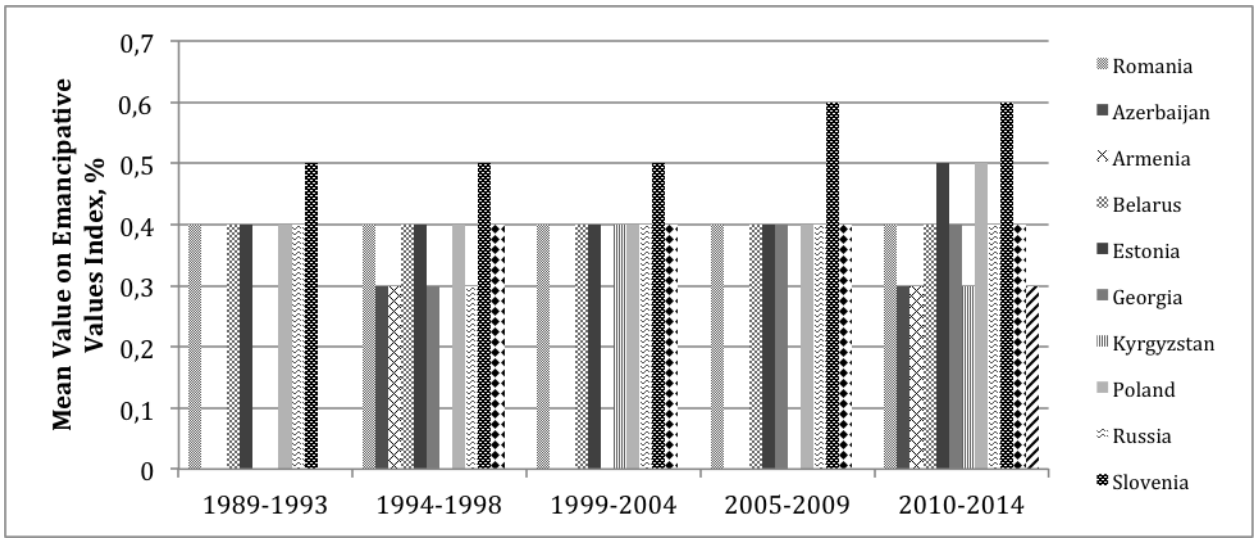
Figure 4.4 demonstrates the rise or decline in emancipative values over the last two decades. The mean value of Emancipative Values index apparently has not changed as opposed to Slovenia, Estonia and Poland. In other words, there was no sudden or gradual rise in post-materialism on the eve of 2011-12 election cycle.

For instance, according to one of the opposition political commentators from the Ekho Moskvy radio station, Viktor Shenderovich, "This is political, not economic. The coal miners came out because they were not paid. The people coming onto the streets of Moscow are very well off. These people are protesting because they were humiliated. They were not asked. They were just told, 'Putin is coming back.'"[19]. To some extent, this logic may underlie the mass protests. Certainly, these data do not allow us to rule out this explanation; however, at first glance, it seems unlikely that the number of people with emancipative values would have changed so dramatically since 2007-8.

Undoubtedly, it is impossible to ignore the hypothesis that the growing demand for new forms of democracy – more direct, participatory, deliberative, and inclusive modes of

[19]Boosted by Putin, Russia's Middle Class Turns on Him. The New York times. 11.12.2011. Accessed on 2.03.2017. http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/12/world/europe/huge-moscow-rally-suggests-a-shift-in-public-mood.html

Figure 4.4: Dynamics in emancipative values across WVS waves and post-communist countries



Source: World Values Survey // http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSOnline.jsp *Selected sample*: Armenia 2011, Azerbaijan 2011-2012, Belarus 2011, Estonia 2011, Georgia 2014, Kazakhstan 2011, Kyrgyzstan 2011, Poland 2012, Romania 2012, Russia 2011, Slovenia 2011, Ukraine 2011, Uzbekistan 2011 (18,322)

politics – can be expanded to the Russian case (Dalton 2013). That said, it is hard to deny that the claims by protesters are far more modest than the current protest movements in Western Europe and the USA – *Indignados* or Occupy Wall Street – and preeminently focus on the grievances linked with the regime's failure to abide to minimally-required democratic procedures during the elections. The common base for most of those gathered in the meetings is the inferior quality of electoral processes (electoral integrity): the request for "free, clean and fair election" was supported by 37% of protesters on December 24, and the demand to abolish the results and to dissolve the legislature - by 19%. The appeals "Churov [the Head of the Central Electoral commission], go away!" are supported by 9% of respondents. Only 25% of the protesters are clearly against the established political regime and prime minister Vladimir Putin personally (VTSIOM). Given that, this explanation does not seem plausible, as claimants are not striving to overthrow the whole political regime; they generally accept the existing institutional setting, and probably merely wish the elites to abide by the established rules. Thus, post-materialist theories and demands for democratization as a kind of inherent worth do not have much explanatory power to solve the puzzle of timing.

4.5.8 Political opportunity structure and contingent factors

The framework of political opportunity structure came from the literature on contentious politics where protest events are viewed as a continuous interaction between protesters and its target(s) that mutually shape and re-shape their identities, senses and aims (McAdam,

Tarrow, and Tilly 2003). Following the resource-based approach (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996; Davis and Zald 2005) adherents of this approach stress the necessity of a minimal organizational structure, its core, leadership and resources. From the POS point of view, exogenous factors can facilitate or curb the likelihood and success of a mobilization. McAdam argues that the degree of protest mood directly depends on the political opportunity structure, where an open POS allows the protests to persist, while in closed POS's they fade away (McAdam 1999). Meyer underlines the role of subjective interpretations of actors involved in contention (Meyer 2004), while Tilley advances the role of political regimes in shaping and transforming protest repertoires and, *vice versa*, in how contention affects the regime's trajectories (Tilly 2010; Slater 2010).

Taking all this together, one might conclude that literally any element – be it a certain type of protesters' identity or a contingent event – constitutes a part of political opportunity structure: "a sponge that soaks up virtually any aspects of social movement environment" (1996:24). Addressing this seemingly all-encompassing nature of the POS, McAdam compares various approaches and derives a more structured view of POS that can be applied in further empirical research (1996:27). He distinguished between the four constituent elements: 1) the relative openness or closure of the institutional political system; 2) the stability and instability of the broad set of elite alignments that typically undergird a polity; 3) the presence of absence of elite allies, and; 4) the state's capacity and propensity for repression (1996:27-28). This framework has been applied to the Russian cycle of contention of 2011-12 by Greene (Greene 2013) and Robertson (2013) who carefully disentangled types of claims, organizational structures, protesters' profile, dominating frames, repertoires as well as the subnational dimension of protests (Dmitriev and Treisman 2012; Lankina 2015; Lobanova, Semenov, and Ross 2015; Zhelnina 2014). The deep causes of the protests in 2011 were far from limited to either election fraud or the resulting announcement of Putin and Medvedev trading jobs for a second time (Robertson 2013:13).

For instance, Robertson (2013) speaks about the importance of organizational structures that has developed since previous civic "protests about ecological destruction (Khimki Forest), the defrauding of ordinary people, and repression against high-profile journalists and artists made two key differences" (2013:21). The experience of solving specific everyday problems by appealing to local and state authorities (Baranov et al. 2015) produced necessary human and organizational capital for sustaining further post-election protests. From this perspective, the protests repertoire has changed from one more typical to democracies to one more symptomatic of an authoritarian regime. "The growing unrest and increased organization on the part of citizens over previous years was a *sine qua non* of the December-May protests" (Enikolopov et al. 2013, p. 21), when fraud simple served as trigger, rather than the deep underlying cause *per se*. "Cheating that had before gone largely unremarked was now seen in the context of wider discontent" (2015:

21) due to the change in the interpretive frame. This is one of the most significant contributions to the current literature on nature of Russian and post-Soviet protests as such. Despite all the virtues of this study, it does not unveil the puzzling relations between the partisanship of the national legislature and the probability of protest. However, if moving along the lines of the social movement approach, one notices that the institutional aspect as well as the perturbations within the ruling coalition and political elites have remained behind the scenes.

The political opportunity structure optics allows for a detailed scrutiny and incorporation of ideas from democratic transitions and institutionalist literature. I shall partly use this language of social movement theory as my argument deals with virtually the same dimensions – political institutions, elite re-alignments, and state repression. However, my purpose is to posit these protests within a wider picture and find out what makes this case outstanding and how it could contribute to a more general theory of post-election subversiveness.

4.6 Contingent events

Contingent events, or what are called contextual factors in the process-tracing point of view (Vennesson 2008), also shape political processes together with more systematic patterns, and the task of a scholar is to dissect context-specific factors from the variables that could be generalized further. Causal reconstruction[20] serves as an efficient tool that helps disentangling the complex multicollinear relationships between context-specific and systematic factors. Seeking a complex explanation, one should take a variety of mutually-linked factors and reveal 'individual propositions' specific to the phenomenon, and its relations to 'general propositions' (Mayntz 2002:13-14). The task is to identify "contingent conditions under which complex causal structures of independent variables come to bear" (Heritier 2008:75).

As long as events often call the tune of forthcoming developments, Russian protests were pre-empted by a series of incidents that are considered to have irritated voters and evoked more public disenchantment. These events to a various extent affected the way actors have been framing and re-framing political processes. For instance, Denis Volkov admits that the series of high-profile scandals "directed the attention and sympathy of the public onto the organizations responsible for monitoring the elections, primarily the 'Golos' Association" (2015:39). The NTV channel 'black PR' campaign against the election monitors from 'Golos' constructed the image of political martyrs and fighters against electoral corruption.

[20]By definition, causal reconstruction is "an explanatory program similar to approaches of complex process tracing – questions a political ontology assuming unit homogeneity, independence of variables, the absence of multicollinearity and endogeneity (...), but emphasizes that political outcomes are the result of complex interaction effects and various forms of multicausality" (Heritier 2008:75).

The year 2011 was remarkably abundant with small victories of the civil society and the opposition that could signal the relative weakness of the regime and its reluctance to resort to repression. In May 2011 Evgeniy Urlashov supported by the coalition of systemic opposition – CPRF, Just Russia, Yabloko and the Democratic Choice movement – won the Yaroslavl' mayoral elections beating the candidate backed by United Russia (Volkov 2012, p. 58)[21]. This regional success paved the way to further scanty local victories of the oppositions.

Beyond regional politics, there were significant reshuffles of the deck on the top. Just Russia's leader Sergey Mironov, who had held the position of the Speaker of the Federation Council (the upper house of the federal parliament), was replaced by Valentina Matviyenko, the then-Governor of Saint Petersburg, with a blatant violation of procedures. Since the post can be held only by elected MPs, Matviyenko, who had not been a member of the parliament, hastily ran in the municipal by-elections in Saint Petersburg in order to acquire *post factum* the necessary legal status, winning with 95% of popular vote, a result bound to raise suspicion[22]. In the meantime, Mikhail Prokhorov, the popular businessman mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, was forced to leave the Right Cause in September 2011 that ushered the split in the *sistemnye liberaly* opposition. The then-Minister of Finance Alexey Kudrin, a close friend of Vladimir Putin, publicly expressed his disagreement with Dmitrii Medvedev's policy and was forced to leave office[23].

Some commentators draw attention to the crucial role of the 'castling' or 'job swap', when at United Russia's 12th Party Congress, the then-Prime Minister Putin announced his intention to enter presidential office again (Gudkov 2012). This decision allegedly vanquished any hopes for political change and further relaxing of the regime, effectively putting an end to Dmitrii Medvedev's 'liberalization.' This gave great impetus to popular movements, which became the basis for further protest mobilization on the one hand, and created an opening for the steep demands from both voters and the elite on the other (Gel'man 2013). Another sign of an emerging challenge for the Kremlin's spin doctors was during at the boxing ring of the Olympic Stadium, when Vladimir Putin was booed by spectators and hissed off from the stage "for the first time in his political carrier" (Volkov 2015, p. 38)[24], an event that immediately went viral on the Web. The emerging

[21]Evgeniy Urlashov was a member of United Russia from 2008 to 2011. In 2012 he was elected as the Yaroslavl city mayor. On the eve of elections, he defected from United Russia in favor of the oppositional Civic platform. In July 2013 he was accused of receiving a bribe of 14 million rubles and was subsequently detained. The litigation started in September 2015 (Washington Post).

[22]Glava isbirkoma, gde V. Matvienko nabrala 95%, otpravilas' v Sovet Federatsii. RBC. Ru. 17.10.2011. Accessed on 5.06.2016. URL: http://www.rbc.ru/politics/17/10/2011/620490.shtml

[23]'Don't Count Out Russia's Kudrin just yet'. Reuters. 26.09.2011. Accessed on 3.03.2017.http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-russia-kudrin-exit-idUKLNE78P01F20110926

[24]Vinokurova, Ekaterina. 2011 Putina privetstvenno osvistali [Putin was welcomed and catcalled]. 21.11.2011 Accessed August, 23rd, 2016.https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/elections2011/2011/11/21$_{a3}$841382.*shtml*

intra-elite cracks perfectly reflect one of the elements of political opportunity structure – elite re-alignments and splits, while such events as public statements, leaks, and spin doctors' mistakes constitute a tissue of political process that preconditioned the protest. Alexey Navalny and his supporters appealed for votes for any party but United Russia, instead of spoiling the ballots. The opposition campaign proved to be witty and efficient in attracting ordinary citizens. As observers note, "the protest wave started to unfold in November 2011. Feelings of tension and strain were replaced by excitement and agitation" (Volkov 2015:38).

4.7 Political Institutions

Institutionalist literature has developed a comprehensive comparative approach to the existing variety of modern forms of authoritarianism. Moreover, is has gained credit in explaining regime transitions in Russia after 1991 (Frye 1997; Remington 2008; Fish 2005; Morgan-Jones and Schleiter 2004; Hale 2005). This literature draws on the premise that institutions are created strategically in order to lower risks of any unintended outcomes or, more generally, uncertainty (North 1990, Frye 1997). Overall idea is that the institutional choices made by political actors and coalitions shaped subsequent political development of a certain regime. Taking the case of the post-Soviet Russia, one of such fateful choices was the decision to establish a presidential republic with a weak parliament. The choice of the parallel voting system, where proportional representation and single-member district principles weer unrelated, discouraged strengthening of the Russian political parties and favored creation of regional political machines around 'independent' candidates and governors.

When parliamentarism is suppressed and political parties are inchoate, the regime constantly struggles for upholding the channels of political feedback and organizing public interests. During the turbulent 1990s Russia experienced a series of violent resurrections in the North Caucasus and more peaceful strikes organized by miners (Robertson 2010). The calm air of early 2000s was interrupted only in 2005 by the massive protests by pensioners against the monetization of public benefits. If during the transition period the highly decentralized and weak political elite demonstrated its capacity to co-opt and to absorb various political groups and interests. On the other hand, the weak state could hardly regulate and control the relations between these numerous groups. After the federal power vertical had been restored, the state re-arranged the mode of relations with interest groups and civil society representatives. By 2011-12 the regime has closed down almost all of the channels of communication and co-optation via elections and legislatures.

Critics of the instituionalist approach argue that there are methodological intricacies associated with how to differentiate effects of political institutions on political outcomes. Assuming that institutions form equilibria as result political actors' interests and bar-

gaining suggests explicitly that institutions by definition cannot function as exogenous factors (Pepinsky 2014:633-635). Under authoritarianism the crafters of political institutions - such as constitutions or electoral rules - get a free hand in re-drafting them as their interests change.

This candid criticism requires those willing to track any causal relations of political institutions to take particular precautions such as differentiating between creating institutions and ensuring that they do bind political behavior, and restrain political actors from constant manipulation and abuse of the rules. However, as the advocates of historical and rational choice institutionalisms posit, some institutional settings may 'lock in' or become 'sticky', thereby capturing political actors into an institutional trap, re-shaping their interests and re-defining further behavior (Taylor and Hall 1996).

The main precaution is to distinguish between policy and procedural coalitions. In the case of Russia it seems to be met, at least on a mid-term horizon. If electoral legislation is being violated and widely abused on a regular basis, the legislation on political parties and electoral system changed once in 2004-2005. The crafters of these laws designed them in such a way that they explicitly favor the party of power, United Russia, a few big federal parties such as CPRF, LDPR, and, to a certain degree, Just Russia. Therefore, these institutional arrangements can be legitimately viewed as major constraints that have re-shaped the political landscape in Russia since 2007-8.

In the case of Russia, the institutional framework is still democratically designed, despite the 7% electoral threshold for parties and lacunae in party legislation. Thus, there is no claim for institutional change in a straightforward sense, but rather *a request to follow already established norms*. This approach highlights the fact that democratization is the quest for political equality which is in line with Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens's stance that democratization is "first and foremost ... an increase in political equality" (Rueschemeyer et al. 2002:5). However, it automatically links this quest for political equality and emancipation with institutional change, overlooking that sometimes allegedly formal democratic institutions do already exist, but are not 'activated' or operate differently.

4.7.1 Russian presidentialism and personalism

Russia represents a typical combination of political institutions that strengthen the personalist nature of authoritarian regime: presidentialism, weak parliament and political parties. In terms of empirical research, what kind of political institutions should we take into account when dealing with electoral authoritarianism? In previous chapters I treat elections as an institution that either undermine or support authoritarianism, however in looking closer it is hard to deny that the nested game within electoral rules and over them (Schedler 2002) could hardly be viewed as a causal variable on a micro-level. Delv-

ing deeper into the flow of events requires more specific and detailed concepts that would unpack the elections. Most of the scholars discuss parliamentarianism and political parties as another set of political institutions that are intimately intertwined with electoral cycles in any political regime. Taking a closer look at the institutional arrangements in post-Soviet Russia could provide more insights into how they form the political landscape. In terms of the social movement literature, institutional system constitutes a part of political opportunity structure that defines the boundaries of tolerated actions (McAdam 1999).

Following this logic, Henry Hale links post-election protests to the phenomenon of '*patronal presidentialism*. Patronal presidentialism is the set of institutions that implies a directly elected president and large discretionary power (Fish 2005) and informal authority over arbitrating the intra-elite conflicts. This is the key to the logic of post-election revolutions (2006: 4). At the core of patronal presidentialism lies the ability of presidents "to play on the diverse interests of such elites as to divide and conquer them" (2006:5). Presidents might extensively exploit the state resources to rewards their allies and redistribute wealth via patron-client relations (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007). This framework describes the mechanism of personalist power in Russia.

How does presidentialism affect the political opportunity structure and signal to the opposition that the regime is opening up? When "someone who is increasingly seen as irrelevant to the political future and hence increasingly powerless to maintain the unity of his or her team since he or she won't be around after the election to punish those who "defect" or simple becomes 'a lame duck'"(Hale 2006:6). One should not confuse patronal presidency and the 'lame duck syndrome' with the effects of presidential charisma or his/her personal traits; rather the president operates as a focal point or effective intermediary between different elite groups. The 'lame duck syndrome' operates via two mechanisms – public opinion and elite strategies (2006:9). For instance, all the instances of the color revolutions in the post-Soviet space occurred when the presidents were lame ducks. In Ukraine then-president Leonid Kuchma's popularity turned into a wreck after the scandal of the journalist Gongadze's murder (Wilson 2006: 44, 52). In Georgia and Kyrgyzstan, neither Eduard Shevardnadze or Askar Akayev was permitted to run for another term. From this perspective, there were only two non-events – Azerbaijan 2003 and Russia in 2000 – where the incumbents Heidar Aliyev and Boris Yeltsin respectively succeeded to appoint suitable successors (Hale 2006). Heidar Aliyev tapped his own son Ilham Aliyev, while Boris Yeltsin appointed then-Prime-minister Vladimir Putin as an heir-apparent (McFaul 2015; Gel'man 2015). Both choices proved to be efficient in the medium term. Thus, the autocrats seem to learn the wrong lessons by looking for the reasons of mass upheavals in the civil society groups and activists, especially those receiving Western financial assistance (2006).

This framework is somewhat similar to the political opportunity structure approach in

underlining the role of institutions that shape the intra-elite relations. The nature of the patronal presidency in transferring the power back from Dmitrii Medvedev to Vladimir Putin produced a 'lame duck syndrome'. While the soon-to-be former president became increasingly irrelevant, particularly after 'the job swap' or *rokirovka* in September 2011, the new president had not yet assumed office. One incident is worth mentioning: on the November 20, 2011, Vladimir Putin was suddenly booed at the stadium during the martial arts show, the then prime-minister looked astonished and overtly taken aback[25]. Broadly speaking, the nature of personalist rule in the specific form of patronal presidency has intrinsic gaps that in every case when the focal role of the president is shaken, will lead to uncontrolled challenge from below.

4.7.2 Why parties in personalist regimes?

Despite the potential 'lame duck syndrome', the presidency in Russia has proven to be efficient in maintaining political stability, dealing with multiple pressure groups, and restoring the state's coercive power (Kahn 2002). Moreover presidentialism, once established in December 1993, has remained unchanged since the adoption of the new Russian constitution. If patronal presidency is solely responsible for regular post-election protests, one would have observed protests in 2000 and 2008. There is no cross-temporal variation that could be conducive to the protest of 2011-12. However, there is a considerable variation in the realm of electoral and party institutional arrangements. Thinking of personalism and institutionalization as a continuum with the two extremes, leads us to think that there must be a variation among personalist regimes, and this variation stems from the proliferation of party politics.

I assume that party and electoral systems make integral parts of personalist regimes in post-Soviet space. The institutionalist literature suggests that dominant parties tackle several problems of intrinsic uncertainty, elite monitoring, and conflict solving thereby prolonging authoritarian survival (Geddes 1999, Gandhi and Przeworski 2007, Brownlee 2008). In the case of patronal presidentialism, perspectives on the curative powers of dominant parties vanquish, because the formation of a genuinely-established dominant party is only possible in regimes where political parties form the government and directly implement policies they advocate. Normally there are fewer protests when parties encompass more candidates, including potential opposition leaders. The latter suggests a less dominant position of presidents as opposed to the legislature. Therefore, patronal presidents either do not rely on dominant parties or rely on the so-called parties of power (see Chapter 1) that makes 'a half-built house' of a dominant party.

[25] Putina osvistali s tribun...20.11.2011. Gazeta.ru: https://www.gazeta.ru/news/blogs/2011/11/20/n_2103490.shtml

4.7.3 Argument to be tested

Building on the institutionalist approach, I link the changes in the electoral and party regulations with the subversive scenario that unfolded in December 2011-March 2012 in Russia. As long as the functions of pro-governmental parties under authoritarian rule include monitoring of compliance, distribution of rent and positions, and cooptation, the United Russia and its satellites become largely inefficient in the long-run. A growing exclusiveness of party system has gradually lead to a number of active politicians outside the power institutions.

I claim that the consequences of the party and electoral reforms solved the short-term problems of Vladimir Putin's political survival, but have led to an accumulation of mistakes and blocked an important absorbing and co-optative capacity of the party of power. If the party of power or dominant party does not manage to maintain a necessary level of cadre rotation, to co-opt moderate politicians or to neutralize potential defections, this will feed the ranks of the opposition. The groups of 'the under-co-optated' make the first necessary element of a successful collection action.

For a mobilization to succeed the critical mass of people is required (Kuran 1991; Lohmann 1994). Each additional person, as Kuran suggests, decreases the costs of participation (1991) and helps reveal 'true' private preferences over political alternatives instead of 'falsifying' preferences such that the impression that the majority of population supports the regime can be spread. Lohmann argues that critical mass comes from the ordinary or 'normal' people who do not constitute the ideological core of the protest (1994). This makes the second necessary element of a collective action.

This mechanism of micro-mobilization is the major prerequisite for collective action, which is, at the same time, hard to test with my empirical tools, such as mass surveys. Bearing this in mind, I focus on the participation of the potential splinter elite and the normalization of protest activity. Co-ordination of the opposition with potential regime splinters proves to be crucial in order to attract 'swing' protesters. The occurrence of splinter elites or defectors stems from the failure of the existing institution to embrace or co-opt them and facilitate expected career advancement. This alliance of the swing protesters with the opposition elites is the backbone of any mass anti-regime mobilization (Tilly, McAdam and Tarrow 2003, Robertson 2013).

The Russian party system proved to be extremely feeble and underinstitutionalized in the 1990s when party substitutes such as regional political machines based on ethnic and/or clientelistic voting supplanted political parties at the regional level (Hale 2005; Golosov 2014). In 2005 the government initiated party- and electoral-system reforms that were aimed at supporting political parties through proportional representation. Up to 2003 the system had remained largely responsive in accommodating regional interests, while the reform of 2005 literally froze the existing party system. The federal legislature

imposed a number of requirements that were virtually impossible to meet for most of the political parties (Kynev 2006). Thus, the emergence of new political parties that could have been more responsive to the population's demands and contain different political interests became impossible. In other words, no new parties and no opportunities for effective co-optation; no single member districts and no guaranteed regional representations and breakdown of constituency-based political machines (substitutes of political parties). Thereby, even the perverse accountability of elections (Stokes 2005) as a feedback channel was severed. Experimentations with party and electoral systems will provide more insights into the way patronal presidentialism in Russia operates and allow for more nuanced understanding of the different modes of authoritarian survival.

4.8 Conclusion

One of the 2011-12 protesters (who had also been an election observer) recalls,

> after repeated reading of blogs, forums, and news outlets, sooner or later one reaches the stage of civic consciousness: "nothing's gonna change on its own". (...) On my way there [to train the observers] I was very afraid that it would be a gathering of twisted people, next to whom I would feel awkward. Who bothers with the country's fate? In our country?! Luckily, my anxiety dissipated: ordinary people came to the gathering. Normal people, who walk on the streets, travel by the subway with bored faces" (Nikolay Pis'mennyi, Disgruntled observers, 2012:23, 25).

A combination of moderate opposition members and moderate protesters allows a collective action to become numerous and attract more participants. The institutional reforms constitute one of the major sources of moderate opposition groups that are able to mobilize people and to make the protest more representative of the citizens.

The paradox of the Russian 2011-12 protests demonstrates that from the area studies' point of view this cycle of contention seems inevitable and overdetermined, while from the mainstream institutionalist comparative authoritarianism literature it is clearly an outlier. There is an extensive list of potential suspects that still needs to be classified as irrelevant, necessary, and sufficient conditions. These protests failed to lead to further regime change and democratization, but the main question I posed did not concern the probability of democratization in the first place (Howard and Roessler 2006, Bunce and Wolchik 2010, Kalandadze and Orenstein 2007), and I have focused on the likelihood of any unexpected outcomes. From this perspective, the Russian regime should be placed into wider comparative perspective by linking the patronal presidency framework with the literature on authoritarian survival by means of political institutions.

This chapter overviews existing explanations of the Russian post-electoral protests. Most of them follow the logic of a unique explanation that accounts for this event. My goal is not to multiply existing explanations by offering a more institutions-based approach, but rather to assign weights and causal status to each relevant factor. At the end I present the hypothesized causal mechanism that will be tested in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5

Failed Co-optation: Linking Protests with the Institutionalization of the Party System

> The political parties created democracy and modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of the parties (Schattschneider 1957, p. 1)

> The coalition-maintaining aspect of ruling parties, rather than their operation as patronage networks, explains elite cohesion within the regime and electoral control at the polls (Brownlee 2007, p. 215)

5.1 Introduction

A political party is an autonomous group of citizens having the purpose of making nominations and contesting elections in the hope of gaining control over governmental power through the capture of public offices and the organization of the government" (Huckshorn 1984, p. 10). In an ideal democratic world political parties would compete for power and control over decision-making. However, the very logic of authoritarian rule imposes on them a different set of functions, transforming them into tools of clientelistic distribution (Shefter 1993; Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007) and channels for office-seeking politicians (Langston 2006, Brownlee 2007). By strengthening party systems and parties as organizational entities, the regimes aim to increase their capacity to co-opt and monitor compliance of its members. In this context, the parties' main purpose is to decrease the level of uncertainty among political elites and facilitate co-ordination. Finally, under certain conditions they may serve as an institutional vehicle of democratic transition by offering more opportunities for career-oriented activists and even moderate opposition to advance their claims by conventional means.

While the one-party legacy of the Soviet Union loomed large over the Russian party system, the formative period of the Russian statehood in 1990-1991 created a birth trauma, which caused the system's severe underinstitutionalization. In the aftermath of the failed putsch led by Communist hardliners in August 1991, the party was legally banned until 1992, creating a window of opportunity for the emergence of alternative political organizations. However, in the new political landscape of the Russian Federation of the 1990s, political parties played but a marginal role, a development caused by several factors: the burden of patrimonial communism with its extensive patronage networks and the weakness of the bureaucracy (Kitschelt et al. 1999), voters' suspicion of the mere idea of 'party' after decades of communist rule, the absence of stable cleavages, and an adverse institutional arrangement for effective party-building, including a mixed-member electoral system and strong executives twinned with weak legislatures (Fish 2005). At the regional level, governors tried to keep parties weak in order to remain in power and strengthen their own electoral machines by creating more 'party substitutes' in the Russian electoral market (Golosov 2004; Hale 2005). "Parties will close out an electoral market, coming to dominate the political system, only when they establish themselves as the main credible suppliers of electoral goods and services" (Hale 2005: 20). Finally, the first Russian president, Boris Yeltsin, largely shunned party labels following his defection from the Communist Party in 1991.[1]

Starting from the early 2000s, Yeltsin's successor, Vladimir Putin, initiated an elaborate project designed to re-assemble the decentralized Russian state and to restore the 'vertical-of-power' (*vertikal' vlasti*) system of executive government. In this effort, the overhaul of crumbling state institutions and reining in rebellious oligarchs became primary objectives, while the development of political parties remained a matter of secondary importance. Only in 2002-2003 first steps were made to revise the existing electoral system and party legislation. The first law on political parties, adopted in 2001, which regulated conditions of the party registration procedure and set a minimum number of party members and regional branches, was followed by party system reform under the motto of strengthening parties and establishing firmer grounds for Russian democracy (Smyth, Lowry, and Wilkening 2007). The 2005 law on elections and referendums introduced a purely proportional representation, which, according to a number of scholars, is favors institutionalization of parties and party system as a whole (Mainwaring and Torcal 2006; Mair 1997). The system adopted in 2005 clearly favors the nationwide parties that had already earned their place under the sun in the 1990s. This was accomplished by tightening rules of registration and augmenting membership requirement from 10,000 up to 50,000 in no less than a half of Russian regions (Federal law "On political parties... "). Moreover, the electoral threshold rose from 5% to an unprecedentedly high 7%, and a ban on electoral coalitions has been introduced. At the same time, the role of electoral

[1] After Article 6 of the Soviet Constitution was repealed in February 1991.

observation was considerably weakened. These measures sharply reduced the number of relevant political parties and eventually closed out the electoral arena for new challengers. As a result, in 2007 voters for the first time cast their ballots for a fully partisan State Duma, where United Russia (UR) secured a constitutional majority of 64.3% of popular votes and 315 seats out of 450.

Several observers dubbed these elections the beginning of authoritarianism with a dominant party regime, akin to Mexico under the PRI or Malaysia under UMNO (Reuter and Remington 2009). Thomas Remington refers to the Russian regime as "... a regime in which the ruling party can afford to rely on patronage more than coercion, and meet its financial needs through rents from natural resource exports, has an advantage over one in which the regime needs to finance its political needs by confiscation and predation" (2008: 960). At the same time, UR – in contrast to classical notions of governmental control as a political party's ultimate goal – used "its enormous majority in parliament [to give] the president unchecked power to control the state, but in return received the right to use its power over regulatory and distributive legislation to reward its supporters and ensure its perpetuation in power" (Remington 2008: 985). United Russia, as it is, diverges from the classical notion of a dominant (hegemonic) party in terms of limited domination over policy implementation (Gel'man 2006; Gel'man 2008). New Russian non-partisan elites made several attempts at forming a suitable legislative vehicle to decrease the costs of bargaining with the State Duma.[2] Presidential-parliamentary systems incentivize presidents to form a pro-presidential majority in the legislature (see Lichtenstein and Golosov 1999), as long as there is no 'separate survival' of executive and legislative branches that leads to frequent governmental changes and potential inter-branch conflicts (Morgan-Jones and Schleiter 2004). The party of the majority acts to diminish the inherent instability of presidential-parliamentary system and maximize the decision-making process. In such cases, the president does not need to intervene in legislative processes and/or issue presidential decrees (Lichtenstein and Golosov 1999).

Within the subset of personalist authoritarian regimes, Russia has demonstrated a puzzling effect of a fully partisan legislature that has reflected the co-optative capacity of the regime and should have hedged the incumbent's bets in electoral game. However, political unrest in 2011 12 undermines this claim. This begs the question of what went wrong in 2011? Why did the legislative elections of 2007 go relatively smoothly, while the same institutional framework proved to be inefficient in 2011? In this chapter, I link the problem of party system institutionalization under authoritarian rule with the probability of post-electoral protests. I argue that it is the failure of political parties to contain potential discontent and the excessive closure of the electoral market that resulted in unexpected and undesired results for the incumbents at the 2011 elections. This

[2]The first attempts to create a party of power were already made in 1993-1994: Choice of Russia (1993), Our Home is Russia (1995), and Unity (1999).

imbalance in the electoral market reflects the controversial and internally subversive nature of personalist regimes and, more specifically, of those with a patronal presidency where the only guarantor of intra-elite deals is the person of president (Hale 2006, 2014). Political parties, including 'parties of power' are doomed to remain underinstitutionalized under patronal presidential systems, thus fail to secure incumbents' positions in the electoral arena. Given the high entry barriers introduced in 2005 and the generally low status of legislative power across the country, parties failed to co-opt moderate activists, leaving this group available to more radical anti-regime opposition. The mechanism explains the unpredicted relations between the share of independent parliamentarians and the odds of subversive effects.

The present chapter aims to explain this puzzling phenomenon. I begin with the summary of a hypothesized causal mechanism which builds a bridge between party institutions (supply side) and protests (demand side). Sections that follow provide an in-depth analysis of the association between the elements and intermediary variables binding these two macro-phenomena: first, electoral integrity and protests, and, second, co-option and leaders of the protest movement 'For Fair Elections'.

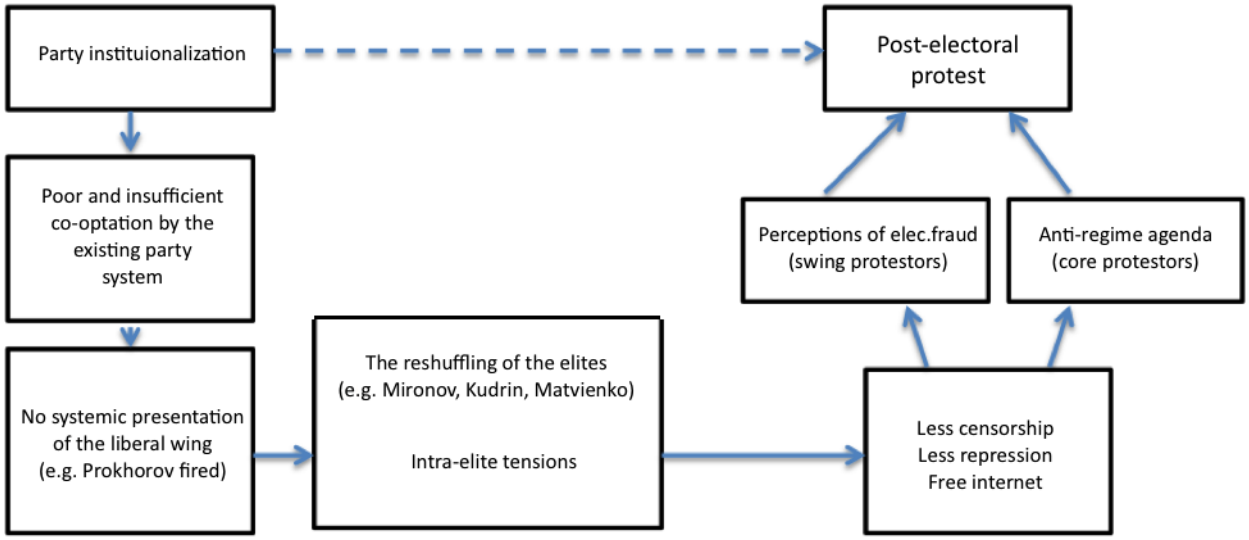
5.2 Causal mechanism

Mechanisms do not predict, but explain causal paths through a series of process-tracing tests (Van Evera 1997, Bennett 2005, see more in Chapter 1). Mechanisms explain how a change in one variable translates into a change in another. Testing for necessary and sufficient conditions helps to eliminate irrelevant explanations, confirm relevant factors, and elucidates combination of contextual factors and variables.

The number of independent members of State Duma reflects the extent to which political parties are not entrenched within the national legislature. Fully partisan parliaments oppose legislatures based on incorporated regional machines and spread of clientelistic linkages between political elites and voters (Stokes 2005, Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007). These machines may or may not be connected with political parties in order to effectively co-opt potential challengers. However, 'parties of power' can perform a stabilizing function only when they provide sufficient level of co-optation and contain potential defections and rivalries, while serving as a legislative vehicle for the president and his government. Failure to co-opt moderate opposition activists may turn the latter into potential leaders and mobilizers of a more radical, or even non-systemic, opposition. Since small groups of such leaders who spread information and devise strategies are crucial for political mobilization and co-ordination, this failure can lead to the emergence of mass protests.

The evidence of poor co-optation is a crucial piece of the causal mechanism leading to post-electoral protests (Figure 5.1). A low level of institutionalization of the party system that fails to include the means for effective containing and prevention of intra-elite splits

Figure 5.1: Linking protests with party system institutionalization: Proposed causal mechanism



and massive defections gradually leads to systematic exclusion and marginalization of previously acceptable politicians and groups. The latter results in groups of 'secondary-rank' public figures such as Mikhail Kasyanov or Boris Nemtsov finding themselves excluded from official channels, but still holding symbolic and social capital sufficient to organize and/or provide enough investment to assist the anti- and/or non-systemic opposition (e.g. Udal'tsov, Naval'nyi).

Large constituencies among the electorate, such as well-off moderate liberals or left-wing radicals, may feel underrepresented (or not represented at all) by any political party in the State Duma, which in turn opens opportunities for cooperation with disgruntled groups within the establishment. The relatively open political opportunity structure in the summer and fall of 2011, characterized by less repression and censorship, facilitated their coordination and enabled protests to occur in large cities.

Most of the literature explaining the causes of protests, as few studies as there are, focuses on triggers, such as electoral fraud and/or contingent events preceding the polling days. In turn, the mechanism proposed here takes a different turn, shifting attention to micro-mobilization fueled by perceptions of procedural injustice, as well as ideology, and approaches them as sufficient conditions.

Each link can be tested via available causality tests for necessary and sufficient conditions. In Table 5.1, I provide a summary of tests and expectations that would corroborate or weaken the proposed causal mechanism or its constituent parts. Following Van Evera (1997) and Collier's (2011) framework, I employ three types of causal tests to back up the argument about the crucial role of co-option through the party system in undermining electoral authoritarian regime. Further analysis is organized along the lines of process-tracing tests: Straw-in-the-Wind, Smoking-Gun, Hoop, and doubly decisive tests.

Table 5.1: Overview of the within-case study (adapted from Collier 2011: 825)

Main 'characters':	- Civic activists / opposition (For Fair Election movement) - Incumbent / party of power - Political parties (co-opted) - Election commissions - International organizations*

Hypotheses

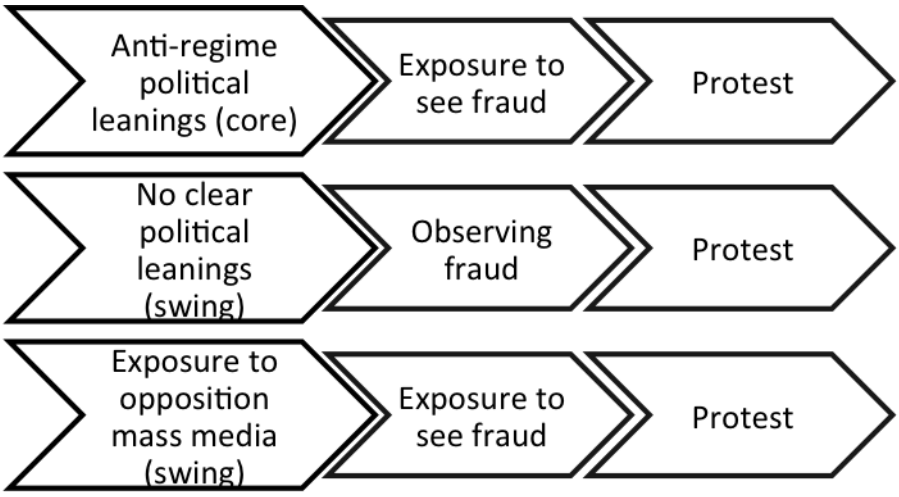
Independent variables	Intervening variables	Dependent variables
H1 Modernization and the rise of the middle class	H6 internet technologies as effective mediator	H11 Anti-regime ideology
H2 Economic crisis and relative deprivation	H7 The Job swap	H12 Against fraud (procedural justice)
H3 International leverage	H8 Prokhorov and the Right Cause	
H4 Politicization through internet	H9 Absence of pressure	
H5 Poor co-option through the party system	H10 Increased number of moderate opposition leaders	

Testing the plausibility of the whole mechanism unfolds backwardly. Firstly, I analyze the immediate causes that drove voters to the streets in Moscow, Saint Petersburg, and other large cities across Russia. Subsequently, I address potential 'intervening or mediator variables'such as the boom of internet technologies and social networks, favorable political opportunity structure that included low pressure, and, tracking back to 'the frozen' party system that limited co-option at federal level. Applying the analogy of detective casework, these motions allow us to identify potential suspects among political actors and organization that caused massive post-electoral protest in December 2011 - as ('independent variables'), intervening obstacles (context, events, intermediaries), and 'triggers'. Table 5.1 presents the overview of the within-case study and scheme to be followed.

5.3 Empirical Evidence

To prop up the argument I use four types of empirical evidence: 1) the New Russia Barometer survey data from December 2011 and March 2012; 2) data on protest slogans and their content; 3) digests by Russian analytical agencies such as *Panorama* with lists of political organizations and their activists, and 4) semi-structured interviews with protest participants and observers. Survey data provide information on the main motives driving people to the streets and serve as basis for a series of smoking-gun tests that aim at affirming sufficient conditions. Interviews and analysis of slogans provide additional straw-in-the-wind tests that strengthen the main argument. Data on the composition of

Figure 5.2: Hypothetical micro-mobilization mechanisms



opposition movements and coalitions permit us to check the co-option capacity of existing party system - and this operates as a hoop test.

5.3.1 Triggering Protests

All electoral revolutions proclaim that elections are unfair and marred with undisguised fraud. However, it is unclear, which trigger contains higher mobilization potential: witnessing electoral fraud or *expecting* fraud at the polls? If one addresses the mechanism of mobilization at the individual level, is it fraud *per se* or preliminary exposure to perceived fraud that is the necessary condition? For instance, the literature on post-electoral uprisings in developing countries often raises the issue of 'the winner-loser gap', whereby electoral losers tend to blame their opponents for unfair play and widespread recourse to dirty tricks (Anderson 2005; Blais and Gélineau 2007). Therefore, losers assess electoral integrity more negatively than winners, thus reflecting the role of biased perceptions of procedural justice (Rose and Sedziaka 2015). If this mechanism holds true, prior politicization is required to drive mass mobilization. On the other hand, simultaneous witnessing of violations creates 'an imagined community of robbed voters' (Tucker 2007), who become politicized through the act of voting. Here the mechanism of micro-mobilization implies reverse links between political leanings and perception of fraud. The third mechanism posits that a voter needs *to be exposed to the information* spread by observer and opposition groups. Thus, we can identify two distinct types of exposure - political and informational - that form *expectations* of electoral fraud. Drawing on this, the three connections between procedural justice and propensity to protest, are mapped on Figure 5.2. The political type of exposure represents the mobilization mechanism for the core oppositionists, while the rest – alternative mobilization mechanisms for the swing supporters.

In addressing this question, I consider two types of evidence: semi-structured inter-

views collected during and after the protests of 2011-12 by researchers from the Public Sociology Laboratory (PS Lab), and a unique collection of protest slogans by Mikhail Gabowitsch in PEPS (Protest Events, Photos, and Slogans). The semi-structured interviews help explain the subjective mechanism of the mobilizing power of elections. PS Lab collected 178 interviews during 23 protest events in Saratov (I), Volgograd (1), Saint-Petersburg (9) and Moscow (11). including rallies, marches, and elections to opposition representative organs from December 24, 2011 to January 13, 2013. The duration of interviews varied from 5 to 50 minutes, most of them taking between 10 and 20 minutes. The sample included a diverse set of interviewees in terms of age, education, occupation, income level and political views.

The second dataset includes the data on the frequency of protests in 2011-2012, types of slogans employed, and the dynamics of repressive acts conducted by the regime for each day. The data come from the PEPS (Protest Events, Photos, and Slogans) collection gathered for the period of November 2011-October 2012, as well as from the GDELT (Global Data on Event, Location, and Tone) [3] data on global events.[4] A large-N analysis has always been a blind spot in virtually every study of protests, since it is hard to capture valid data on the frequency and number of protest actions, as well as to fully capture the protest repertoire. In the case of authoritarian regimes these difficulties are exacerbated by restricted access and unreliability of data collected by the police and local authorities, whom the initiators of legal protests are supposed to inform in advance. The alternative is to rely on self-reported participation in the protests from the mass surveys gathered on spot on protest days (see Levada Center surveys). However, these data are rarely available for every protest event taking place even within a relatively short time-span – in this case, between four and five months - and for every region. Since the protests in Moscow and Saint Petersburg enjoyed far more media coverage than demonstration in the provinces, the latter are severely underrepresented in such datasets. The PEPS dataset contains slogans registered at the protest actions devoted to fair elections from November 2011 to October 2012. The highest frequency of protests was registered for the period of December 20ff-May 2012. The PEPS dataset contains slogans registered at the protest actions devoted to fair elections from November 2011 to October 2012. The highest frequency of protests was registered for the period of December 20ff-May 2012.

Particular attention should be paid to this time-span, including the legislative electoral campaign in the State Duma of the Russian Federation (December 4, 2011) and the presidential elections (March 4, 2012). The dataset includes slogans from protest rallies across the Russian territory, as well as those organized by Russian-speaking communities abroad. Its methodology differs from similar databases by relying on photographic and

[3]The data have been kindly provided by Mikhail Gabowitsch. For more information, see http://gabowitsch.net/peps/

[4]For more details on these data source, see http://gdeltproject.org/data.html

other types of visual evidence provided by participants and observers of the protests. Each appearance of a slogan is coded as a separate entry along with the information regarding time and place of the event during which it appeared. This allows us to study demands and forms of protesters' self-expression at an unprecedented level of detail, since the photos and links to the sources make PEPS a source both trustworthy and available for replication.

While the PEPS data may not encompass every single protest during the period under discussion, it nonetheless provides the most reliable and complete data source of over 6,000 slogans, covering both the rallies in the capitals and across the provinces. In this sense, it provides us with a unique opportunity to examine the ways protesters articulated their motivations and demands. Thanks to the way these entries are coded, we are able to trace the frequency with which particular slogans appeared, taking into account the type of protest frame and the main subject of particular utterances.[5].

Finally, I make use of two waves of New Russia Barometer surveys conducted in December 2011, right after the protests, and in March 2012, after the polling day. These data provide a representative sample of Russian citizens consisting of 1,600 respondents, and information regarding their attitudes towards protests, procedural justice, consumption of mass media, and their political stances. Levada Center is one of the most reputable pollster in Russia that carries out regular independent surveys[6]. The first survey wave of December 2011 contained questions regarding respondents' assessment of the quality of elections, their support of the protests and particular political parties, sources of political information, as well as their assessment of their current economic situation. These data allow me to test a wide range of hypotheses and mechanisms. Lastly, the questionnaire covers such topics as the respondents' sense of underrepresentation and their support for unregistered political parties. These questionnaire can be utilized as a link between the approval of protests with the perceptions of election and to what extent the perceptions depend on political leanings and representation issues.

5.3.2 Imagined community of robbed voters

As the literature suggests, rigged elections can generate an independent protest agenda for two reasons. First, the election period decreases the costs of participation - meaning less repression, more international attention, etc. Second, the simultaneous involvement of a large number of people facilitates mobilization. However, we should point a caveat regarding the mechanism of mobilization. While most of scholarship on post-electoral protests links election with the issue of fraud, claiming that the decrease in participation

[5]In order to ensure the reliability of the coding procedure we carried out an intercoder check by three independent coders of 1000 slogans. The overlap is 79-80%.

[6]In 2014 after the notorious "foreign agent" law, Levada Center was declared as a foreign agent because it receives foreign funding. This status implies additional oversight and control from the tax authorities as well as labels the organization with a shameful status in the eyes of the public.

costs stemmed from witnessing 'stolen election' and 'major' fraud (Tucker 2007), the Russian case is paradoxical in that the elections were not, strictly speaking, 'stolen' in the sense of a close race and a miniscule margin of victory that was there for the stealing.

In spite of the fact that previous liberalization provided opportunity for the opposition to gain ground and allowed new leaders, such as city movements' activits like Aleksei Naval'ny, Evgenia Chirikova, and Maksim Katz, to enter the political arena, the opposition remained weakly consolidated and lacking both a viable candidate and plan of action. Recounting the ballots, the central demand of the protesters, would not have change the results in any significant manner. As mentioned earlier, the electoral fraud of 2011 did not come as a surprise for the voters, and as some experts argued the level of fraud did not dramatically differ from the 'norm' (i.e. 5-8%)[7].

The survey results by the Levada Center in big cities are worth quoting: "According to our estimates the UR could hardly have received more than 30% of votes. There is a quite similar picture in Saint Petersburg"[8]. In Moscow, according to the exit poll carried out by FOM, 27.5% of respondents voted for UR, which is considerably less than in the official voting returns (46.6%)[9]. Another survey, conducted in November 2011 by the Levada Center, reported that 42% of respondents were certain that the upcoming elections would be 'dirty', against 37% who expected 'clean' elections. Morever, 51% of respondents agreed with the statement that the elections "will be just an imitation of political competition, when the seats in the State Duma will be distributed at the regime's discretion".

If this mechanism holds, there are grounds to believe that the very mechanism of mobilization differs from that of a 'classical' electoral revolution. In the Russian case, many of the mobilizing factors deemed necessary by the literature on 'color revolution' is missing from the picture, but the elections turned out to be the trigger for protests nevertheless. One could argue that the depoliticized context brought about favorable conditions for the elections to trigger mass mobilization. In such cases of everyday depoliticization, elections constitute an ideal opportunity for mass mobilization, since participation in protest actions provides participants with a sense of community and solidarity, not through collective action, but rather through the *individualized* and private action of casting the ballot ("Preodolevaya depolitizatsiyu..." 2013: 212-227)[10]. Thus, the perceived fraud creates an imagined community of robbed voters by turning participation into a mass activity. Moreover, the individualized nature of casting the ballot makes the perception of fraud,

[7]Gudkov L. 2011. "O razocharovannykh v 'Edinoi Rossii' [On those disappointed in United Russia]". Levada Center, 9 December 2011. Accessed on 17 August 2015. URL: http://www.levada.ru/09–2012-2011/lev-gudkov-o-razocharovannykh-v-edinoi-rossii.

[8]Gudkov, "O razocharovannykh v 'Edinoi Rossii' [On those disappointed in United Russia]."

[9]Georgii Il'ichev, "Utinaya" sotsiologiya ["Mother Goose" Sociology]." Novaya gazeta. 14 December 2011. Accessed on 26.02.2014. URL: http://www.novayagazeta.ru/comments/50034.html.

[10]Preodolevaya depolitizatsiyu: dialog uchastnikov Kollektiva issledovatelei politizatsii [Overcoming depoliticization] in Polititicheskaya kritika 1 (2013): 212-227.

regardless of its expectedness, a cause for 'moral shock' at the perception of procedural unfairness. Thus, rather than the 'stolen elections' as a whole, it was the outrage at 'stolen votes' that became the trigger for protests (Jasper 2011; Sedziaka and Rose 2015).

Frames in social movement studies are the schemes of interpretation that allow individuals to locate, conceptualize, identify, and label various events and situations (Benford and Snow 2000, p. 464). This is why the process of *frame alignment* becomes a necessary condition for participation. Frame alignment is the process that provides the link between individual interpretations and interpretations suggested by a social movement or its key actors. It is through this process that individual interests, values, and attitudes align with the activities, goals, and ideology of a social movement. As Lindekilde remarks, frame analysis, in paying special attention to the causes of participation and mobilization, focuses primarily on how previously defined ideological constructs are strategically deployed to frame a specific theme (Lindekilde 2014, pp. 195-227).

Taking into account that For Fair Elections social movement failed to produce identifiable leaders or organization capable of producing and disseminating such mobilizing frames before and after mass protests took place, it is safe to assume that these 'frames' did not emerge in a top-down manner as the result of leaders' efforts, but originated among ordinary participants. Thus, I have identified seven basic mobilizing frames that are articulated in the slogans[11]:

(1) frame of fair elections (procedural justice);
(2) frame of anti-regime or anti-Putin opposition (political leanings);
(3) frame of violated human rights;
(4) frame of solidarity;
(5) frame of social policy demands;
(6) frame of self-values of emotion and their expression, and;
(7) residual category of slogans[12].

The first frame is **the frame of fair elections**. At its core is a dissatisfaction with the procedural side of elections and discontent with fraud, expressed through the calls for a recount, overturning the election results and repeating the process in a fair manner, as well as the resignation of the head of the Central Electoral Commission, Vladimir Churov.

[11]In order to interpret the slogans and attach a particular frame label to them, I also referred to the interviews collected during the meetings, using them as another source for interpretation which allowed us to capture the motivation and ideas behind each slogan. I was looking at the interviews and slogans as different parts of the same 'text' generated by the movement. For more detail on combining frame analysis with discourse analysis, see Lindekilde (2014).

[12]The last category includes all the slogans, which do not fit anywhere else. For instance, there are unclear statements that contain appeals such as "Rise up, great country!" (Vstavai, strana ogromnaya!), which is a direct quotation of the first line of a famous song from the World War II period. Such cases can hardly be assigned to any of the aforementioned frames.

These measures were meant to serve as a means of shaming those responsible for the fraud, demonstrating evidence of vote rigging and doctoring, and denying the procedural fairness of the elections and of the legitimacy of the newly re-elected authorities, who had obtained their power through unfair play (*"We did not choose you!"*). Furthermore, this category captures slogans indicative of the fact of vote stealing (*"My vote has been stolen! Give me back my vote, magician!"*[13]), as well as emotions brought about by fraud and the power holders' cynicism (*"They cheated us! We are being deceived! We are no scum"*).

The second frame, which I label as **the 'opposition' frame**, brings together slogans expressing open discontent with the political regime as a whole, as well as its key representatives: Vladimir Putin, Dmitrii Medvedev, and the party of power, Uniten negative attitude towards them: *"Putin, go away!", "For the third term ... in jail!", "United Russia - the party of swindlers and thieves!", "EdRo [from Yedinaya Rossiya, "United Russia] into the trash can!", "IS THIS MY president?!"*.

The third frame ties in with **demands for law compliance and respect of human rights and the Constitution**: freedom of speech and mass media, release of political prisoners, crackdown on corruption, control over judges, police etc. These demands emphasize the role of rules and procedures and refer to legal arguments rather than to social fairness and equality, thus setting them apart from social and economic desiderata. What distinguishes them from the demands for free and fair elections, which also incorporate legislative demands (e.g. registration of opposition, reintroduction of 'none of the above' option on the ballot and lowering the electoral threshold), is the wider scope of the slogans, going beyond the immediate concern with procedural fairness of the electoral process.

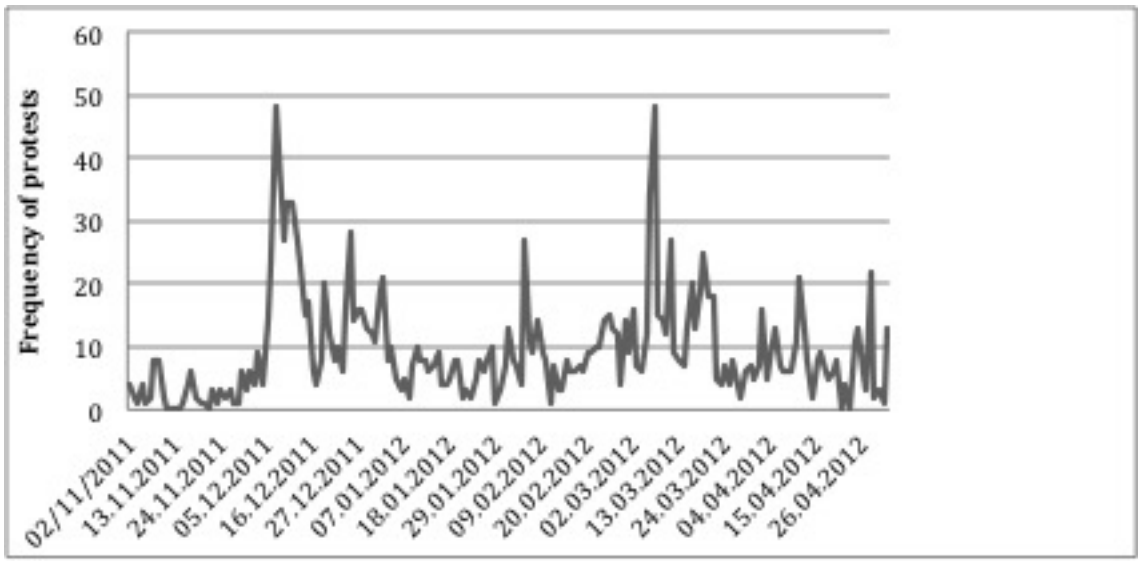
The fourth frame reflects **the value of support and solidarity between protesters from different cities and countries**, which is captured in such slogans as: "We are with you! Ufa, Hamburg is with you!".

The fifth frame ties in with **demands for specific social policies**, and draws attention to the social problems of particular people or social groups. I include in this category such slogans as: *"Where is the affordable accommodation, damn it?", "A city for pedestrians and cyclists!", "Give my 1991 bank savings back!", "How [are we] to survive on a pension?!",*), and *"Greetings from the comedy show "Affordable Accommodation for Young Families"*.

Finally, the sixth frame taps into **the expression of emotions** towards actual and potential protesters. As opposed to other frames, which all comprise slogans targeting principally those in power as the principal targets, these statements address the speaker's

[13]The nickname "magician" was given to the head of the Central Electoral Commission Vladimir Churov, who on December 6th declared that his electoral forecast had turned out to be the most precise. "You are practically a magician, or so some party leaders call you", President Dmitry Medvedev praised him. "I'm still learning", replied Churov, quoting the famous Soviet movie Zolushka ("Cinderella")(1947). These words, as well as a screenshot of a news report on the major channel Russia 24 showing that 146,47% of voters cast their ballots in the region of Rostov, immediately became the subject of numerous jokes and mock art installations during the protest (The Alphabet of Protest, Azbuka protesta, Moscow 2012)

Figure 5.3: The frequency of the registered mass protests (2011-2012) per day



fellow citizens. Through this framing, an imagined community is created via the assertion that "they are just like us". These statements are associated with the creation of a communicative space from within the meeting. Examples are: *"Nice to meet you!", "Policeman, remember: your son is in this crowd!", "Thanks for coming!", "Tomorrow we'll be smiling for real!" OMON"*[14]*, remember, you're not a cog in the machine, you're a human!", "Hey you, on the stage!" "Happy birthday, civil society!"* and *"Together we can do it!"*. The self-presentation of the subject is another important parameter discernible in the slogans. In the course of the analysis of each slogan, it is possible to categorize the mode in which the claimant positions himself as belonging to one of three categories through the use of first person singular ("My vote has been stolen!", "Putin is not my president!"), the first person plural ("We're not the opposition, we're your employers!"), and impersonal statements ("Putin, go away!", "Russia, rise up!")[15].

From Figure 5.3 it is clear that the protests peaked in December 2011 and March 2012, with minor upticks in February and April 2012[16]. The protest mood remained widespread between the legislative and presidential elections, withering away following the election of Vladimir Putin in March 2012.

As we address the way the frame configurations and the ways protesters defined and explained the events on a day-to-day basis (see Figure 5.4), we can see that the dominant motive for protests in December 2011 was the concern with unfair elections and stolen votes, while the opposition frame played a secondary role. Then the number of

[14]OMON is Russia's police special force.

[15]It must be noted that I excluded all quotations from popular movies, songs, public speeches, literature or anecdotes. These slogans have been coded as impersonal together with other slogans on behalf of "the people", citizenry etc.

[16]It must be recalled that these data do not mirror reality; they are only approximations of the frequency of media messages. This is why they tend to ignore less salient and smaller protest actions (conservative bias), so there may be a risk of undervaluing some events.

slogans referring to electoral integrity drops as they are superseded by more opposition and socially-oriented claims. Perhaps this originates with the fact that in most of the regions the protest agenda at the end of January and February shifted as the local and regional branches of the political parties (e.g. CPRF) recaptured the initiative (Semenov and Lobanova 2013, pp. 5-19). The frame of fair elections and stolen elections somewhat belatedly re-emerges only in April 2012, echoing the aftermath of presidential elections on the 4th of March 2012. The most pronounced pattern can be seen in Figure 5.5, where the frame of 'fair elections' swaps places with the anti-regime opposition frame, the latter often couching its slogans not in terms of laws and facts, but in terms of moral norms, emotions and political preferences.

The frame of 'unfair elections' may be considered a self-sustained mobilizing agenda, not merely a response to 'the final straw' or a pretext to voice existing grievances. One assumption underlying this claim is that the December protests may have been triggered by a substantively distinct combination of factors from those at work during previous protest waves. In other words, the way people frame the protests and their own role in them is specific for each protest, and various frames are associated with different mobilizing mechanisms. Figure 6 demonstrates the proportion of slogans reflecting mass dissatisfaction with the existing political regime (the opposition frame) and slogans commenting on the perceived electoral integrity (fair elections). What is remarkable is that in December predominantly anti-regime slogans constituted only 13-14%, whereas slogans challenging the fairness and legitimacy of the elections made up approximately 35% of all registered slogans[17]. In any case, this fact confirms the claim that the slogans come not only from committed anti-regime fighters, but also from disgruntled (*razgnevannye*) voters and observers. It is the frame of fair elections that spontaneously emerged and crystallized under a common semantic umbrella all those who had never sympathized with any oppositional ideas, or stayed away from politics altogether, or simply did not believe that things were that bad (Razgnevannye nabyudateli 2012: 12). Then the proportion of these slogans shrinks, indicating a decrease in the salience of the electoral procedure agenda as the mobilizing frame. At the same time, the proportion of 'purely' oppositional slogans increases, and during the second protest wave in March 2012 it exceeds 20%. As was the case before, the electoral integrity alarms the protesters, but this frame becomes a minor one, comprising less than 16%.

[17]Obviously, most of the slogans heavily overlap in theme because anti-regime moods and complaints about procedural legitimacy are closely intertwined. Oppositional orientation does not preclude condemnation of the Central Electoral Commission and other authorities. However, I tried to define the primary, dominant frame for each.

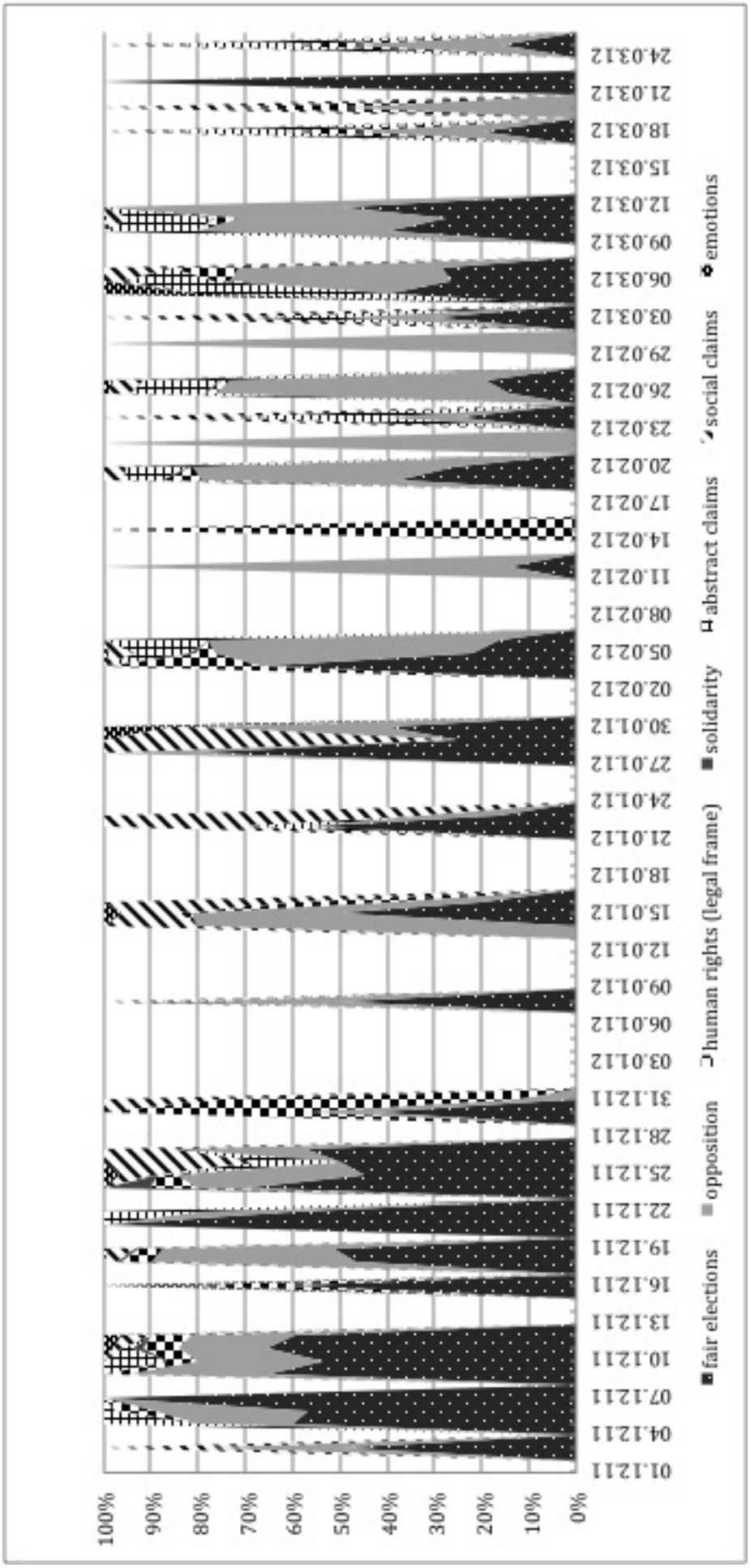
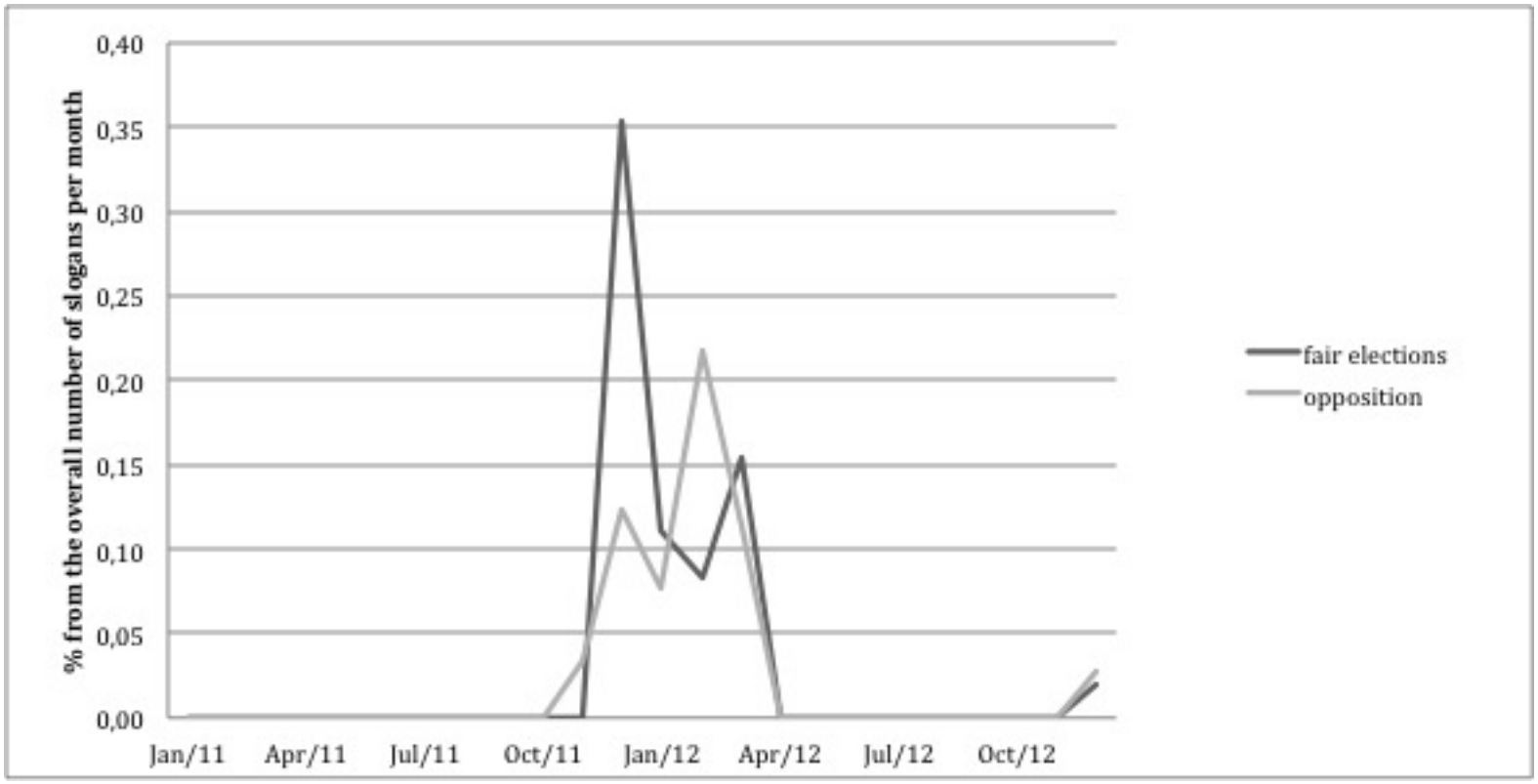


Figure 5.4: The frame composition during the protests 2011-12

Figure 5.5: The frame dynamics: fair elections vs opposition per month (share in the overall number of slogans)



5.3.3 Mobilizing by Fraud: Evidence from Interviews

What made protesters perceive the act of voting as a 'personal matter'? In their analyses of Russian social movements in the past decade, Gladarev (Gladarev 2011, pp. 69-304) and Clément et al. (Clément, Miryasova, and Demidov 2010) underline the role of immediate threats to people's well-being, and state's intrusion into their private sphere, as a major mobilizing force. Intrusion into the private sphere may drive further mobilization. For instance, the citizens of Saint Petersburg join city preservation initiatives not because they own the buildings or city land, but because they perceive Saint Petersburg as something private, as their space, and any transformation of the city equals intrusion into their home (Gladarev 2011). Extending these insights, it can be argued that the elections of 2011-2012 have created a mobilizing agenda because they turned from being of interest to no one into a personal matter. Evidence from collected interviews suggests that a vote cast – 'my vote', 'stolen vote' – bridged the individual act of voting and the impact of the regime's decisions. McAllister and White emphasize that, unlike external observers, voters cast ballots themselves and, therefore, in a certain sense they see themselves as proprietors of their vote. Thus, the voters extend their property rights to electoral outcomes (2011). Obviously, these property rights do not always form grounds for discontent with fraud. Thus, we are dealing with a response to the authorities' intrusion into the privacy of those who cannot be labeled opposition activists or *swing protesters*.

In our case, private property rights extend to a given vote, which is perceived as a personal possession. This is why the phrase 'my vote has been stolen' is worth considering in a literal sense, not just as a metaphor. For instance, one of the participants of the Observers' Movement, explaining the reasons why he decided to become involved in the electoral campaign, stressed his wish to track the votes. Once he had thereby made sure that there were no apparent problems with his vote, he decided to withdraw from the protests:

> I didn't go to the meetings, because my vote hadn't been stolen, because I had been observing, watching my votes, and counting. (male, worker, September 15th, 2012, Saint Petersburg)

On the other hand, the vote was not just a stolen possession. There were also debates over voting strategies (abstention or *Nikh-Nikh*[18], spoiling the ballot or *Nakh-Nakh*), as well as the tenacious attention of the mass media to anticipated violations and growing dissatisfaction with the existing regime. Consequently, the formal act of voting was endowed with additional moral weight, as one of the observers posits:

[18]For instance, some oppositionists urged for spoiling the ballot, while others – to vote for any party but United Russia. Grigorii Golosov, a political scientist who widely publishes in mass media, advised people to cast a ballot for either of the parties – the Communists or the Right Cause – by flipping a coin (2011).

> Many voters were coming [to the polling station] with a sincere belief that their decision was important... it was obvious that for most of the people it was important, that it was not a tribute to tradition, but rather that they were trying to make a decision about their future (Razdnevannye nablyudateli 2012: 224).

Both strategies of protest voting – "For any party but UR" and "Spoil the ballot" (*Nakh-Nakh*) – assumed a 'voice' strategy, rather than an 'exit' one (Hirschman 1970). Consequently, the choice of any particular party was of lesser significance than the act of voting itself and the opportunity of not casting the ballot for the party of power. To take this opportunity away would mean not to simply violate the Constitution, but "to trample the last thing left":

> ...the last thing that remained at the people' disposal – freedom of speech – is being trampled by those in power. (female, age 50, secondary professional education, retired, October 20th 2012, Moscow)

This is why, during the winter and spring protest, the slogan "I did not vote for these rascals, I voted for someone else! Give me back my vote!" sounded much more frequently than slogans supporting any particular party or candidate. Thus, in this case, the expression of personal opinion embodied in the act of voting was initially incorporated into the system of political representation, subsequently becoming a specific form of self-representation (Zhuravlev 2014, pp. 350-388).

The immediate cause that pushed the participants to the street boils down to the short phrase "My vote has been stolen, unabashedly and cynically". The accusation of theft brings us back to the violations and fraud at specific polling stations and, simultaneously, to the *perception* that these elections were marred by blatant fraud. While in the former case the main concern were specific votes, the latter cast shadow on the vote count procedures as a whole and subverted the confidence in reported electoral results:

> ...Well, I don't like falsifications, dishonesty, and impudence. I can't stand such cynicism. That's why I joined [the rally] on the rebound from this mayhem. (female, middle age, teacher, 4th of February 2012, Saint Petersburg)

> What turned me on is that during the parliamentary elections they didn't even respect us enough to hide the fact that they were stealing votes. We went to the site of the Butovskaya *uprava* [the city administrative board] where I reside. We examined the precinct electoral commission tallies: UR – 32%, 40%, and ... ta-dah!... like a bolt from the blue – 89%! Everything was in open access. I realized I live in a place where the stuffing of sham ballots had occurred.

> It is that barefaced lie that drove me mad. (male, age 42, higher education, mid-level manager in the sphere of corporate PR, 12th of June 2012, Moscow)

> When fraud is inconspicuous, small... well, that happens in every election. But when it happens in such a massive, undisguised, and blatant way, when for some reason bureaucrats decide who will be the president, not the people's wish, that is really strange. (female, age 25, 25th of February 2012, Saint Petersburg).

The undisguised and unrepentant way in which the fraud was carried out is deeply associated with the concept of "procedural fairness" or "procedural justice" (Sedziaka and Rose 2014), which renders important how voters assess and react to procedural violations. This procedural justice affects the survival of electoral authoritarian regimes, which are highly dependent on the skill of recalibrating the control by the ruling elite (Case 2006). According to experts observing the flow of the electoral campaign of 2011, the measures taken by the regime appeared so clumsy and crude that they could not remain unnoticed. In other words, the elite gave a signal that they did not fully control the situation (Kak Kreml' svoimi rukami... 2011)[19].

The response to fraud described above is a consequence of two phenomena: the vote being seen as a private possession, and perceived lack of procedural fairness, with subsequent fraud. The increased attention paid to the electoral process, personal experiences of acting in observer capacity, and documented evidence of fraud all converged to create a powder keg ready to explode when the expectations of electoral fraud were confirmed by actual instances of vote-rigging. Many observers who witnessed violations emphasized the gap between expected and actual falsification, or to be more precise, between expectations and voters' personal experiences:

> Before the Duma elections, I expected some minor violations, but I didn't anticipate such a disgrace. Now having observed the presidential elections, I've seen human vileness at its worst. (male, age 22, student, employed in PR, February 15th 2012, Saint Petersburg)

Thus, the gap between the expectations and subsequent experience of voter fraud, coupled with a strong moral meaning associated with the act of voting, resulted in a moral shock and outrage. As these convictions clashed with the first-hand experience of electoral fraud and ballot stuffing, the criminality of the regime came in full view, pushing previously apolitical people towards mass protest action.

[19] "Kak Kreml' svoimi rukami nanes udar..." Slon.ru. Accessed on 24.07.2015: http://slon.ru/russia/kak_kreml_svoimi_rukami_nanes_udar_po_edinoy_rossii-722192.xhtml

The convergence of these factors largely shaped the later protesters' perception of the elections as a personal experienced, even if they had not observed fraudulent actions themselves. That said, it is important to note that their interpretative framework remained largely unpoliticized, focusing instead on a personal level. Fraud was cast in terms of a personal insult, while the actions of the authorities were read as lack of respect towards voters. As the protesters recoded the interactions within a newly created public sphere into the format of interpersonal, it led to the emergence of an unusual rhetoric of personal communication at the rallies: *"I don't like the way I've been treated", "I'm offended by such treatment", "They take us for idiots", "I've been humiliated", "Stop ignoring us!" and the quintessential "'You've hurt me!*"

Many respondents' statements indicate a shift to the personal level within the public sphere, and the perception of fraud as a 'personal' matter. When recalling the motives that drove them to attend protest meetings for the first time, all of them cited feelings of indignation and humiliation:

> ...the biggest push, perhaps, was my almost personal humiliation by Mr. Putin, when he labeled me with some filthy and disgusting words. After the first meeting, which I missed, he called all the people Bandar-logs [monkey people from Rudyard Kipling's The Jungle Book] wearing condoms, and he was insulting *me*... At that moment he humiliated me. I counted it as a matter of honor to take part in all forthcoming protests. (male, age 30, higher education, manager, February 4th 2012, Moscow)

> Yes, I think it is important [for elections to be fair], because I'm convinced that be it any elections, they must be fair and it shouldn't be forgotten that we are not fools, that people have eyes and brains, that we understand everything and [they shouldn't] take us for fools. I'm not sure that we can displace this Putin, because he's backed by serious financial structures. Head of the state, what can one say. But really at least to show them, damn it, that we're not stupid scum, that we see these violations, that we know that you're cheating. Why are you doing all this? (male, age 30, higher education, March 5th 2012, Saint Petersburg)

Here is another example of a respondent who managed to prevent electoral fraud at her polling station:

> At 5 AM I came back home and burst into tears. I felt I had been deeply and personally offended (Razgnevannye nablyudateli 2012: 106).

The lion's share of the slogans expresses these emotions even more eloquently: "We've been screwed", "You've offended me", "We're not scum", "We're not cattle", "Stop playing us for fools", "You ought to respect me" etc. Thus, the perception of elections as

a personal matter transformed the act of voting into a bridge between the individual and the regime. Because of this bridge, fraud, regardless of its expectedness, gave rise to a mobilizing agenda. The bureaucrats could not properly organize the electoral campaign and control the electoral results, and the observers allowed into the polling stations put the evidence of clumsy and unskillful fraud into the public domain. Consequently, prospective protesters, having obtained factual evidence of violations, learnt that their vote had not just been stolen, but stolen blatantly, outrageously, and unashamedly. The regime not only ignored its citizens, but also humiliated them. This is why the protest became a logical continuation of electoral participation. What makes these protests distinct from Serbian, Ukrainian, and Georgian ones is that voters were striving not only to demonstrate their outrage, but also to declare their existence and claim representation.

5.3.4 Core and Swing Protesters

Slogans and interviews lead us to conclude that the act of voting carries sufficient mobilizing power through individualized expression of will at the polls. At the same time, we should test the mechanisms of prior exposure to the mass media and/or strong ideological positions that affected the propensity of voters *to expect and see* electoral fraud. Therefore, exposure to oppositional mass media together with strength of anti-regime leanings has to be taken into account and tested.

The Russian mass media market has been in decline since the media war between two tycoons – Boris Berezovsky, former kingmaker and disgraced *oligarkh*, and Vladimir Gusinsky, whose media asset NTV was taken over in 2000 by Gazprom, leaving the First Channel (*Pervyi kanal*) and Rossiya as the main Russian TV channels with a countrywide reach, both *de facto* belonging to the state. First Channel inherited the infrastructure of the Soviet television, transformed in 1991 into the Russian State TV and Radio Company, Ostankino (Oates 2013; Lipman and McFaul 2005) and turned three years later into a closed joint-stock company, Russian Public TV or ORT, whose shares were distributed between state agencies and private shareholders. From 1998 to 2002, the controlling stake belonged to media tycoon Boris Berezovsky, after which his share was sold to another pro-Kremlin billionaire, Roman Abramovich and eventually reclaimed by the state. RTR or the 'Second Channel' is another old Soviet channel that fully belongs to the state and upholds a loyal position towards the regime.

By the early 2000s the Kremlin regained control over news channels, while other TV outlets had to co-operate with the government following the principle of non-intrusion, whereby the state imposed no censorship over entertainment media, as long as they steered clear of the big politics. After the series of color revolutions in 2003-2005 the Kremlin tightened up its control. As a result, the mass media "declined as a public institution", but "flourished as a lucrative business" (Lipman and McFaul 2005) due to the economic

upturn and the growth of TV advertising. Gazprom-Media and Yuri Kovalchuk's National Media Group (REN TV, the Fifth Channel) expanded their outreach to TV, newspapers, and internet resources. A series of amendments to the legislation regarding anti-extremism and anti-terrorism allowed state authorities to tighten their grip in order to selectively sanction particular materials, journalists, and media outlets. Nevertheless, REN TV continued to broadcast its famous Week with Marianna Maksimovskaya (*Nedelya s Mariannoi Maksimovskoi*) until its shutdown in 2014.

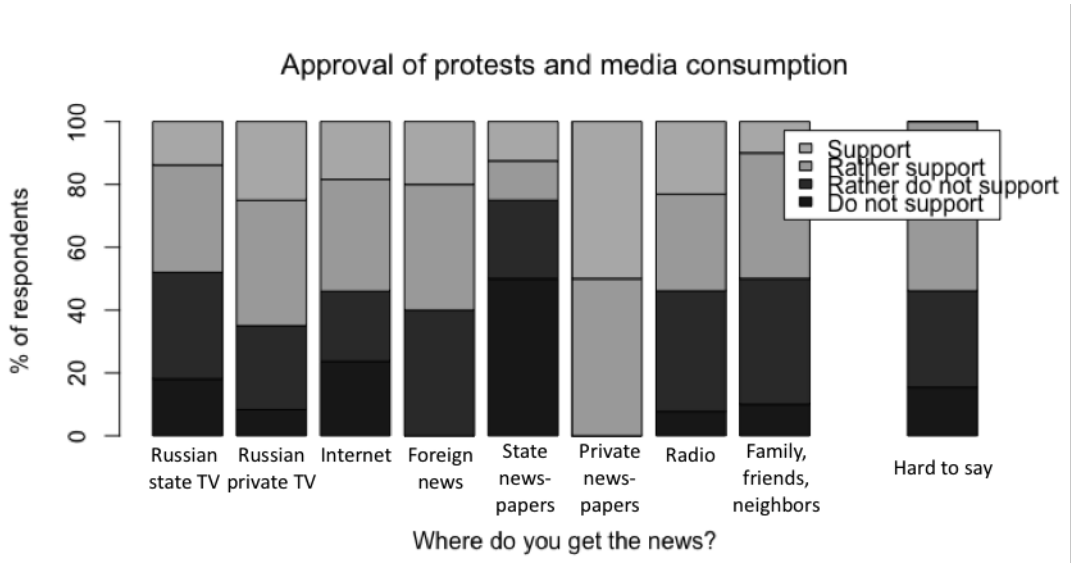
As opposed to television, print media and radio outlets had been offering a wide range of politicized content of various colors up to 2012. *Kommersant, Vedomosti, Novaya Gazeta*, The New Times, *Vlast'* and Russian Newsweek (closed in 2010) provided political analysis and critical articles of decent quality. Independent and neutral *Ekho Moskvy*, an old-timer radio station existing since Perestroika, continued to give the floor to opposition activists and liberal analysts. Another technological novelty that unleashed the opposition were the cable packages that included foreign channels – BBC, CNN, EuroNews – and a Russian brand-new alternative channel TV *Dozhd'* that went on air in 2010. On the eve of elections even entertainment editions turned to politics and such cultural luminaries as a poet Dmitry Bykov and actor Mikhail Efremov launched an ambitious internet project dubbed The Citizen Poet (*Grazhdanin poet*), where actors imitated the style of famous Russian poets like Joseph Brodsky criticizing current policies.

As of December 2011, 73% of all respondents mentioned state TV channels as the primary source of news; family, friends, and neighbors were mentioned by 46.3%, radio (36.2%), state newspapers (14.1%), while foreign sources, internet, and private channels were mentioned only by 12.1%, 10% and 8% respectively (Rose 2011, Figure 5.6). Television remained the main source of information for the majority of Russian citizens. Those who received news from state newspapers seem to support the post-electoral protests less than those who read the news in private newspapers or watched foreign news channels. Interestingly, consuming news from the internet does not seem to be associated with higher support of the protests. The latter confirms the idea that the internet merely reflects the distribution of preferences of the world offline. Respondents 'self-select' in consuming the news depending on their lifestyle and ideological leanings. Lastly, those who refused to answer the question do not tend to support the protests. This perhaps could relate to the issue of respondents' unwillingness to discover their true preferences in public.

In Table 5.2 I present the OLS regression estimates [20] of the approval of protests. The dependent variable is the responses to the following question: "Generally speaking, do you support street protests against violations of the organisation and conduct of elections and falsification of their results?". The responses take on four values: Definitely support,

[20] I use the OLS regression instead of ordered logit models, because the distribution of responses is roughly similar to the normal distribution and the results do not change much. The interpretation of linear coefficients is easier and more intuitive.

Figure 5.6: Approval of protest by media consumption



Source: New Russia Barometer, December 2011.

Mostly support, Mostly oppose and Entirely oppose. I reverted the Likert scale to make interpretation more straightforward: the highest values stand for the highest support of protest, while the lowest - for opposing the protests.

In terms of statistical significance, only private television makes a difference to the extent respondents approve of post-electoral protests (see Table 5.2). Other sources do not seem to differ in their politicizing effects from state television (which is a reference category in regression analysis). Major activities on the internet and type of social networks used by respondents are not associated with higher propensity to support protests. Even controlling for other predictors such as gender, age, income, and education does not change the results (see Annex). Those respondents who said that they get the news primarily from the Russian private TV channels vis-a-vis those watching state TV tend to support the protests by 0.36 points on the Likert scale. While significant, the effect is not a large one. The explanatory power of the models is pretty low - 6% (Specification 1, Table 5.2).

Newspapers, radio or peer groups such as family, friends or neighbors do not make any difference in terms of respondents' propensity to support the protests. The reasons why respondents use internet did not reveal any statistically significant result as well (Specification 2, Talbe 5.2). The same holds true for the variety of existing social networks in Russia - Facebook, Odnoklassniki or VKontakte. Only female respondents seem to be consistently more anti-protest, than males (by roughly 0.25 points).

Recent research suggests that the effects of mass media still hold, but its unconditional effect is rather limited. However, one could assume an amplifier effect of mass media on the eve of elections, which would thereby prepare the ground for expectations of fraud

Table 5.2: Mass media and attitudes towards protests

Variables	M1: Sources of news	M2: Reasons to use internet	M3: Social networks
Female	−0.25***	−0.26***	−0.24***
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)
Russian private TV channels	0.36***		
	(0.13)		
Internet	−0.01		
	(0.12)		
Foreign sources of news	0.30		
	(0.42)		
State newspapers	−0.51		
	(0.33)		
Private newspapers	0.85		
	(0.66)		
Radio	0.26		
	(0.26)		
Family, friends, neighbours	0.004		
	(0.30)		
Don't know	−0.01		
	(0.26)		
Internet: To get news			
		(0.11)	
Internet: country		−0.19	
		(0.13)	
Internet: communication		−0.02	
		(0.09)	
VKontakte			0.07
			(0.09)
Odnoklassniki			−0.13
			(0.09)
Facebook			0.03
			(0.15)
N	679	679	679
$PseudoR^2$	0.06	0.05	0.05

Robust standard errors in parentheses. Constant terms are suppressed.
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

to arise. The literature suggests three possible mechanisms of how procedural justice or perception of fraud could have played out: 1) prior exposure to the opposition mass media (private channels such as *Dozhd'*, internet services) without strong political stances (media+fraud); 2) strong political stance amplified by witnessed fraud (leanings+fraud), and; 3) strong political stance (pro- or anti-regime) amplified by media, where fraud *per se* is of secondary importance. I test these three mechanisms against one another interacting subjective assessments of fraud with variables indicating respondent's political leanings (approve or disapprove of Putin's policies, support of United Russia) and use of mass media (see Table A.9 for the regression estimates in the Appendix).

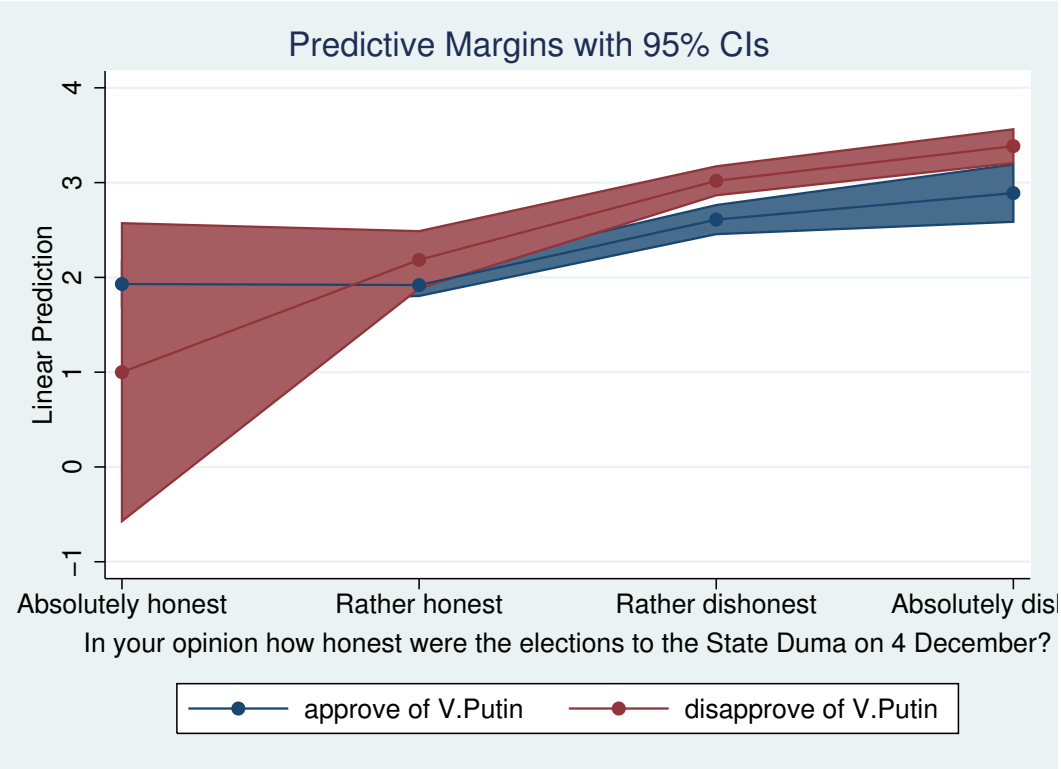
Those who view the elections as rigged tend to be more supportive of protests and vice versa. The effect of political leanings proves strong only when the perception of fraud has not been accounted for. Once the perception of fraud is plugged in this effect fades away. Finally, those voters who were more skeptical of United Russia are slightly more prone to assess electoral integrity as poor.

These models suggest multiple mechanisms of politicizing through procedural justice apart from that emphasized in protesters' interviews (fraud+media). 'Core protesters' reveal the mechanisms wherein their opposition views were bolstered by the realities of fraud - either witnessed or learned from others. When those who did not share any clear political views - 'swing protesters' - were exposed to perceived fraud through the amplifying effect of internet and private channels, they also become politicized through a more procedural way. Thus, survey data bring more evidence to the table by revealing multiple mechanisms of how electoral fraud translates into at least support of protest.

Were respondents who supported Putin's government still prone to react to electoral malpractice? The answer is yes. There is a slight interaction effect between political leanings (approval of Putin's government) and perception of fraud. While it comes as no surprise that voters who disliked the government and its then-Prime Minister assess elections more rigorously ('winner-loser gap'), those who trusted Putin's government and assess electoral integrity as mediocre still tended to support the protests (see Figure 5.7). We can thus identify two modes of protest mobilization: anti-regime stance+perception of fraud and/or mass media exposure+perception of fraud (see Table A.9 of Appendix). Removing perception of fraud from the equation leads to a decreased share of explained variance. Therefore, I conclude that the poor assessment of electoral process was the main trigger in the emergence of the 2011 electoral protests.

These mechanisms require further tests in order to ensure that the relationship between protests and perception of fraud is not reverse or endogenous. Since the survey assessments are simultaneous and people could have lost their trust with the regime after observing electoral violations or those who reported low electoral integrity were ready to show up at the protests, it is necessary to instrument perception fraud in such a way that would exclude potential correlation between the predictor and error term. I used two-stage least

Figure 5.7: Predictive margins of support for protests and approval of V. Putin's policies



square instrumental variable regression (2SLS IV) where my instruments are the questions from New Russia Barometer surveys carried out in December 2011 and March 2014:

– How widespread do you think bribe-taking and corruption are? (q7a, NRB 2011)
– Do you think that the Federal Government controls the situation in Chechnya now? (q99A, NRB 2012)[21]
– The speeches of what public figures, scientists, journalists, writers, actors, or culture representatives do you remember the most? Stanislav Govorukhin mentioned (q78_38, NRB 2012).

Sets of questions vary from survey to survey; therefore, we should approach the comparison of the two models with utmost caution. I found those variables that would somehow correlate with the main predictor indicating perception of fraud to be unrelated – practically and theoretically – with propensity to support protests. Assessments of how widespread bribe-taking is could correlate with overall importance of procedural justice and appreciation of rule of law while, on the other hand, it may or may not be linked to the protest activities. Assessments of whether the Federal Government controls the troublesome rebellious region of Chechen republic seem absolutely unrelated to the propensity to support protests, but may reflect overall suspicion towards the state's capacity to maintain order and peace. Lastly, paying attention to such a personality such as Stanislav Govorukhin proved to be negatively correlated with perception of fraud. It must be men-

[21] All instruments pass formal tests to avoid the use of weak instruments.

tioned that Stanislav Govorukhin is a Soviet and Russian film director, screenwriter, and actor who is famous for his socially-oriented cinema that raises problems of inequality, marginality, and difficulties of transition period (*"Rezhisser pobedy Putina..."*)[22]. In 2011-12 Mr. Govorukhin served as Vladimir Putin's attorney and joined the pro-Putin All-Russia People's Front in 2013. Thus, the fact of Govorukhin's recognition potentially means that respondent supports or at least pays attention to activity of some celebrities who may share conservative views. At the same time, it may or may not correlate with the extent to which respondents support protesters and the Movement for Fair Elections.

The enhancing effect of perceived fraud (dichotomized) remained a strong predictor of protest approval rates and reveal a robust and statistically-significant effect both in 2011 and 2012: those who reported low level of electoral integrity tend to have a higher score on protest approval by 0.5 other things being equal (see Table 5.3). The effect becomes even stronger in 2012 - 0.6-0.7 and it explains alone almost 20% of variation (see Table 5.4). Interestingly, the effect of Putin's disapproval is significant and equally strong as the effect of perceived electoral malpractice in 2011, but it loses its significance according to the data of 2012. This can be a result of a dramatic shrinking of the available sample - only 155 respondents answered all the questions of interest. Other predictors fail to achieve a minimal level of statistical significance.

Bottom line, the effect of perceived electoral malpractice was decisive in bringing voters to the streets in December of 2011 and in March 2012. Political leanings also did play a major role, largely overlapping with the effect of fraud. However, as we can see, those who were not happy with the way elections had been carried out were not necessarily the ones engaged in political opposition.

5.3.5 Wind of change?

Protesters could be driven either by exposure to opposition mass media coupled with observed fraud or via anti-regime moods amplified by observed fraud. This begs the question how was it possible for mass media to enjoy such freedom as to allow for protest coordination and the shift in public mood? Without a major reshuffling within the political elite and the activity of the opposition, the effect of mass media would have been close to zero. To understand this one needs to scrutinize three episodes most often mentioned by respondents and analysts: mass reaction to the 'job swap' between then-prime minister V. Putin and then-president Dmitrii Medvedev in September 2011, the 'Prokhorov's affair' when the allegedly perspective leader of the newly established liberal party – the Right Cause – left his post that same September, and a high-profile scandal with a liberally-minded Minister of Finance, Aleksei Kudrin, who left the government after having been told off publicly by President Medvedev.

[22]'Rezhisser pobedy Putina'. 8.12.2011. Gazeta.ru. Accessed on April 4th, 2015. http://www.gazeta.ru/politics/elections2011/2011/12/08$_{a3}$919210.*shtml*

Table 5.3: Approval of Protests in December 2011: 2SLS vs OLS Regression Estimates

Variables	OLS	2SLS
Perception of electoral malpractice	0.45***	0.46**
	(0.05)	(0.17)
Disapprove of Putin's performance	0.40***	0.40**
	(0.09)	(0.17)
Assessment of econ. situation	0.01	0.01
	(0.05)	(0.06)
Sex	−0.15**	−0.13*
	(0.07)	(0.07)
Age	−0.001	−0.001
	(0.002)	(0.002)
Education	0.004	0.01
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Region	−0.04**	0.04**
	(0.02)	(0.02)
N	573	550
$Adj.R^2$	0.30	0.30

Robust standard errors in parentheses. Constant terms are suppressed.
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 5.4: 2SLS vs. OLS Regression Estimates: Approval of Protests in March 2012.

Variables	OLS	2SLS
Perception of electoral malpractice	0.56***	0.71**
	(0.08)	(0.28)
Disapprove of Putin's performance	−0.03	−0.02
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Sex	−0.16	−0.20
	(0.13)	(0.13)
Age	−0.01	−0.001
	(0.004)	(0.004)
Education	−0.03	−0.04
	(0.04)	(0.02)
N	155	145
$Adj.R^2$	0.27	0.21

Robust standard errors in parentheses. Constant terms are suppressed.
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

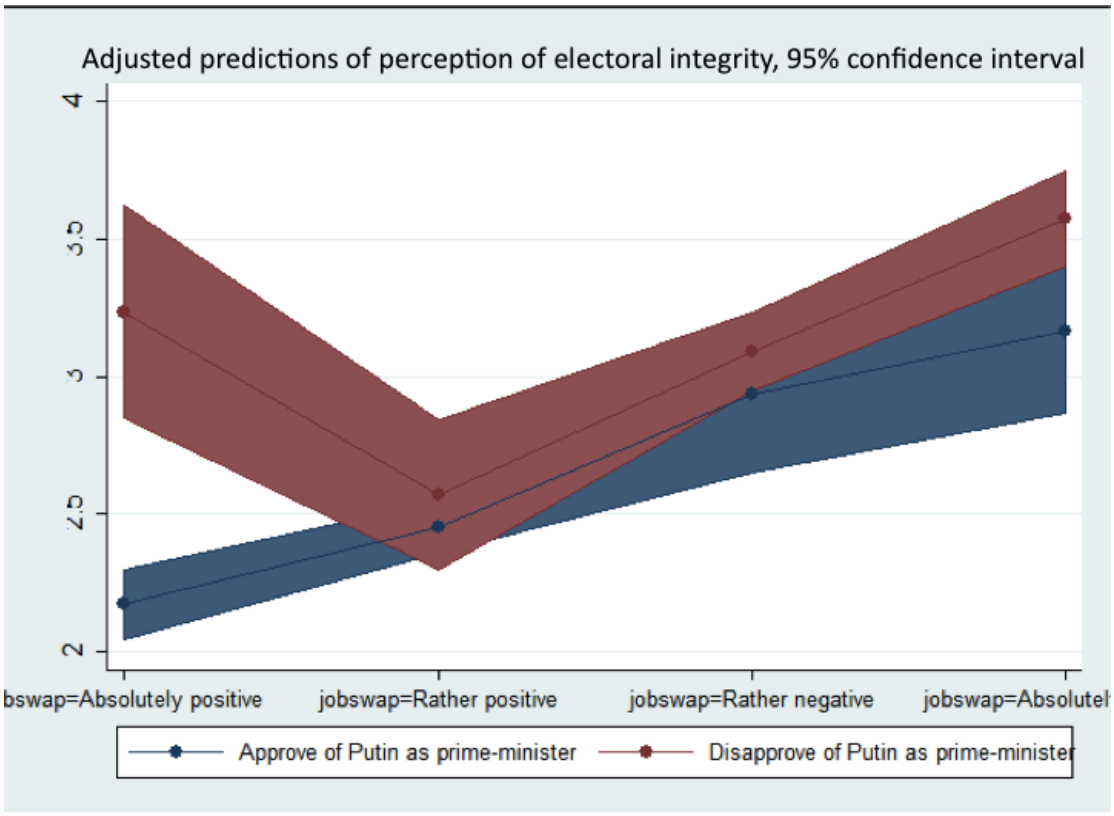
Protesters could be driven either by exposure to opposition mass media coupled with observed fraud or via anti-regime moods amplified by observed fraud. This begs the question how was it possible for mass media to enjoy such freedom as to allow for protest coordination and the shift in public mood? Without a major reshuffling within the political elite and the activity of the opposition, the effect of mass media would have been close to zero. To understand this one needs to scrutinize three episodes most often mentioned by respondents and analysts: mass reaction to the 'job swap' between then-prime minister Vladimir Putin and then-president Dmitrii Medvedev in September 2011, the 'Prokhorov's affair' when the prospective leader of the newly established liberal party - the Right Cause - left his post that same September, and a high-profile scandal involving a liberally-minded Minister of Finance, Aleksei Kudrin, who left the government after having been told off publicly by President Medvedev.

To what extent are these events associated with electoral behavior and perceptions of fraud? I used the survey data to explore how respondents reacted to the position swap between V. Putin and D. Medvedev at United Russia Party Congress on the 25th of September 2011. Those who disapproved of the position exchange between Putin and Medvedev tend to view elections as more corrupt. However, this correlation could be an artifact of general propensity of respondents to see the regime as more corrupt regardless of the elections results. Data shown in Figure 5.8 illustrate a clear correlational pattern between those assessments of electoral integrity and the approval of the 'job swap' (Pearson's Chi2=218.62, p-value=0.00). On the other hand, the relations between the general assessments of how bribe-taking is widespread in the country are less tightly connected to the number of people who saw the elections as fraudulent.

Looking at the differences of assessments between supporters of V. Putin and his opponents, one will find a positive elevator effect on how critical respondents are of the election's quality. Surprisingly, those who saw the job swap as an absolutely positive event, tend to be more critical of elections.

Recognition of these personalities as politically-relevant reflects the salience of these events and gives more evidence of the extent to which they could shape voters' perceptions. Surprisingly, there is no apparent relation between personality-recognition rates and perception of electoral integrity, while those who mentioned the UR party conference and Russia's admission to the World Trade Organization (WTO) as the best events of the previous four weeks assessed the level of electoral integrity lower (see Figure 10). Thus, perhaps, there is no 'straw-in-the-wind' evidence that shows in the direction of such explanations emphasizing the impact of particular events. Thus, the list of suspects or accomplices consisting of a series of pivotal events does not reveal tangible effects on propensity to critically assess electoral integrity. This sort of data does not provide a hoop test that would allow one to refute these explanations, but there are indirect signs that show the implausibility of these contextual factors.

Figure 5.8: The Impact of the Job Swap on the Perceptions of Electoral Integrity



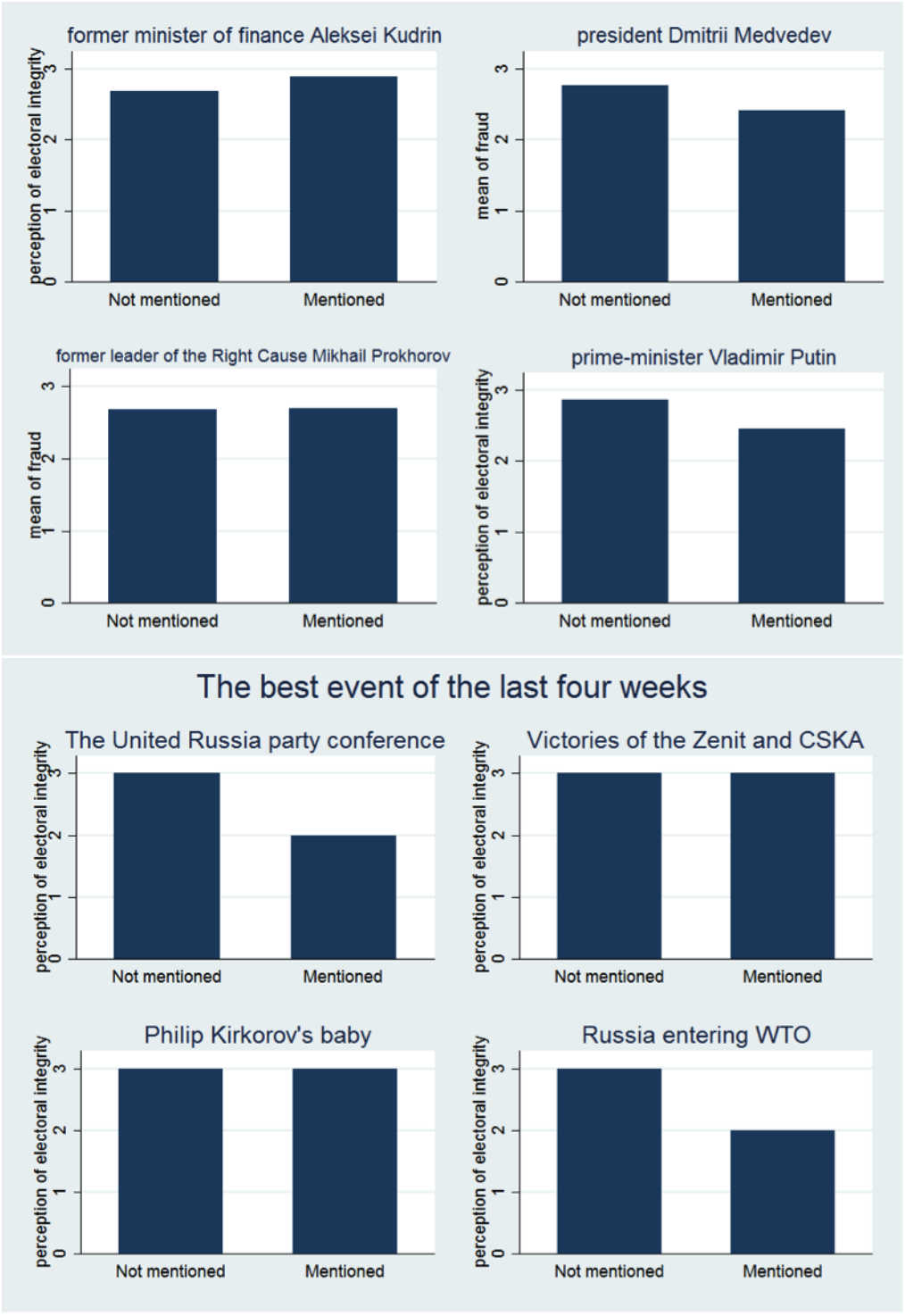
Source: New Russia Barometer December 2011

In Figure 5.9 I compare the median values of perception of electoral malpractice by a variety of concurrent political and non-political events as well as recognition of particular politicians. There is no observable difference in evaluations of fraud depending on a public person mentioned by a respondent. I included incumbents – the president, Dmitrii Medvedev and prime-minister, Vladimir Putin, as well as a liberally-minded former minister of finance Aleksei Kudrin, who had lost his position in September 2011, and former leader of the Right Cause Mikhail Prokhorov, whose dismissal could affect perceptions of fraud.

If we compare median values of perception of fraud at these elections, only the United Russia party conference and entering the WTO demonstrate some effect. Those who mentioned the UR party conference and Russia's entering the WTO tend to assess the electoral integrity somewhat lower.

A possible interpretation of this phenomenon is that those keeping closer track of political news tend to be more critical in their assessment of electoral integrity. Those who were more exposed to politically-relevant information had opportunities to learn how to spot electoral violations or could learn of significant concerns shared by the opposition and civic activists. Meanwhile, non-political events such as victories of the Russian football teams or the birth of pop singer Philip Kirkorov's baby did not produce any effects. Thus, it seems likely that some political events could have created an atmosphere of liberalization

Figure 5.9: Perceptions of electoral integrity by political vs non-political events.



Source: New Russia Barometer, December 2011.

or potential changes as well as enhanced voter awareness of expected electoral fraud and the ways to recognize it.

5.3.6 Revolt of the non-co-opted and unrepresented

What kinds of phenomena define prior exposure of particular groups of citizens to consume oppositional mass media? How do they learn about alternative opinions? Studies on the topic suggest the crucial role of 'caused activism,' whereby citizens mobilize in response to their encounter with a specific issue related to his/her everyday life - leaking roofs, cutting down a park, demolition of symbolic objects (Norris 2002). This phenomenon is also known as 'not-in-my-backyardism' (NIMBY-ism) and, as some scholars claim, may politicize participants and activists and result in more large-scale protests. There is evidence that Russian voters demonstrated willingness to engage in locally-relevant issues and challenge local authorities (Gladarev 2011, Clement et al. 2010). However, most of such activists distance themselves from the political sphere and emphasize non-political nature of their initiatives. In other words, the sphere of politics is stigmatized as something dirty and not worth to be taken seriously (Zhuravlev et al. 2014). Nevertheless, some observers argue that this seemingly depoliticized involvement has led some activists to politics and opposition (Zhuravlev et al. 2014, Volkov 2015).

Political opposition, even if feeble and loose, constitutes a crucial ingredient in any collective action, including post-electoral protests (Rueschemeyer et al. 1992). Students of social movements, even those who emphasize the role of masses and grassroots mobilization, still claim that without the co-ordinating role of smaller elite groups it would hardly be successful (MacAdam et al. 2003). Going back to the Russian protests, the presence and co-ordinating role of civic activists – Aleksey Naval'ny, Yevgenia Chirikova, Ksenia Sobchak, Udal'tsov, as well as politicians – Boris Nemtsov, Garry Kasparov, Mikhail Kasyanov – proved to be essential for organizing at Chistye Prudy right on the polling day and afterwards on Sakharov Avenue (Volkov 2015).

The next step to be made is to answer the question who these people are and why did they dare to challenge the regime. Political opposition can be driven by various sets of motivation under authoritarian regimes, ideational or instrumental (Dahl 1969). However, it is not that important to establish whether Russian opposition – systemic or non-systemic – was made up of true believers or pragmatic politicians. What it really crucial is to trace where these opposition groups came from and whether they already had connections with former ruling elites.

As the theory suggests, political parties under authoritarianism are usually designed to co-opt potential rebels and contain emerging conflicts and splits (Geddes 1999, Brownlee 2007). However, if a party system becomes impermeable, it results in the growing number of politicians or career-oriented activists who lack access to lucrative positions. Moreover,

if a party system clams up, more diehard supporters of the regime push moderates and liberal politicians out of the large coalition. In effect, the mechanism of co-optation breaks down and political parties (or dominant parties, as in this case) cease to prevent intra-elite ruptures. Thus, I argue that the breakdown of co-optative capacity is the clue to understating the odd relationship between the partisan legislature and the probability of post-electoral protests.

If this claim holds true, one should find among those spearheading the protests a number of politicians who, at some point, had been squeezed out of the political elite and subsequently marginalized. This process of gradual marginalization should be particularly visible in cross-temporal perspective following the Russian State Duma's adoption of more restrictive legislation on political parties and the introduction of the new electoral system in 2005. These changes led to a growing number of un-co-opted politicians who, having found themselves marginalized, joined the non-systemic opposition and attracted public attention to the issues of electoral integrity. Two types of empirical evidence support this claim: biographical trajectories of marginalized politicians and survey data. Analysis of the main opposition organizations and their composition starting from 2003 (long before the electoral reform) up to 2012 demonstrates the share of previously acceptable public figures who became largely marginal and non-systemic. This kind of evidence provides a straw-in-the-wind test, while survey data give us more evidence for the hoop tests that help eliminate unviable explanations.

Starting from 2003 – the last electoral cycle before the electoral and political party reform – the number of politicians with relatively liberal views who enjoyed access to state positions and resources, the so-called 'systemic liberals' (sistemnye liberaly), had dropped dramatically. Table 7 shows the list of loyal, semi-loyal, and disloyal political forces that do not belong to incumbent parties, elucidating a conspicuous drift among liberals from loyal towards disloyal opposition. If in 2003 most of the liberal parties gravitated towards a semi-loyal pole and constituted a significant part of the political establishment without any clearly ghettoized organizations, in 2011 most of the former liberal parties and their members – *Solidarnost'*, United Civic Front, Democratic Choice – found themselves among the disloyal opposition. The presence of nationalist and leftist parties remains roughly the same in this period. The distribution of registered political parties and unregistered political organizations with a clear claim for power possession to the nationalist and leftist wings is somewhat even across three electoral cycles. The distribution among liberal organizations and parties has changed dramatically. Starting from 2007, the Kremlin instigated a creation of loyal party-satellites that aimed at splitting the liberal vote, including Civic Power and the Democratic Party (founded by Bogdanov). In 2011, Prokhorov's the Right Cause became another pro-Kremlin liberal project. There has never been any sort of semi-loyal nationalist organizations or parties, while there has always been a choice of left-wing organizations of all degrees of loyalty and disloyalty.

The number of parliamentary parties dropped from 12 in 2003 to 4 in 2007 (Central Election Commission)[23]. After the adoption of the new restrictive legislation on political parties, the number of registered parties shrank from 44 at the beginning of the 2003 electoral campaign to a mere 15 by the start of the 2007 legislative elections. In 2008, this figure fell as low as seven and remained stable until 2011[24]. This dynamic clearly reflects the closure of the space of competitive politics and electoral democracy in the country.

Looking at the profile of opposition organizations and parties there, is also a pronounced trend towards higher numbers of former systemic liberals. In 2003, *Yabloko* and SPS (Union of the Right Forces) largely supported the new government (Gel'man 2005). Three newly-elected members of parliament defected from *Yabloko* to United Russia. In 2004, for the first time the Russian public observed the Dissenters' Marches, spearheaded by Mikhail Kasyanov who had served as the prime minister in the first Vladimir Putin government (2000-2004), and Garry Kasparov, chess grandmaster and neophyte public activist, who organized the United Civic Front. Other organization such as Another Russia (*Drugaya Rossia*) gathered around more radical political forces, including Eduard Limonov's national-bolsheviks (NBP). Dissenters' Marches have been replaced by the Strategy 31 movement commemorating Article 31 of the Russian Constitution, which stipulates the freedom of meetings. In 2010-11 a number of civic organizations – the Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK) of Aleksei Naval'nyi and the Khimki Forest Defense of Evgenia Chirikova gave a fresh impetus to the opposition movement.

Shifting the focus from organizations to personalities brings new evidence of former mainstream politicians leading protest co-ordination. Table 5.6 presents the list of speakers at the biggest post-electoral rally on the 24th of December 2011 that was held on Sakharov Avenue, one of the main streets close to the ministerial buildings in Moscow and the Kremlin itself. According to the video records and scripts, about 40 speakers took to the floor during the march. Permission to give a speech as well as their order was a subject of hot debates and several compromises on the eve of the rally. The analysis of speakers sheds more light on the leading forces of the opposition and its several groups. If we find a critical number of former mainstream politicians along with civil activists and media personalities, it would provide us with additional evidence propping up the co-optation hypothesis.

The speakers can be divided into several groups: media and cultural personalities (writers, poets, journalists, singers, actors) and civic activists that openly abstain from partisan politics, politicians representing extreme rightist or leftist views (Left Front, DPNI or KRO) and moderate politicians. I define as politicians only those speakers who unequivocally express their interest in obtaining political power. Only 17 out of

[23]Official electoral statistics, Central Election Commission (CEC). http://www.cikrf.ru/
[24]Ministry of Justice: http://minjust.ru/nko/gosreg/partii/spisok

Table 5.5: Distribution of political parties and organizations by type of opposition and ideological family

Ideological family	Loyal parties	Semi-loyal opposition (moderates)	Dosloyal opposition (radicals)
Liberal	2003 - na	2003 - SPS, Yabloko	2003 - na
	2007 - Civic power, Democratic party	2007 - SPS, Yabloko	2007 - United Civic Front Kasianov's group
	2011 - RC		2011 - Solidarnost', UCF, Democratic Choice
Nationalist	2003 - People's party		2003 - NBP*
	2007 - LDPR		2007 - DPNI, Drugaia Rossia
	2011 - LDPR		2011 - Party of progress
Leftist	2003 - Rodina, Party of pensioneers*	2003 - CPRF, APR	2003 - Labout Russia, RKRP, AKM
	2007 - Just Russia, APR, PSS	2007 - CPRF, PoR	2007 - Left Front, AKM, RKRP
	2011 - Just Russia	2011 - CPRF, PoR	2011 - Left Front, RKRP, AKM, RSD

Source: Political data books Panorama
See the list of abbreviations in Appendix
*NBP was banned in 2007 for extremism

Table 5.6: Speakers at the rally on December, 24th, 2011.

No.	Name	Affiliation	Member of political establishment	Former member of political establishment	Status
1	Konstantin Krylov	Leader of the Russian nationalist movements (KRO)	No	No	Politician
2	Aleksei Gaskarov	Civic activist, anti-fascist	No	No	Politician
3	Grigorii Mel'koniantz	Civic activist, head of the Golos (domestic election monitor)	No	No	Activist
4	Vladimir Tor	Movement The Russians (Russkie)	No	No	Politician
5	Mikhail Kasianov	Co-chair of the People's Freedom Party	No	Yes	Politician
6	Ilya Ponomarev	Just Russia	Yes	Yes	Politician
7	Vladimir Ryzhkov	Co-chair of the Republican Party – People's Freedom Party	No	Yes	Politician
8	Aleksei Kudrin	Former Minister of Finance	Yes	Yes	Politician
9	Yevgenia Chirikova	Civic activist, Khimki	No	No	Activist
10	Grigorii Yavlinskii	Yabloko	No	Yes	Politician
11	Ilya Yashin	People's Freedom Party, Solidarnost'	No	No	Politician
12	Ksenia Sobchak	Media-person	No	No	Journalist
13	Viktor Shenderovich	Media-person	No	No	Journalist
14	Aleksei Naval'nyi	Foundation for Fight against Corruption (FBK)	No	Yes	Politician/Activist
15	Vladimir Yermolaev	DPNI (Movement against Illegal Immigration)	No	n.a.	Politician
16	Garry Kasparov	Oppositioner	No	No	Politician

17	Sergei Udal'tsov	Left Front	No	No	Politician
18	Olga Romanova	Slon.ru / journalist	No	No	Journalist/activist
19	Dmitrii Bykov	Journalist/poet	No	No	Journalist
20	Leonid Parfenov	Journalist	No	No	Journalist
21	Boris Akunin	Novelist	No	No	Activist
22	Mikhail Yefremov	Actor	No	No	Activist
23	Liya Akhedzhakova	Actress	No	No	Activist
24	Oleg Basilashvili	Actor	No	No	Activist
25	Mikhail Gorbachev	Former president of the USSR	No	Yes	Activist/politician
26	Artemii Troitskii	Journalist/media-person	No	No	Journalist
27	Chulpan Khamatova	Actress/charity	No	No	Activist
28	Yurii Shevchuk	Musician	No	No	Activist
29	Vassilii Utkin	Journalist	No	No	Journalist
30	Boris Nemtsov	Leader of Solidarnost'	No	Yes	Politician
31	Anastassia Udal'tsova	Left-wing activist, Left Front	No	No	Activist
32	Mikhail Gel'fand[25]	Civic activist, Dissernet	No	No	Activist
33	Vladimir Pozner	Journalist	No	No	Journalist
34	Mikhail Prokhorov (did not give a speech)	Businessman	No	Yes	Politician
35	Konstantin Kosyakin	Left Front	No	No	Politician
36	Aleksei Kortnev	Singer	No	No	-
37	Vassilii Shumov	Singer	No	No	-
38	Evgenii Roizman	Civic activist, anti-drug movement	No	Yes	Activist/politician
39	Gennadii Gudkov	Just Russia	Yes	Yes	Politician
40	Oleg Smolin	CPRF	Yes	Yes	Politician

Source: Novaya Gazeta : http://www.novayagazeta.ru/politics/50259.html;
Radio Svoboda : http://www.svoboda.org/content/article/24431541.html

[25]One of the co-founders of a voluntary community of experts, academics, researchers and journalists Dissernet who investigate and disclose the cases of academic fraud, ghost writing, plagiarism and other instances of the academic integrity violations. See http://www.dissernet.org/ . The organization has managed to investigate tens of thousands cases of academic malpractice and create a database of plagiarists and authors of fake dissertations. Several politicians are also suspected of writing fake texts or plagiarism, therefore some of the investigations became a hot topic in mass media.

40 speakers were political activists and 11 of them had held a position either in the governments or legislatures of federal and regional levels. Speakers from the non-systemic opposition (*nesistemnaya oppozitsia*) constituted a minority. The summary of systemic and non-systemic opposition depending on their ideological orientations is presented in Table 5.6.

Four participants had previously occupied positions in the state apparatus: Aleksei Kudrin (former Minister of Finance), Ilya Ponomarev, Gennadii Gudkov, and Oleg Smolin (MPs in the State Duma, Just Russia and CPRF correspondingly). It must be mentioned that Gudkov and Smolin allegedly were not allowed to speak from the stage ("Gennadii Zyuganov: Ya vsei dushoi..." 2011). Despite the fact that the lion's share of speakers were media personalities and journalists, Vladimir Ryzhkov (*Solidarnost'*), Boris Nemtsov (*Solidarnost'*), Aleksei Naval'nyi (FBK) and Sergei Udal'tsov (Left Front) took the lead and had clear political ambitions. Only Udal'tsov has never occupied any public office and is famous for his unsanctioned protests and activity within the AKM (Avangard krasnoi molodezhi, Vanguard of the Red Youth). Mikhail Prokhorov, a billionaire media tycoon, and the former leader of the Right Cause party, showed up as well, but abstained from any public statements. Some media personalities and former politicians such as Vladimir Pozner or Mikhail Gorbachev sent a pre-recorded video message. At the same time, it is hard to ignore that among the organizers, civic non-partisan activists and journalists outnumbered partisan politicians. Protests were organized by a rather loose coalition of partisan and non-partisan forces that affected the prospects of the For Fair Elections movement and its subsequent dissolution. However, only this group of people was the most active and headed the informal negotiations with the then-president Dmitrii Medvedev on the February 20th, 2012[26].The meeting was initiated by the Kremlin and the declared purpose was to discuss the reform of the party legislation and loosening of the registration barriers. Boris Nemtsov and Vladimir Ryzhkov represented an newly created, but unregistered the People's Freedom Party (PARNAS), Sergei Udal'tsov - the Left Front movement, and Anatolii Panfilov - the ecological movement "The Greens". This meeting signals the incumbent elites' anxiety and attempt to test the waters. However, the results and of the presidential elections afforded more security to the pro-Kremlin forces and put the end to the negotiation process. At the same time, it is hard to ignore the fact that among the organizers civic non-partisan activists and journalists outnumbered partisan politicians. Protests were organized by a relatively loose coalition of partisan and non-partisan forces that affected the prospects of the For Fair Elections movement and its subsequent dissolution. However, only this group of people was the most active and headed the informal negotiations with the then-president Dmitrii Medvedev on the

[26]http://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/russia-medvedev-opposition-meeting-2012-02-20-139670013/250935.html

February 20th, 2012 [27].The meeting was initiated by the Kremlin with a declared aim of discussing the reform of the party legislation and loosening of the registration barriers. Boris Nemtsov and Vladimir Ryzhkov represented the newly created, but unregistered the People's Freedom Party (PARNAS), Sergei Udal'tsov - the Left Front movement, and Anatolii Panfilov - the ecological movement "The Greens". This meeting signals the incumbent elites' anxiety and attempt to test the waters. However,the results of the presidential elections afforded more security to the pro-Kremlin forces and put an end to the negotiation process.

The number of politicians was clearly insufficient for a further transition. The civic activists and media persons constituted a critical mass, but very few of them took a clear-cut political stance. These groups were important for creating a common identity for protesters and signaling that taking part in a protest is safe, thereby decreasing the costs of participation for the swing protesters. On the other hand, these groups refused to take responsibility for supporting any political claim or an action plan.

The plausibility of the argument on gradual exclusion and marginalization of systemic opposition could be traced not only by exploring the membership of former mainstream politicians in the opposition organizations and movements, but also by looking at voters' perceptions. Voters who feel unrepresented and/or would be willing to vote for someone who had been excluded from the race, may have more incentives to join the protests and support non-systemic opposition. The lack of sufficient level of co-option can also echo the voters' perceptions of the level of fraud as if their best candidates and/or parties were not permitted to run.

382 out of 638 respondents agreed that among the parties that took part in the election to the State Duma there was none for which I would really have wished to vote (see Table 5.7). Two fifths of these respondents (N=176) tend to view elections as less honest. The link is not that pronounced as we might assume, since some respondents could support some of the systemic opposition and still share discontent with election results (e.g. communist voters and JR voters). Narrowing down the question to whether "among the parties and movements that were not allowed to participate in the election to the State Duma there was one for which I could have voted" gives the following figures: 425 respondents out of 638 agreed with the statement (which is more than a half), and 231 of those who would be willing to vote for a non-systemic opposition believed that election had been dishonest (see Tables 5.7-5.8).

The survey data also suggest that voters who feel underrepresented by any political party perceived elections as more fraudulent. Comparing proportions of those who claimed that there were parties or movements for which they would have cast their ballot does correlate with how critical voters are of electoral integrity (see Table 5.7). This evidence

[27]http://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/russia-medvedev-opposition-meeting-2012-02-20-139670013/250935.html

brings to the table another series of passed straw-in-the-wind tests, while hoop tests have not been fully passed. As long as there are voters who supported CPRF – a largely co-opted party – and still believe that elections were not fair. Nevertheless, supporters of co-opted parties tend to assess the level of fraud lower than the rest.

Thus, poor co-option resulting from electoral and party reforms of 2005 led to an increased number of moderate opposition leaders who found themselves marginalized and ultimately spearheaded the protests. Co-ordinated actions of civil society groups (e.g. Navalnyi) – fighters against corruption, election monitors, human rights watchdogs – coalesced with some members of the opposition political parties or former members of the political establishment and succeeded in spreading the word that there were significant concerns that elections would fall short of international standards and would be stolen. The crucial element of the model is that voters and potential protesters need to learn in advance how electoral violation looks like. And this job is to be done by the opposition and civil society groups by means of a relatively free media. The prior exposure to civil rights groups and opposition plays a central role in mobilizing through elections.

5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have tested the causal mechanism that potentially links party system institutionalization and co-optative capacity of the regime with the probability of protest. The findings suggest that perceived electoral malpractice served as a sufficient condition for the protest to occur, while the role of mass media, perceptions of economy, and contingent events of the eve of the elections was marginal.

Civic activists and a small group of former politicians constituted the driving force of the protests. The share of the former members of establishment and current mainstream politicians was negligible for a fully-blown democratic transition, but sufficient to organize a large-scale rally at the heart of the country. Non-partisan post-electoral protests are usually doomed to failure. Without any political force to back it up, it is difficult to co-ordinate between disparate groups and articulate a coherent political program and action plan.

Although, the presence of moderate politicians that make a liberal and left-wing part of the ruling elites was crucial for sustaining the protest wave for several months. The composition of protesters tells us the two stories. First, the abundance of civic activists and self-help groups as well as their largely non-partisan nature signals the reluctance of the Russian civil society to politicize. Otherwise, protesters were doing politics, fearing to call it politics. Second, existing channels are not capable of accommodating requests by these largely apolitical persons. Meanwhile, the critical mass of very few, but active professional oppositionists like Boris Nemtsov, managed to organize the temporary steering committee and even start informal consultations with the then-president Dmitrii

Table 5.7: Perceptions of fraud by the extent to which voters feel represented (1)

53A. Among the parties which were participating at the elections there was no one presenting you						
Perceptions of fraud	Certainly agree	Rather agree	Rather disagree	Certainly disagree	Don't know	Total
Absolutely honest	21	7	1	2	5	36
Rather honest	90	88	25	13	13	229
Rather dishonest	55	76	56	32	34	253
Certainly dishonest	25	20	23	35	17	120
Total	191	191	105	82	69	638

Source: New Russia Barometer 2011. Pearson's $\chi^2 = 97.44 (p = 0.00)$

Table 5.8: Perceptions of fraud by the extent to which voters feel represented (2)

43B. Among parties and movements which were not allowed to participate in the elections is there any you would have voted?						
Perceptions of fraud	Certainly agree	Rather agree	Rather disagree	Certainly disagree	Don't know	Total
Absolutely honest	18	5	2	6	5	36
Rather honest	93	78	20	18	20	229
Rather dishonest	71	92	26	18	46	253
Certainly dishonest	41	27	14	8	30	120
Total	223	202	62	50	101	638

Source: New Russia Barometer 2011. Pearson's $\chi^2 = 38.85 (p = 0.00)$

Medvedev.

The absence of efficient channels of preventing defections together with failure to recruit new blood and offer attractive carrier prospects, make the existing party system inadequate for a channeling emerging claims from the Russian society and growth of new requests for the power apart from political stability. Although some early attempts seemed successful – Just Russia made several moderate left-wing oppositionists defect in 2007 – the system had frozen until 2011 and subsequently failed to adequately address newly ascendant interests.

In this sense more non-partisan legislature in Russia without any clear-cut factional divisions inside seems to be more fluid and therefore flexible in containing potential interests. Moreover, non-partisan legislatures are formed through a single-member district electoral system that ensures at least partial accounting for territorial interests and even representation. Putting together previous theory on the stabilizing role of political parties under authoritarianism with the findings from the Russian case, it is reasonable to state that proportional representation model is conducive to fully partisan legislatures and SMD constitutes different modes of sustaining authoritarian rule. If PR serves as a convenient tool for power-sharing, redistribution of spoils, compliance monitoring and solving of credible commitment problems, SMD works as an accountability mechanism. Political parties do facilitate authoritarian sustainability but only when the co-optative strategies are successfully pursued. Failure to maintain a sufficient level of co-optation results in a growing number of excluded and marginalized politicians, as well as career-oriented politicians without prospects of pursuing a political career further.

Conclusion

The case of anti-regime protests in Russia fits into a more general discussion over the role of elections and political parties under non-democratic conditions. Most of the studies of electoral authoritarian regimes emphasize the *modus operandi* of the regimes with dominant parties - Malaysia, Indonesia, Mexico, Egypt, Kenya - while the largest share of modern authoritarianisms with competitive elections exemplify the personalist regime with extremely weak (if any) parties of power. While the Russian regime attempted to establish dominant parties akin to those in Mexico or Singapore, its failure to do so has led to an unstable equilibrium. The protests of 2011-12 demarcated the cut-off point for continuing de-institutionalization and transformation of a failed dominant party regime to a full-blown personalist regime. This study shows how elections operate under various types of authoritarianism. Party-based regimes, military regimes and monarchies are immune to subversive post-electoral outcomes even if marred with massive fraud. Only personalist regimes proved sensitive to election cycles and exposed to particular type of subversion: the challenge from below. The probability of each post-electoral scenario varies depending on the presence of dominant party and the reach of partisan politics in general along with perceived level of fraud.

The case study of Russian elections and subsequent protests is an outlier from this pattern since the party of power - the United Russia - proved to be an inefficient tool to decrease the level of uncertainty via cooptation and monitoring of elite compliance. While the effect of perceived electoral fraud makes Russian elections a typical ('on-lier') case, Russia turned out to be in 'the institutional limbo' between a party-based regime and personalist dictatorship, which undermined the regime's capacity to co-opt and collect credible information, thus making the regime vulnerable on the eve of elections thanks to the expected and perceived level of fraud.

As an afterword, the Russian political regime has successfully survived the post-electoral wave of protest and in response to the challenge turned into a more repressive and closed regime than it had been on the eve of 2011. The legacy of protests underpinned subsequent counter-measures initiated by the Kremlin, including a new restrictive legislation on the demonstrations and public gatherings, the introduction of the labels of 'foreign agents' targeting NGOs that receive foreign funding, drawing up the list of 'undesired organizations' whose operation is prohibited on the Russian territory, including NDI,

IRI, the Open Society Institute and others. An ambiguous conduct of the referendum in Crimea followed by its rejoining the Russian Federation in March 2014 offered as an efficient tool for a massive 'rally-around-the-flag effect', providing an ideological pretext for a fully-blown conservative turn in Russia and increasing support of the Putin's regime. Authoritarian leaders tend to learn not only from other regimes' mistakes, but from their own as well.

Apart from deepening authoritarian tendencies, the Russian failed 'challenge from below' also resulted in a series of institutional reforms that at the first glance can be interpreted as liberalization. New party legislation adopted in 2012 significantly facilitates party registration process, and the number of registered parties multiplied by several times[28]. An amended Federal law on elections lowered the highly restrictive threshold of 7% back to 5% for political parties and restored the previously existing mixed-member formula instead of a fully proportional formula. The latter allowed non-partisan candidates to run in single-member districts. This system clearly benefits the party of power through generating more disproportional outcomes and simultaneously allowing for more efficient co-optation.

Hence, the case of the Russian failed protests allows us to reconsider the role of dominant parties and parties of power in the modus operandi of authoritarian regimes. Weak party systems undermine the regime's capacity to rotate elites and co-opt newcomers. These groups of ambitious politicians under specific circumstances form coalitions and can gradually prepare ground by mobilizing civic groups for increasing voters' awareness about, for instance, the quality of elections. If successful, perceptions of fraud serve as powerful mobilizing tool for challenging the incumbent.

To summarize main findings, this thesis contributes to the field of comparative authoritarian regimes in the following ways:

First, exploring post-electoral scenarios - post-election protests in combination with electoral outcomes - seems fruitful in grasping the complex realities of elections under authoritarian regimes. This approach 1) updates the buzzword 'color revolutions' and brings more consistency into the field by drawing a clear distinction between successful and failed protests, 2) allows for a integrate in a parsimonious manner alternative 'subversive' scenarios unrelated to the mass mobilizations coined as 'democratization by elections' suggested by Lindberg (2006) or 'liberalizing electoral outcomes' by Roessler and Howard (2006).

Second, the question of election timing and its causal effect proved to be largely irrelevant in military regimes and monarchies, since electoral schedule is deeply endogenous to the will of the incumbent. In personalist and party-based regimes the period of elec-

[28]Medvedev's party reform" concession or convenience? // Open Democracy. https://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/grigorii-golosov/medvedev%E2%80%99s-party-reform-concession-or-convenience

toral campaign increases the odds of protests. However, this effect is somewhat weaker in party-based regimes. Thus, the phenomenon of electorally induced protests is specific to a narrower class of modern autocracies.

Third, highly institutionalized regimes equipped with a dominant party cope better with unintended consequences. Most of "subversions" occur in regimes with less developed party systems. If political party does not spread its tentacles down to the regions and does not effectively recruit ambitious rank-and-file functionaries, or the perks it offers do not seem sufficiently attractive.

Fourth, in more personalist regimes co-optational capacity of political parties and legislatures can be limited and incurs the incentives for marginalized politicians to engage in anti-regime protests, while regimes with stronger parties cope with the task of co-optation better. However the exact mechanisms of co-optation (channels, scale etc.) remain an open question for further research.

Fifth, the causal role of electoral fraud and malpractice in triggering post-electoral protests is decisive, but should not be overestimated. Various aspects of electoral malpractice correlate differently with the probability of subversive scenarios. Biased perceptions of political processes impede successful coordination between protesters. 'Objective' reports on the scale of fraud and violations do not always correlate with the probability of protests. Therefore, this poses another empirical and theoretical question regarding the specific aspects of malpractice and fraud that are conducive to regime transformation. That said, the analysis presented in the study leaves some important features of the phenomenon open for further research, at the same time indicating the ways the findings can be strengthened further.

Nevertheless, this study has left important gaps and opens other ways how these findings can be strengthened.

First, the large-N analysis clearly shows that the variety and heterogeneity of personalist autocracies still remains largely underexplored. Being the most populated category of authoritarian regimes, there is a need for more fine-tuned instruments to explore the institutional diversity and its effects.

Second, the lack of comparable data across countries regarding the frequency of protests challenges any causal inference not only in this study, but in analogous comparative projects.

Third, there is a deficit of comparative knowledge of how authoritarian institutions operate on the ground, what are the mechanisms that represent the processes of cooptation or monitoring. How and why independent members of parliament are connected facilitate or dampen the functioning of electoral authoritarianism?

Fourth, the link between 'objective' and perceived fraud needs to be analyzed in more detail. Do they correlate across various political regimes? If not, what are the underlying causes of these discrepancies and are they systematic? The emerging new comparative

data on electoral integrity and malpractice (e.g. Birch's Index of Electoral Malpractice, Electoral Integrity Project, Free and Fair Election Database by Bishop and Hoeffler) can do more justice to the topic and reveal the role of expectations *vis-a-vis* the electoral forensics.

In sum, electoral malpractice can occur in any country (Norris 2014). However, we should not expect the types of malpractice, nor the actors involved in perpetrating it, or the consequences of malpractice in a particular stage of the electoral cycle to be the same. The present study argues instead that one must consider the regime type and state capacity, and corresponding levels of uncertainty, constraints or vulnerabilities that come with them, as key variables in predicting the type of malpractice that may appear and the consequences that may follow.

During the recent decade the perspectives on modern authoritarianism have dramatically changed, demonstrating that the variety of a non-democracies is wider than of a democratic one (whichever way we define democracy). Even in the personalist regimes where seemingly all political decisions depend on a dictator's mood, one observes restraining power of specific political institutions. However, this restraining and binding power varies across autocracies and the set of this institutions also varies from context to context, which has to be taken into account in order to address the phenomenon in a meaningful manner.

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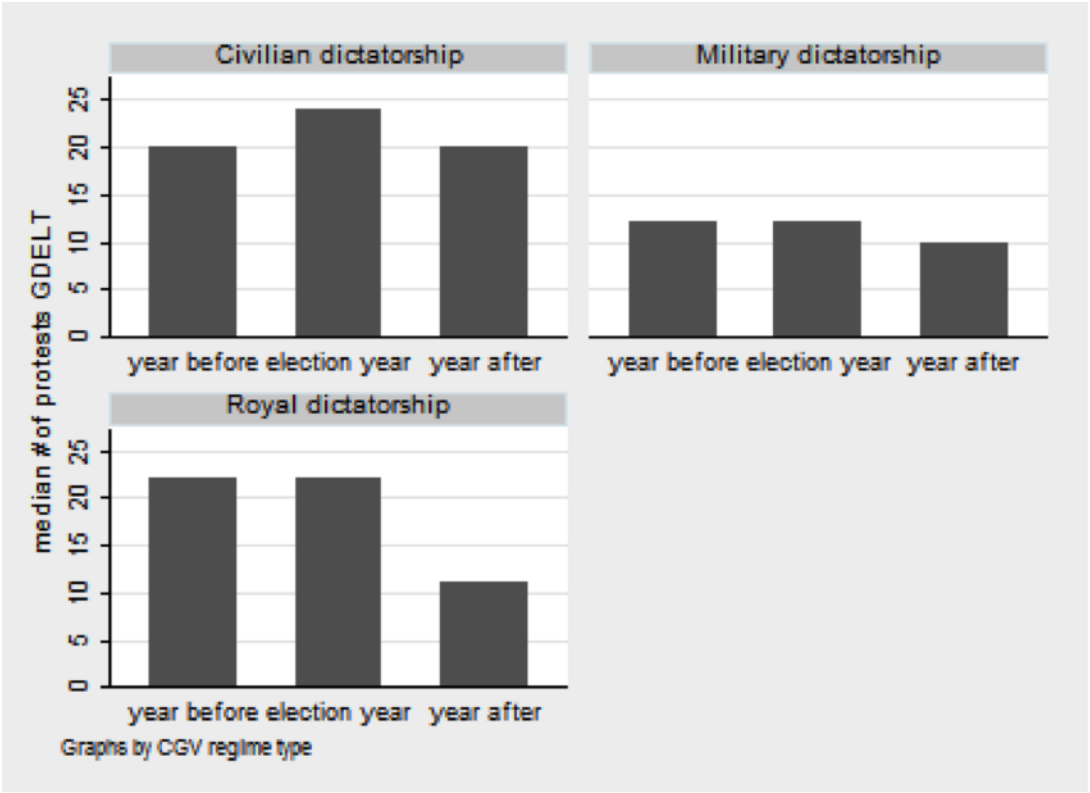
Appendix

Table 1: Process tracing tests for causal inference

		Sufficient	
Necessary		No	Yes
	No	**Straw in the Wind** Passing: affirms relevance of hypothesis, but does not confirm it. Failing: Hypothesis is not eliminated, but is slightly weakened.	**Smoking gun** Passing: Confirms hypothesis. Failing: Hypothesis is not eliminated, but is somewhat weakened.
	Yes	**Hoop** Passing: Affirms relevance of hypothesis but does not confirm it. Failing: Eliminates hypothesis.	**Doubly Decisive** Passing: Confirms hypothesis and eliminates others. Failing: Eliminates hypothesis.

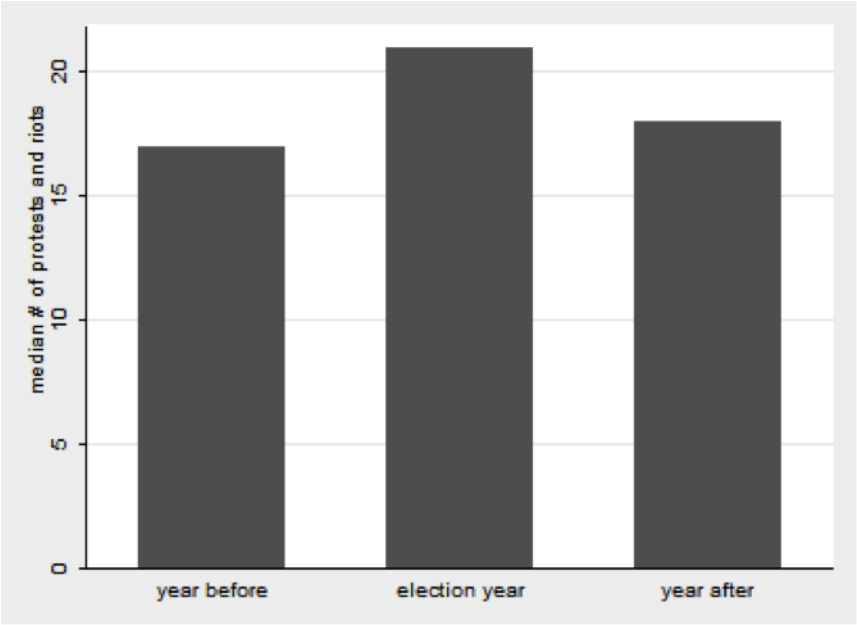
Source: Adapted from Collier (2011) and Van Evera (1997: 31-32).

Figure 1: Median number of protests (GDELT) by regime type (CGV)



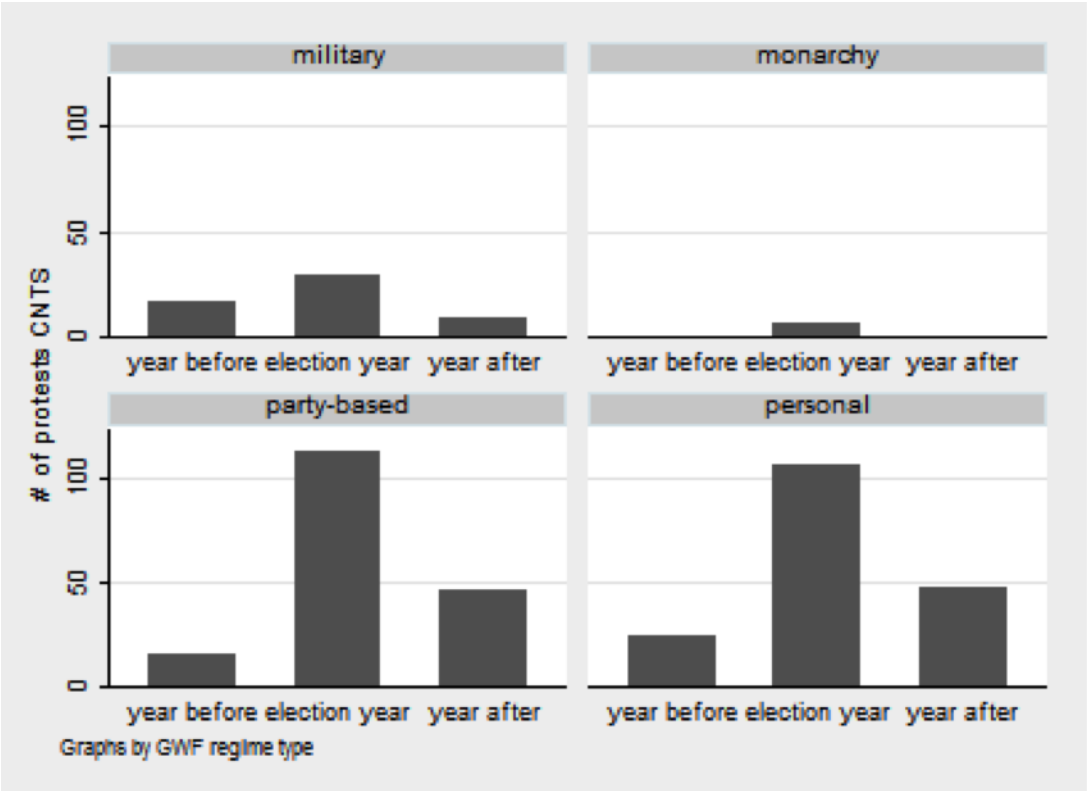
N=822

Figure 2: Median number of protests before and after elections (CNTS)



N = 822

Figure 3: Number of protest (CNTS) by regime type (GWF)



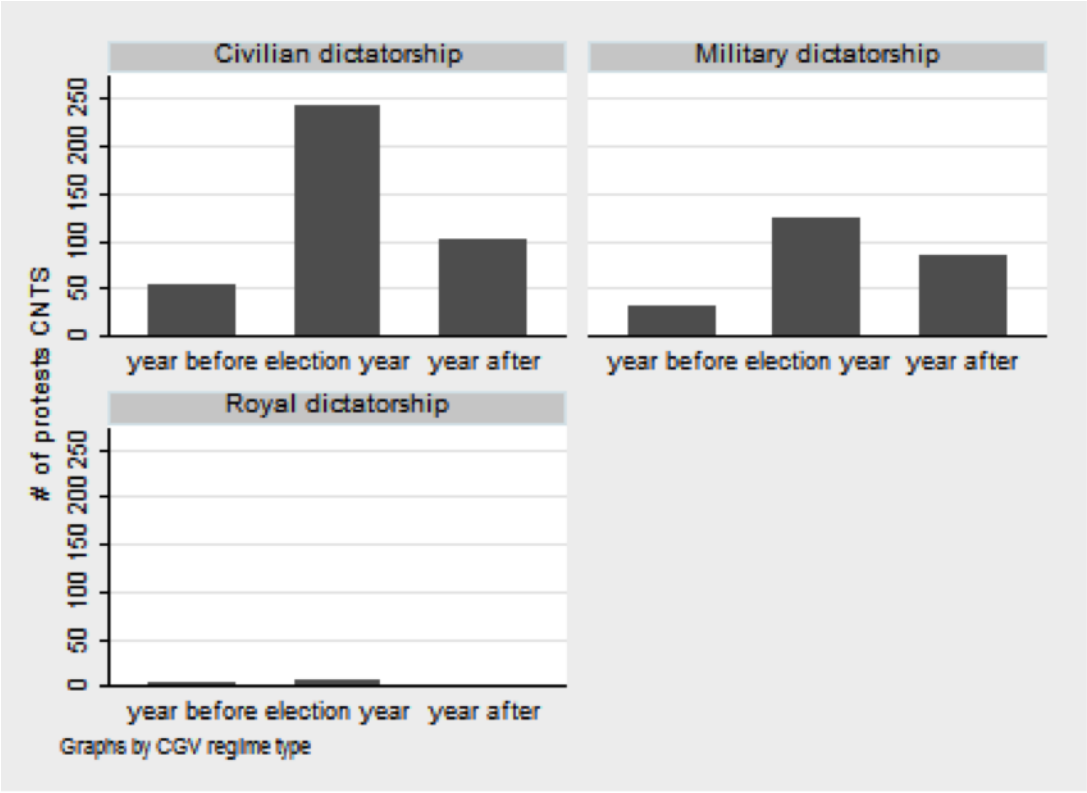
N= 660

Table 2: Protests by time and regime types (random effects models, robustness checks)

Variables	M1: GWF	M2: CGV	M3: GWF	M4: CGV
Elec. year	1.23***		1.14**	
	(0.09)		(0.07)	
Yr before election		0.85		0.85*
		(0.09)		(0.07)
Yr after election		0.75***		0.86**
		(0.07)		(0.06)
Military	1.04	0.84		
	(0.23)	(0.19)		
Monarchy	1.13	0.64		
	(0.26)	(0.20)		
Party-based	1.54***	1.14		
	(0.19)	(0.16)		
Before elec.#military		1.99**		
		(0.64)		
Before elec.#monarchy		0.92		
		(0.34)		
Before#Party-based		0.95		
		(0.15)		
After1#military		0.84		
		(0.23)		
After#Monarchy		1.33		
		(0.44)		
After#Party-based		1.20		
		(0.17)		
Elec.#military	0.96			
	(0.21)			
Elec.#monarchy	0.86			
	(0.22)			
Elec.#party-based	0.97			
	(0.11)			
Military dict.			0.55***	0.64***
			(0.05)	(0.08)
Royal dict.			1.08	0.91
			(0.23)	(0.26)
Elec.#military			1.05	
			(0.12)	
Elec.#party-based			0.99	
			(0.20)	
Before#military dict.				0.92
				(0.15)
Before#Royal dict.				0.87
				(0.26)
After#Military dict.				0.91
				(0.13)
After#Royal dict.				1.14
				(0.31)
Logged pop	1.15***	1.27***	1.17***	1.19***
	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.04)	(0.04)
r	1.04	1.11	1.03	1.04
	(0.19)	(0.20)	(0.17)	(0.18)
s	14.06***	12.39***	14.81***	13.71***
	(3.34)	(3.02)	(3.38)	(3.25)
N	779	606	931	713
$Nofcountries$	59	59	66	64

Robust standard errors in parentheses. Cell entries are odds ratios. Constant terms are suppressed.
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
GWF = Geddes et al. Sample, CGV = Cheibub et al. Sample

Figure 4: Number of protests (CNTS) by regime type (CGV)



N= 822

Table 3: Fitting protests, models with control variables (robustness checks)

Variables	M1: GWF	M2: CGV	M3: GWF	M4: CGV	M5: GWF	M6: CGV	M7: GWF	M8: CGV	M9: GWF
Elec.year	1.22***	1.14**	1.23***	1.17***	1.22***	1.16	1.23***	1.16***	1.21***
	(0.09)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Military	1.14								
	(0.26)								
Monarchy	1.07								
	(0.26)								
Party-based	1.71***								
	(0.22)								
Elec.#military	0.89								
	(0.21)								
Elec.#monarchy	0.89								
	(0.23)								
Elec.#party-based	0.98								
	(0.11)								
Milit.dict.	0.58								
		(0.06)							
Royal dict.		0.92							
		(0.21)							
Elec.#milit.		1.04							
		(0.12)							
Elec.#royal		1.04							
		(0.23)							
Ethnic.frac.			0.37	0.61					
			(0.27)	(0.45)					

Table continues on the next page

Ling.frac.	1.65	1.33					
	(1.00)	(0.86)					
Relig.frac.	3.05***	2.11***					
	(0.94)	(0.58)					
Trade			1.00	1.00			
			(0.00)	(0.00)			
ODA			1.00	1.01			
			(0.00)	(0.00)			
FDI			1.00	1.00			
			(0.01)	(0.00)			
internet			1.02***	1.02***			
			(0.00)	(0.00)			
Gini				1.02**	1.00		
				(0.01)	(0.01)		
% of public sector						0.99***	0.99***
						(0.00)	(0.00)
Growth					0.98***	0.98***	
					(0.01)	(0.01)	
GNI pc					1.00**	1.00***	
					(0.00)	(0.00)	
GNI logged					0.98	0.89	
					(0.07)	(0.06)	
CIRI Physical Integrity Index							0.88***
							(0.02)
Popul.	1.00**	1.00**					
	(0.00)	(0.00)					
Logged pop	0.93	1.01	1.03	1.09**	1.18***	1.14***	1.01
	(0.07)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)

Table continues on the next page

N	789	932	826	921	826	921	691	725	826
N of countries	56	65	59	64	59	64	48	50	59

Robust standard errors in parentheses. Cell entries are odds ratios. Constant terms are suppressed.

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

GWF = Geddes et al. Sample, CGV = Cheibub et al. Sample

Table 4: Descriptive statistics

VARIABLES	N	mean	sd	min	max	Type of var	Source
Year of elections	1,150	1.37	0.48	1	2	Dichotomous	Author's data
Referendum=1	1,143	0.07	0.26	0	1	Dichotomous	C2d2 Aarhus data
Ethnic. fractionalization	1,117	0.55	0.24	0.04	0.93	Continuous Alesina et al. 2000	
Linguist. fractionalization	1,100	0.53	0.28	0.01	0.92	Continuous	Alesina et al. 2000
Relig. fractionalization	1,126	0.45	0.26	0.00	0.86	Continuous	Alesina et al. 2000
Electoral victory=1	391	8.64	26.55	0	99	Dichotomous Author's data	
Party of power	1,136	0.96	0.35	0	2	Categorical	Author's data
No. of independent MPs	1,141	41.41	1,070	0	36,161	Continuous	IPU.org, PARLINE, national election commission data
No. of protests	1,143	96.50	306.4	0	7,147	Count	GDELT
No. of protests	921	1.141	4.29	0	78	Count	CNTS
CIRI Physical Integrity Index	855	3.71	1.93	0	8	Continuous	Cingranelli and Richards
GDPt ppp pc in constant prices	877	4,052	6,370	213.8	55,862	Continuous	PWT
GDPt-1 ppp pc in constant prices	884	3,951	6,12	207.5	50,438	Continuous	PWT
Δ GDP	816	2.13	8.60	-30.38	115.4	Continuous	PWT
Inflation rate in consumer prices	773	43.62	279.9	-13.23	4,735	Continuous	World Bank Indicators
% of public sector	999	34.94	17.33	3.10	100	Continuous	World Bank Indicators
Gini	1,076	41.93	9.40	23.31	74.33	Continuous	World Bank Indicators

No. of repression (coalition)	994	6.22	18.83	0	176	Count	GDELT
No. of repression (masses)	994	4.70	15.31	0	186	Count	GDELT
No. of repression (opposition)	994	1.40	5.03	0	72	Count	GDELT
No. of repression (NGOs)	994	0.03	0.21	0	3	Count	GDELT
No. of protests	556	1.04	2.68	0	21	Count	SCAD
Snap elections=1	1,150	0.19	0.39	0	1	Dichotomous	Author's data
Logged population	1,139	16.00	1.48	11.18	19.14	Continuous	World Bank Indicators
CIRI Physical Integrity Index (squared)	855	17.51	14.88	0	64	Continuous	Cingranelli and Richards
No. of repression	1,067	14.68	43.77	0	423	Count	GDELT
ODA	1,040	7.37	8.94	-0.48	78.71	Continuous	WDI
Trade	1,097	85.85	60.72	21.06	531.74	Continuous	WDI
FDI	1,090	4.40	8.47	-8.59	161.82	Continuous	WDI

Table 5: Descriptive statistics

VARIABLES	N	mean	sd	min	max
Year of election	236	1	0	1	1
First elections	235	0	0	0	0
Post-electoral protest	235	0.234	0.424	0	1
Ethnic frac.	233	0.559	0.234	0.04	0.93
Linguistic frac.	231	0.551	0.280	0.01	0.92
Religious frac.	233	0.473	0.241	0.002	0.80
Elec. victory=1	234	0.910	0.286	0	1
% of independent MPs	234	9.364	19.61	0	100
No. of protests GDELT	235	124.1	292.2	0	2.93
No. of protests CNTS	212	1.259	2.797	0	18
No. of repression (coalition)	236	10.74	29.55	0	250
No. of repression (masses)	236	7.339	19.54	0	126
No. of repression (opposition)	236	2.542	8.378	0	72
No. of repression (NGOs)	236	0.0297	0.170	0	1

CIRI Physical Integrity Index	193	3.591	1.783	0	8
Inflation rate in consumer prices	179	23.32	90.95	-13.23	1,128
% of public sector	213	33.17	16.81	6.200	100
Inequality (Gini)	229	41.15	8.158	26.22	63.90
ΔGDP	230	3.308	5.525	-24.28	50.05
Turnout	212	67.69	16.46	22.90	98.50
Votes cast for the incumbent	200	60.35	19.65	3.200	99.45
Total seat share in a legislature	181	152.1	150.1	1	547
No. of repression GDELT	236	22.64	60.62	0	423
GDP ppp pc in constant prices	230	7.956	1.038	5.535	10.65
Type of post-electoral scenario	236	0.403	0.729	0	3
Type of election (leg vs exe)	236	0.411	0.493	0	1
Boycott by opposition NELDA	223	0.220	0.415	0	1
NELDA Index	181	0.01	1.443	-1.936	3.075
KOF Index of Globalization$_t$	222	46.44	11.42	25.45	88.97
KOF Index of Globalization$_t - 1$	226	47.42	11.35	26.42	88.63
Nelda Index standardized	181	0.388	0.288	0.00	1.00
Population	231	0.00	0.00	979,67	
NELDA Index 2	142	-0.014	1.013	-1.082	1.49
NELDA Index standardized	142	0.415	0.394	0.00	1.00
CIRI Physical Integrity Index standardized	193	0.449	0.223	0	1

Table 6: Descriptive statistics. New Russia Barometer. December 2011.

Variables (questions)	mean	max	min	sd
1_1a.Do you approve of the performance of: Dmitry Medvedev as President of Russia?	1.4	2	1	0.5
1_1b. Do you approve of the performance of: Vladimir Putin as Premier of the Russian Federation?	1.4	2	1	0.48
1_1c. Do you approve of the performance of: The Government of Russia as a whole?	1.6	2	1	0.5
2. As for your own household. how do you rate its economic situation today?	3	9	1	1.3
24. WHAT DO YOU THINK IS HAPPENING RIGHT NOW IN THE COUNTRY?	3.6	9	1	2.6
T1A. TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU SUPPORT UNITED RUSSIA?	3	9	1	2.1

T1B. TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU SUPPORT COMMUNISTS?	3.3	9	1	2.1
T1C. TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU SUPPORT LIBERAL DEMOCRATS?	3.5	9	1	2
T1D. TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU SUPPORT FAIR RUSSIA?	3.4	9	1	2.1
T1E. TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU SUPPORT RIGHT CAUSE?	4.3	9	1	2.2
T1F. TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU SUPPORT YABLOKO?	4.1	9	1	2.2
T1G. TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU SUPPORT PATRIOTS OF RUSSIA?	4.3	9	1	2.3
28A. ARE THE QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE ELECTIONS DISCUSSED IN YOUR FAMILY, WITH YOU?	2	9	1	1,5
28B. IF YOU HEAR THE CONVERSATION ABOUT THE ELECTIONS IN A TRAIN, BUS, QUEUE , DO YOU PARTICIPATE?	2,5	9	1	2,2
29. DID YOU PARTICIPATE AT THE ELECTIONS TO THE STATE DUMA OF RUSSIAN FEDERATION?	1,3	2	1	0,46
33. WHOM DID YOU VOTE FOR AT THE ELECTIONS 4 OF DECEMBER OR DID YOU SPOIL/TAKE YOU BALLOT WITH YOU?	4,7	9	1	2,2
q38_1. Family, close people (who influenced your vote?)	0,14	1	0	0,35
q38_2. Friends (who influenced your vote?)	0,11	1	0	0,31
q38_3. Recommendation of knowledgeable people (who influenced your vote?)	0.00	1	0	0,18
q38_4. TV, radio, newspapers (who influenced your vote?)	0,14	1	0	0,35
q38_5. Publications of parties' polls (who influenced your vote?)	0.00	1	0	0,18
q38_6. The public speeches/appearances of the leaders of the parties (who influenced your vote?)	0,13	1	0	0,34

q38_7. TV debates of the party leaders (who influenced your vote?)	0.00	1	0	0,25
q38_8. Personal support of the certain party by V. Putin (who influenced your vote?)	0.00	1	0	0,26
q38_9. Party campaigning prior to the elections (who influenced your vote?)	0.00	1	0	0,25
q38_10. General atmosphere of the elections (who influenced your vote?)	0.00	1	0	0,28
q38_11. I was disappointed with the other party (who influenced your vote?)	0.00	1	0	0,25
q38_12. I know this party for a long time/ always vote for it (who influenced your vote?)	0,18	1	0	0,38
47. IN YOUR OPINION HOW HONEST WERE THE ELECTIONS TO THE STATE DUMA ON 4 DECEMBER 2011?	3,9	9	1	2,6
q48_1. Were pressurised to participate in the elections - from local authorities	0.00	1	0	0,25
q48_2. Were pressurised to participate in the elections	0.00	1	0	0,25
From the colleagues	0.00	1	0	0,22
Have never noticed any pressure	0,72	1	0	0,45
T2B. HAVE YOU BEEN PERSUADED TO VOTE FOR THE CERTAIN PARTY AT THE ELECTIONS?	2,2	9	1	0,92
49. IN YOUR OPINION, WERE THERE VIOLATIONS DURING THE VOTES CAST?	4	9	1	2,9
53A. AMONG THE PARTIES WHICH WERE PARTICIPATING AT THE ELECTIONS THERE WAS NO ONE WORTH VOTING FOR	3,1	9	1	2,5
53B. AMONG PARTIES AND MOVEMENTS WHICH WERE NOT ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ELECTIONS, WAS ANY YOU WOULD HAVE VOTED FORE?	3,3	9	1	3

53E. GENERALLY SPEAKING DO YOU SYMPATHISE OR NOT TO THE LEADERS OF THE "NON-SYSTEMIC OPPOSITION?	4,7	9	1	2,6
60. GENERALLY SPEAKING, DO YOU SUPPORT THE STREET PROTESTS AGAINST THE VIOLATION?	3,5	9	1	2,5
AGE	44	88	18	16
EDUCATION	5,3	8	1	1,9
SUBJECTIVE ECONOMIC CLASS	2,9	6	1	0,83
INCOME	40	99	1	46
User of VKontakte	0,23	1	0	0,42
User of Odnoklassniki	0,25	1	0	0,43
User of Facebook	0.00	1	0	0,22

Table 7: Support for protests: interaction effects

Variables	Leanings+media	Media+fraud	Leanings+fraud1	Leanings+fraud2
sexFemale	0.12*	−0.19***	−0.11	−0.13*
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)
regionCentral	0.10	0.02	0.12	0.06
	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)
regionVolga	−0.36**	−0.56***	−0.40***	−0.47***
	(0.14)	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.15)
regionSouthern	−0.02	−0.01	0.12	−0.06
	(0.19)	(0.20)	(0.20)	(0.20)
regionNorth Caucassian	−0.06	−0.27**	−0.11	−0.24**
	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)
regionUral	−0.18	−0.23	−0.09	−0.18
	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.15)
regionSiberian	−0.17	−0.15	−0.01	−0.11
	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.14)
region Far Esatern	−0.28	−0.28	−0.20	−0.30
	(0.19)	(0.19)	(0.19)	(0.19)
internet news (mentioned)	−0.12	−1.04***		
	(0.14)	(0.36)		
UR: support, but not more than the other	0.23**		−0.38	
	(0.11)		(0.31)	
UR: indifferent	0.51***		−0.24	
	(0.11)		(0.48)	
UR: to some extent against	0.74***		1.21	
	(0.13)		(0.81)	

UR: against	1.07***		−0.64	
	(0.11)		(0.81)	
UR: never heard	1.65***		0.89	
	(0.43)		(1.12)	
UR: DK	0.37**		−0.05	
	(0.17)		(0.81)	
internet_news # UR Support but no more	0.20			
	(0.24)			
internet_news# UR:indifferent	0.42			
	(0.29)			
internet_news#UR to some extent agaisnt	0.27			
	(0.24)			
internet_news#UR:never heard	0.26			
	(0.23)			
internet_news#UR:DK/RA	−0.68			
	(0.74)			
Putin Disapprove				−0.54
				(0.81)
Elec. rather honest		−0.11	−0.16	−0.01
		(0.15)	(0.16)	(0.14)
Elec. rather dishonest		0.71***	0.39**	0.68***
		(0.15)	(0.19)	(0.15)
Elec. absolutely dishonest		1.09***	−0.02	0.97***
		(0.16)	(0.80)	(0.20)
internet#rather honest			1.01***	
			(0.38)	
internet#rather dishonest			1.06***	
			(0.38)	
internet#absolutely dishonest			1.35***	
			(0.40)	
UR support but no more#rather honest			0.45	
			(0.35)	
UR indifferent#rather honest			0.54	
			(0.52)	

UR to some extent against#Rather honest			−1.44*	
			(0.86)	
UR against#Rather honest			1.41*	
			(0.85)	
Never heard#Rather honest			1.00	
			(1.37)	
UR DK#Rather honest			−0.04	
			(0.88)	
UR support but no more#Rather dishonest			0.64*	
			(0.36)	
UR indifferent#rather dishonest			0.72	
			(0.51)	
UR to some extent against#rather dishonest			−0.74	
			(0.83)	
UR against #rather dishonest			1.22	
			(0.83)	
UR never heard#rather dishonest			0.37	
			(1.21)	
UR DK#rather dishonest			0.40	
			(0.86)	
UR support but no more#Abs.dishonest			0.77	
			(0.90)	
UR indif.#abs.dishonest			71.46	
			(0.95)	
UR against#abs.dishonest			2.07*	
			(1.14)	
UR DK#abs.dishonest			0.86	
			(1.18)	
Putin disapprove#rather honest				0.76
				(0.83)
Putin disapprove#rather dishonest				0.90
				(0.82)
Putin#abs.dishonest				1.00
				(0.83)
Constant	2.19***	2.35***	2.14***	2.15***

	(0.13)	(0.17)	(0.18)	(0.16)
N	679	575	575	573
$Adj.R^2$	0.23	0.33	0.35	0.34

Standard errors in parentheses.
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 8: Explaining protest approval: comparing alternative models

Variables	Economy	Political leanings	Mass media	Electoral integrity
Disapprove of V. Putin		0.34***		
		(0.12)		
Support UR but no more than the other party		0.17		
		(0.13)		
I am indifferent towards UR		0.35**		
		(0.14)		
To some extent I am against UR		0.49***		
		(0.16)		
I am against this party		0.50***		
		(0.17)		
Never heard about this party		0.48		
		(0.77)		
Do you support the govn't? Rather yes		−0.14		
		(0.26)		
Rather no		−0.64**		
		(0.25)		
Certainly no		−0.83***		
		(0.26)		
Household economy				
Fairly satisfactory	−0.32			
	(0.28)			
Not very satisfactory	0.03			
	(0.28)			
Very unsatisfactory	0.31			
	(0.34)			
Don"t know	−0.02			
	(0.40)			
economy2	−0.01**			
	(0.00)			
Russian private TV channels			0.57***	
			(0.16)	
Internet			0.11	

			(0.17)	
1.internet_news			0.25*	
			(0.15)	
1.internet_country			−0.40**	
			(0.17)	
1.internet_comm			0.14	
			(0.14)	
1.VK			−0.03	
			(0.14)	
1.Odnoklas			−0.27**	
			(0.14)	
1.Facebook			−0.17	
			(0.21)	
Rather honest				−0.01
				(0.19)
Rather dishonest				0.48**
				(0.21)
Absolutely dishonest				0.67***
				(0.24)
Rather satisfied				0.38***
				(0.14)
Rather unsatisfied				0.33**
				(0.17)
Totally unsatisfied				0.64***
				(0.21)
2.heard_viol				0.29*
				(0.16)
3.heard_viol				−0.26
				(0.18)
4.heard_viol				−0.34**
				(0.17)
fraud - reason for protests				0.26**
				(0.11)
N	255	334	336	283
$Adj.R^2$	0.23	0.40	0.25	0.55

Standard errors in parentheses.

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 9: Mass media and attitudes towards protests

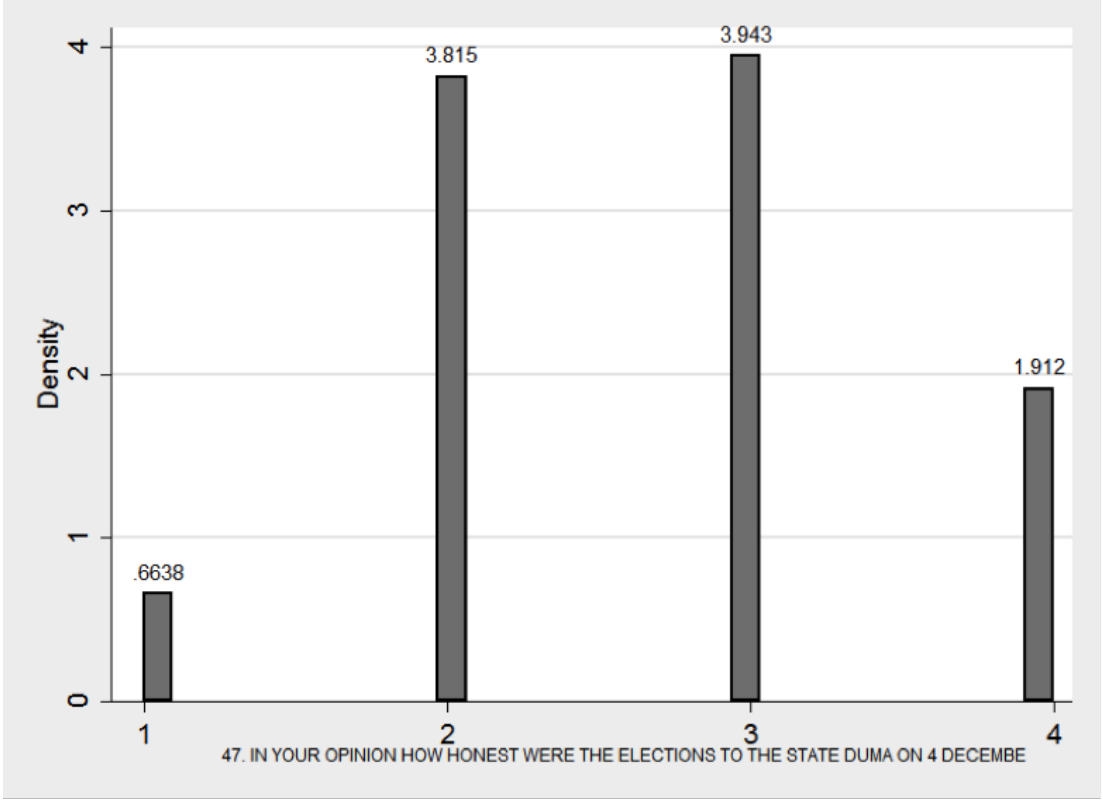
Variables	Leanings+media	Media+fraud	Leanings+fraud I	Leanings+fraud II
Female	−0.12*	−0.19***	−0.11	−0.13*
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)
News from internet (mentioned)	−0.12	−1.04***		
	(0.14)	(0.36)		
UR:support but no more than the other	−0.23**		−0.38	
	(0.11)		(0.31)	
UR:I'm indifferent towards this party	0.51***		−0.24	
	(0.11)		(0.48)	
UR:To some extent I'm against this party	0.74***		1.21	
	(0.13)		0.81	
UR:I'm against this party	1.07***		−0.64	
	(0.11)		(0.81)	
UR:Never heard about this party	1.65***		0.89	
	(0.43)		(1.12)	
UR:Don't know	0.37**		−0.05	
	(0.17)		(0.81)	
Putin: Disapprove				−0.54
				(0.81)
Elec.were rather honest		−0.11	−0.16	−0.01
		(0.15)	(0.16)	(0.14)
Elec.were rather dishonest		0.71***	0.39**	0.68***
		(0.15)	(0.19)	(0.15)
Elec.were absolutely dishonest		1.09***	−0.02	0.97
		(0.16)	(0.80)	(0.20)
News from internet#Rather honest		1.01***		
		(0.38)		
News from internet#Rather dishonest		1.06***		
		(0.38)		
News from internet#Absolutely dishonest		1.35***		
		(0.40)		
Support but no more...#Rather honest			0.45	
			(0.35)	
Indifferent#Rather honest			0.45	
			(0.52)	
To some extent against#Rather honest			−1.44*	
			(0.86)	
Against this party#Rather honest			1.41*	
			(0.85)	
Never heard#Rather honest			1.00	
			(1.37)	
Support but no more..#Rather dishonest			0.64*	
			(0.36)	
Indifferent#Rather dishonest			0.72	
			(0.51)	
To some extent against#Rather dishonest			−0.74	
			(0.83)	
Against this party#Rather dishonest			1.22	
			(0.83)	
N	679	575	575	573
$Adj.R^2$	0.23	0.33	0.35	0.34

Robust standard errors in parentheses. Constant terms are suppressed.
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 10: Description of the main variables (codebook)

60. GENERALLY SPEAKING, DO YOU SUPPORT THE STREET PROTESTS AGAINST THE VIOLATION			
	Freq.	Percent	Cumulative percent
Totally support	104	13.00	13.00
Rather support	238	29.75	42.75
Rather against	217	27.13	69.88
Totally against	120	15.00	84.88
Don't know	121	15.13	100.00
Total	800	100.00	
47. IN YOUR OPINION HOW HONEST WERE THE ELECTIONS TO THE STATE DUMA ON 4 DECEMBER 2011?			
	Freq.	Percent	Cumulative percent
Absolutely honest	83	5.19	5.19
Rather honest	477	29.81	35.00
Rather dishonest	493	30.81	65.81
Absolutely dishonest	239	14.94	80.75
Don't know	308	19.25	100.00
Total	1,600	100.00	

Figure 5: Distribution of the main independent variable (q47 In your opinion how honest were the elections to the State Duma on 4 December 2011?



N=1600; Source: New Russia Barometer. December 2011.

Table 11: Desription of the main variables, New Russia Berometer survey, December 2011 (codebook).

60. GENERALLY SPEAKING, DO YOU SUPPORT THE STREET PROTESTS AGAINST THE VIOLATION			
type:	numeric		
range	[1,9]	units:	1
unique values	5	missing	800/1,600
tabulation	Freq	Numeric	Label
	104	1	Totally support
	238	2	Rather support
	217	3	Rather against
	120	4	Totally against
	121	9	DK
	800		
47. IN YOUR OPINION HOW HONEST WERE THE ELECTIONS TO THE STATE DUMA ON 4 DECEMBER 2011?			
type	numeric		
range	[1,9]	units	1
unique values	5	missing	0/1,600
tabulation	Freq	Numeric	Label
	83	1	Absolutely honest
	477	2	Rather honest
	493	3	Rather dishonest
	239	4	Absolutely dishonest
	308	9	DK

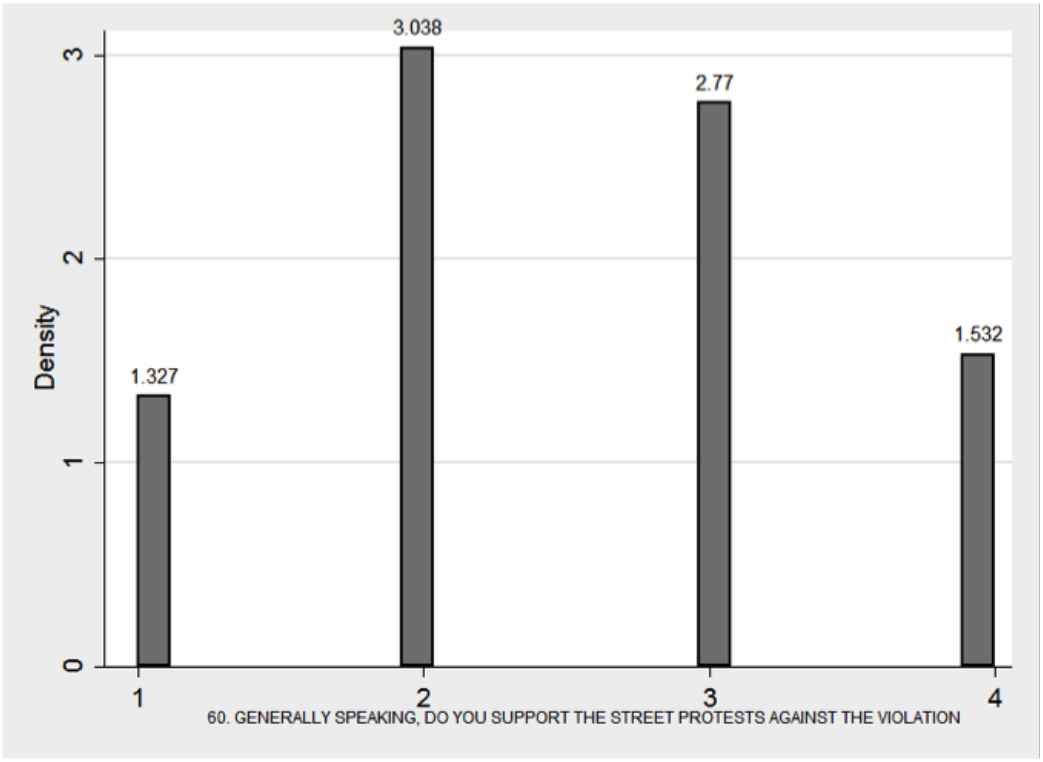
Table 12: Description of the main variables, New Russia Barometer survey. March 2012 (Codebook).

56A. DO YOU THINK THE ELECTIONS OF THE PRESIDENT OF RUSSIA AND DEPUTIES TO THE STATE DUME WERE HONEST?			
type:	numeric		
range	[1,9]	units: 1	
unique values	5	missing	701/1,633
tabulation	Freq	Numeric	Label
	288	1	Absolutely honest
	379	2	Rather honest
	129	3	Rather dishonest
	38	4	Absolutely dishonest
	98	9	DK
	701		
63A. DO YOU SUPPORT THE MASS PROTESTS TAKING PLACE SINCE DECEMBER LAST YEAR AGAINST [ELECTORAL] VIOLATIONS?			
type	numeric		
range	[1,4]	units	1
unique values	4	missing	1,034/1,633
tabulation	Freq	Numeric	Label
	44	1	Totally support
	164	2	Rather support
	256	3	Rather against
	135	4	Totally against
	1,034	.	

Table 13: The list of party abbreviations

No	Abbreviation	Name
1	RC	Right Cause
2	LDPR	Liberal Democratic Party of Russia
3	UR	United Russia
4	CPRF	Communist Party of the Russian Federation
5	JR	Just Russia
6	APR	Agrarian party of Russia
7	SPS	Union of Right Forces (Souyz pravykh sil)
8	PoR	Patriots of Russia
9	UCF	United Civic Front
10	NBP	National-Bolshevik party
11	DPNI	Movement against illegal immigration (Dvizheniye protiv nelegal'noi immigratsii)
12	RKRP	Russian communist labour party
13	AKM	The Red Youth Vanguard (Avangard krasnoi molodezhi)
14	RSD	Russian Socialist Movement (Rossiiskoe sotsialisticheskoe dvizhenie)

Figure 6: Distribution of the main dependent variable (q60: Generally speaking, do you support the street protests against the violations?



N=1600;
Source: New Russia Barometer. December 2011.