

**Russian Duma Elections in the Territorial Districts:
Explaining Patterns of Proliferation of
Independent Candidates, 1993-1999**

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requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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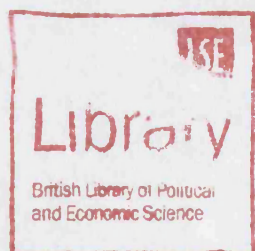
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Abstract

Russian political parties remained weak and under-institutionalised in the 1990s, with profound implications for the viability of the country's democratic project. This research is concerned with explaining one glaring sign of party under-development - the success of independent candidates in federal parliamentary elections. Its originality rests on focusing on the uneven geographic concentration of independents' electoral success, given that existing accounts have confined themselves to the national, average picture. A second point of originality is the choice of multilevel modelling as the tool of quantitative analysis, applied here for the first time in post-communist electoral studies.

The analysis relies on a macro-political explanatory framework where single-member electoral districts provide the units of analysis, and where the dependent variable is the district vote share received by independent candidates. Explanatory factors apply at the level of both districts and federal units (regions). They include conflict in centre-regional relations, geographic conditions, candidates' personal resources and the use of administrative resources by regional governors. The main finding confirms the hypothesis that the independents enjoyed a competitive advantage over parties in articulating the new territorial cleavages that emerged, after the collapse of the Soviet-system, as a consequence of state-building and federalisation processes.

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Acronyms

The acronyms for parties, electoral blocs and associations adopted here are those most widely used in the western literature. In some cases, they are transliterations of the Russian acronyms. For such cases, the English translation of the full name is given in the list below (e.g. OVR for *Otechestvo - Vsyaya Rossiya*, "Fatherland-All Russia"). When the most common version is the English one, the transliterated Russian acronym is added in parentheses in the list below, e.g. CEC for Central Electoral Commission (TsIK).

Russian political parties, electoral blocs and associations

APR	Agrarian Party of Russia
DPR	Democratic Party of Russia
KEDR	Constructive Ecological Movement of Russia
KPRF	Communist Party of the Russian Federation
KRO	Congress of Russian Communities
LDPR	Liberal Democratic Party of Russia
NDR	Our Home is Russia
NRPR	National-Republican Party of Russia
OVR	Fatherland - All Russia
PRES	Party of Russian Unity and Concord
PST	Party of Workers' Self-Government
RDDR	Russian Movement for Democratic Reforms
SPS	Union of Right Forces
SSR	Union of Collective Owners of Russia

Other

ANCOVA	Analysis of Covariance
--------	------------------------

CEC	Central Electoral Commission (TsIK)
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union (KPSS)
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
IGLS	Iterative Generalised Least Squares
OLS	Ordinary Least Square
NRB	New Russia Barometer
PSOE	Socialist Workers' Party (Spain)
RIGLS	Restricted Iterative Generalised Least Squares
SMD	Single-Member District
VTsIOM	All-Russian Centre for the Study of Public Opinion

A Note on Transliteration

Russian names have been transliterated according to the Library of Congress system. Exceptions have been made to conform to widely used forms. In particular, the Russian letters *ю* and *я* are transliterated as 'yu' and 'ya', respectively (e.g. 'Chechnya' instead of 'Chechnia'). The letter *ѣ* is rendered with 'i'. Moreover, the transliterated form of surnames starting with the Russian *е* begins with 'Ye' (e.g. 'Yeltsin' instead of 'Eltsin'), while surnames ending with the Russian *-уѣ*, end with 'y' (e.g. 'Ostrogorsky', instead of 'Ostrogorskii'). Finally, the marks ' and " for the Russian soft and hard signs have been omitted.

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All of the errors and omissions in the pages that follow remain mine.

Introduction: Independents, Parties and Democracy

"Are party-political politicians good for democracy? Politicians are elected to serve their constituents. More often than not they turn their backs on their constituents and toe a party line. Having independent politicians ought to be mandatory and not simply a novelty".

Paul "R.", UK¹

The anonymous contributor to a BBC on-line forum quoted in the epigraph above was probably dismayed at the results of the 2001 British parliamentary election, which returned virtually no independent candidate.² By contrast, it seems, Paul "R" would be quite happy with electoral returns like those of post-communist Russia in the 1990s; at least in terms of independents' success. In the first three Russian parliamentary elections held after the collapse of the Soviet Union, non-party candidates gained between 34 and 64 percent of the plurality seats.³ Contrary to Paul "R", however, most political scientists are in agreement that political parties are a crucial aspect of functioning modern democracies and consider such a proliferation of independent candidates as an important and alarming phenomenon.

There are, in fact, very good reasons why Russian and British voting behaviour should differ markedly in the success of the independents. On the one hand, this is just

¹ Contributor to the on-line forum on "Are independent politicians good for democracy?", hosted by the BBC NEWS web site, in the section "Talking Point", 23 May 2001. Accessed August 2003 at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/vote2001/hi/english/talking_point/newsid_1330000/1330549.stm .

² To be precise, one of the winners can be considered an independent candidate. Richard Taylor won the race in constituency 654 under the banner of the "Independent Kidderminster Hospital and Health Concern".

one aspect of a more general difference in the degree of party system institutionalisation between established and young democracies, particularly of the post-communist variety. On the other hand, Russia has shown an especially marked pattern of party weakness, even when compared to other post-communist cases, which can be seen as evidence of the particular hurdles its history has left for party development. A combination of these two perspectives, i.e., the typical party underdevelopment observed in transitional settings and the peculiar problems of Russia's party weakness, is usually invoked to explain the proliferation of independent candidates. The phenomenon is seen as caused by the socio-economic and cultural legacies of the Soviet system and by the new institutional and strategic choices of post-communist Russian rulers.

This conventional wisdom is based on national factors. As such, it can aptly inform *cross-national* comparisons, such as those between the UK and Russia, but it cannot help the analyst explain the conundrum of *sub-national* variation. That is, why the success of independents varies so greatly within Russia. Clearly, accounts based on country effects alone are liable to miss a good deal of information if the phenomenon to be explained varies significantly *within* the country; such accounts thus forgo the opportunity to determine more complex explanations.

This thesis aims to address and explain the *sub-national* concentration of the success of independent candidates in Russian Duma elections. In this, it reveals a somewhat different, and certainly more complex, picture.

The Duma is the Lower House of the Russian Federal Parliament; it is the most important of the two chambers of the Parliament and the only elective one.⁴ The 450 members of the Duma are elected through a mixed electoral formula. Half of its members, or 225 deputies, are chosen from closed party lists in one Russia-wide proportional representation constituency, subject to a 5 percent threshold. The other 225 deputies are elected in 225 Single-Member Districts (SMDs) through a plurality method circumscribed by the provisions that at least 25 percent of eligible voters turn out to vote and that the winner receives more votes than the option "against all candidates".⁵

³ In the latest vote of December 2003, the independents won 30 percent of the plurality seats. The scope of this thesis, however, is confined to the elections of the 1990s.

⁴ The other chamber of the Parliament, the Council of the Federation, was elected only once, when it was created in 1993. Since then, it has been formed by co-optation or by appointment.

⁵ In addition to expressing a preference for a candidate, the Russian voter can also tick a box "against all candidates" on the SMD ballot.

This mixed electoral system is "parallel" in the sense that "there is no linkage between tiers in the allocation of seats to parties" (Shugart and Wattenberg 2001: 13-14).

In the terminology of Russian law, the "independent candidate" is an individual who "presents himself" or is "presented by a group of voters" for election, as opposed to a candidate who registers as party-affiliated with the electoral commission.⁶ By definition then, independent candidates cannot appear on the proportional representation (PR) ballot, which includes lists of candidates affiliated with political parties or electoral associations. Since, therefore, the independents are a phenomenon of the plurality tier only,⁷ this thesis is only concerned with the vote in the SMDs.

This chapter has a number of tasks. The first section (1.1) sets up the study of the independents in the light of ongoing theoretical debates on the role of parties in the consolidation of democracy and in the stabilisation of federations. The second section (1.2) compares Russia with other cases of recent democratisation along key dimensions of party system institutionalisation, including independent candidates' proliferation. The same section also presents a description of the spatial variability in independents' success across Russia, or the variance of the "dependent variable" of this thesis. Based on this descriptive account, the case is argued for a large-*n* research design (section 1.3, the details on data and research design are deferred to chapters 4 and 5). A concluding section presents the chapter structure of the thesis.

1.1 Parties, democratic consolidation and federal stability

Why should anybody be interested in this proliferation of independent candidates? The most common view on this question – one shared by virtually all works on Russian elections – is that the independents are of interest because they are a strong sign of party weakness (White, Rose and McAllister 1997; Munro and Rose 2002; Golosov 1997,

⁶ The electoral rules were initially introduced by presidential decree on 1 October 1993. The main subsequent electoral legislation (in English translation) is available at the web site of the Essex University project on elections, www.essex.ac.uk/elections/.

⁷ In 1995, however, there was one electoral bloc that defined itself as a gathering of independent candidates, the "Bloc of Independents", and ran in both PR and SMD tiers. In the literature, it is considered a marginal party because it only received 0.1 percent of the list vote. However, it will be shown that it did have an impact on the chances of "individual" independents in the plurality districts.

2002; Moser 1999, 2001).⁸ This, in turn, is cause for alarm because parties are considered fundamental institutions for democracy; crucial instruments for democratic consolidation, and the primary agents of federal stability. In short, the success of independent candidates is important because parties are important. To be sure, the claim that parties are the *only* agents of democratic electoral representation and national integration is subject to qualification (see this section, below). However, admitting such qualifications, it is this conventional wisdom that has provided the impetus for this research.

Usually, a corollary of this view that parties are of central importance to modern democracies is that independents are a form of disturbance, or "noise", which hampers the smooth functioning of elections. A central argument of this thesis is that independents should in fact be seen under a different light: as very particular providers of democratic representation, rather than simply signals of party weakness. If the long term development of democracy impinges on institutionalised parties, in the short term the typical party weakness of a transitional setting and a set of institutional incentives can create the opportunity for independents to meet the demand for democratic electoral representation of particular cleavages. This interpretation will be elaborated in the chapter on the explanatory framework of the research (chapter 3) and the chapters that present the analysis (chapters 6-8).

It is important to distinguish between the positive role of parties in democratic consolidation and an explanation of independents' success in terms of their ability to fulfil electoral representation functions. As mentioned above, the topic of the independents is important because parties are key institutions of representative democracy. The remainder of this section reviews the latter claim.

Parties and democratic consolidation

If political parties play a key role in the working and consolidation of democracy, and democracy is a valued outcome, then the proliferation of independent candidates represents an important problem. Indeed, by the first half of the last century, few arguments in political science had received so much and such clear support as the

⁸ For a study that uses the proliferation of the independents as a quantitative indicator of party underdevelopment, see Ishiyama and Kennedy (2001).

proposition that modern (i.e. representative) democracy is only conceivable in terms of *party* democracy (Kelsen 1929; Finer 1949; Schattschneider 1942).⁹ This consensus, however, has not always been so stable. The distrust of parties, seen as factions endangering social harmony and unity, has a long tradition, including Rousseau, the Founding Fathers of the USA and beyond.¹⁰ Even the first systematic students of political parties, Bryce (1888), Ostrogorsky (1912), and Michels (1915), while admitting the central role that parties had come to play in modern democracies, sharply criticised their organisational distortions.

And of course the importance of parties does not go undisputed in the contemporary debate either. Philippe Schmitter has made strong arguments that other agencies of representation, namely corporatist organisations, have replaced parties in important policy domains. More specifically, in terms of democratic consolidation, Schmitter argues that parties are not the only key actors, and that interest groups should not be overlooked (Schmitter 1992, 2001). Finally, it is widely accepted that the most established democracies of today are precisely those showing the clearest signs of 'party decline'. The role of parties in political life has declined precisely where they are supposed to be more stable, more deeply rooted in society, more cohesive, and better organised (Wattenberg 1996; Pharr and Putnam 2000; Dalton and Wattenberg 2000).

On the other hand, Katz and Mair (1993) and Mair (1994) show that it is only *one type of party*, the traditional mass party, that is declining. They maintain that parties as such are still 'alive and kicking' in Western democracies. Having secured state funding and other key resources for their survival, parties virtually monopolise access to public office (especially legislative office). Aldrich reminds us that in the USA "the path to office for nearly every major politician begins today, as it has for over 150 years. ... All serious candidates seek their party's nomination, and they become serious candidates in the general election only because they have won their party's endorsement" (Aldrich

⁹ Some emblematic quotes include the following: "Parties are inevitable. No one has shown how representative government could be worked without them" (Bryce 1921: 119); "Modern democracy depends directly on political parties, whose importance becomes the greater the more strongly the democratic principle is realised" (Kelsen 1929: 19); "Representative government is party government" (Finer 1949: 237); And "the political parties created democracy . . . and modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of the parties" (Schattschneider 1942: 1). Kelsen and Finer are quoted in Hofstadter (1969: 7).

¹⁰ "And so strong was this tradition that even as late as 1861, long after his own country was well launched upon the development of its two-party system, John Stuart Mill could write an entire treatise, *Considerations on Representative Government*, in which he never elaborated upon the role of party" (Hofstadter 1969: 51-2).

1995: 14). He points out that even candidates endowed with personal resources follow this pattern, as "autonomous, ambitious candidates are nonetheless overwhelmingly partisans" (Aldrich 1995: 289).

Moreover, even if the importance of the party institution is declining in established democracies, this can be distinguished from its contribution to the process of *establishing* new democracies.¹¹ In this regard, Morlino has described the process of democratic consolidation in Southern Europe as "party-centred", with political parties as its "protagonists" (Morlino 1995, 1998). This is because of parties peculiar ability in "forming, maintaining, expressing, and deepening attitudes relating to regime legitimacy or illegitimacy" (Morlino 1995: 315).

Parties can fulfil this legitimising role by establishing stable links with civil society, which in turn stabilise electoral behaviour (thereby reducing electoral volatility and the chances for successful new parties). By taking root firmly in society, the party organisation 'controls' the electorate and reduces anti-system alienation (Morlino 1995: 330-1). All of these developments are empirically associated with successful consolidations of democracy. However, not all democratic consolidations have required these developments. As Toka notes, in Eastern Europe, masses and elites have accepted democracy as 'the only game in town' before political parties came to play a significant role in politics.¹²

The importance of parties to democracy can also be argued in relation to the values underpinning one's chosen definition of democracy. To rephrase Katz's observation on the role of elections, "the debate over the value and the place of *parties* in modern democracy stems from the problem of defining democracy itself" (Katz 1997: 4, where the word is *elections* instead of *parties*). One key value of normative definitions of democracy is the accountability of rulers towards the ruled. In the context of the present inquiry, it can be argued that individualised representation by non-party candidates,

¹¹ This parallels Rustow's distinction between the study of the conditions sustaining established democracies and those necessary for the genesis of democracy (Rustow 1970: 337-40). Rustow claimed that to study the genesis of democracy is a peculiar task, quite distinct from the study of the conditions that sustain an already established democracy.

¹² The alleged impact of the institutionalisation of the party system on democratic consolidation is understood by Mainwaring and Scully as mediated by a supposed increase in the efficiency of policy making, but a government's stability and the quality of its policies do not in fact seem to be associated. Neither does party system institutionalisation appear to have much to do with the legitimacy of the democratic regime. East and West Europe do not differ in popular trust of elected officials, despite having different levels of party system institutionalisation (see Toka 1997: 118).

while at least as good as party representation for a number of purposes (e.g. for the articulation and expression of interests), is inferior to party representation in terms of structuring the political arena and allowing for the *collective* accountability of elected officials. "Within the mass societies of modern states, if some degree of responsibility and accountability is to be enforced, candidates need also to be organized in competing teams, i.e. political parties. Thus office-holders who are little known to most individual electors can at least be associated with a definite group, which is tied both to a specific record in government and to certain pronouncements about future performance" (Budge and Keman 1990: 5).

Therefore, in the most common normative definitions of democracy, political parties are seen as essential in relation to such values implicit in that definition as structured representation and accountability. As MacIver (1947: 210) put it: "The principle of representation had to be vitalized by the conflict of parties. When parties flourish we have in effect passed from a pre-democratic mode of representative government to a genuinely democratic one".¹³ Aldrich points more precisely to the link between parties and the collective accountability of rulers:

"Each official can be held accountable for his or her own personal actions by the constituency that elects and reelects that official. But government policy is determined by the collective actions of many individual office holders. No one person either can or should be held accountable for actions taken by the House, Senate, and president together. The political party as a collective enterprise, organizing competition for the full range of offices, provides the only means for holding elected officials responsible for what they do collectively" (Aldrich 1995: 3).

This being the case, clearly it is not only partisan vs. non-partisan representation that matters; the *type* of parties that emerge also has a bearing on the "viability of democracy".¹⁴ Support for this point has been found in the context of third-wave and post-communist party systems, where a positive effect of the institutionalised party system has been noted on the *quality* of democracy, i.e. the capacity to go beyond

¹³ Quoted in Hofstadter (1969: 7).

¹⁴ "The way parties operate and create linkages of accountability and responsiveness to citizens is likely to have major consequences for the viability of democracy and the quality of its outputs" (Kitschelt et al. 1999: 15).

democracy's procedural minimum and "give meaning" to elections (Mainwaring 1999; Toka 1997; Kitchelt et al. 1999).¹⁵

In sum, despite trends of party decline in advanced democracies, and the parallel developments of possible party substitutes in the form of interest groups and corporatist organisations, the general consensus holds that the party institution is still necessary to achieve the collective accountability of rulers, the legitimisation of newly established democracies and their consolidation through improved "quality".

Parties and federal stability

The conventional view that political parties are the main agents of representation and channelling for popular demands also includes parties' role with regard to regionalist demands. In other words, "in democratic societies political parties are the main agents responsible for articulating interests including those based on regional or provincial distinctiveness" (McKay 2000: 5-6). However, the often-posited role of parties in centre-regional relations goes well beyond mere representation. Contrary to 18th century views of parties as factions that would inevitably threaten the integrity of any political community – views notably shared by the authors of the American *Federalist Papers* (Hofstadter 1969) – in the last four or five decades great hopes have come to be attached to the role that parties can play in moderating regionalist demands and fostering federal stability.

William Riker, Donald Horowitz and many others have stressed this link between party development, national integration and federal stability. Riker (1964) argues that centralised party systems tend to foster centralised federations. To that end, it is important that the parties in charge of national government are also in control of lower levels of administration. This argument is based on the view that national parties can integrate and moderate centrifugal forces – primarily territorial cleavages – in federal settings.

A recent formulation of this thesis has been made by Filippov, Ordeshook and Shvetsova (2004), who argue that well-crafted institutional arrangements can induce the emergence of a particular type of party, the "integrated party", in which ambitious

¹⁵ "Without parties to structure the campaign, to provide continuity from one election to the next, and to provide links among candidates in different localities and for different offices, the resulting elections are unlikely to be meaningful, even if they are technically free" (Katz 1980: 1; quoted in Toka 1997: 122).

politicians face an incentive to avoid mobilising divisive issues and to moderate centrifugal demands from their territorial constituents. This concept is based on the historical experience of the US party system, but is considered potentially exportable in all federations, given the correct set of institutional incentives. Office seekers will be willing to be "imperfect representatives of their constituents" because they need to be part of a nation-wide organisation in order to win as many votes as possible; in this, they often count heavily on the coattail effect produced by popular presidents or presidential candidates. As they put it, "local and regional politicians will not seek to disrupt unduly the functions of the federal government for fear of damaging the electoral standing of national politicians from their party and, thereby, their own subsequent electoral chances" (Filippov et al. 2004: 194).

With reference to the US case, Aldrich notes that, prior to the Republican party's emergence to national prominence, when the North-South division found representation as a party cleavage, American parties had functioned as "complex institutions designed to maintain national unity by avoiding division among regions, especially over slavery" (Aldrich 1995: 65). The example of the US Republican party illustrates that a successful integrated party can absorb territorial cleavages within its ranks, rather than letting such divisions define intra-party competition. Thus, "[i]t was the complex set of partisan and other institutional arrangements that kept the regional issues, especially slavery, from being addressed at all, and certainly from being resolved on terms suitable to those who would soon become the Republicans" (Aldrich 1995: 285).

It is apparent that this party ideal-type is contingent on a number of institutional and political conditions. Firstly, parties must be truly national, in the sense that they must successfully compete at different levels of government. Secondly, if there are presidential elections, they should be partisan, thus inducing benefit seekers (motivated by the prospect of winning the spoils of presidential office), as well as policy seekers, to preserve the electoral coalition. It should be noted, moreover, that this model implies a sharp aversion to regionalist parties, i.e. "parties which derive their support primarily from a single federal subject or subset of subjects" (Filippov et al. 2004: 188). Given its underlying assumption that the emergence of "integrated national parties" should be promoted, it is fair to say that the proponents of this model would certainly approve of institutional rules discouraging regionalist parties, such as exist, for example, in the

Russian Federation.¹⁶ The prevailing view, then, is that political parties have the potential to play a crucial role in fostering national integration and inducing federal stability. As with the thesis that parties are necessary for democratic consolidation, the argument that fostering "integrated parties" is conducive to federal stability will be critically considered in the concluding chapter in the light of the findings of this research.

1.2 Russia and the other party systems of the Third Wave

Having established the accepted importance of party institutionalisation to modern democracies, the discussion now turns to how the Russian political system compares along this dimension to other democratic political systems, especially with respect to the phenomenon of independents' success. There are three defining elements to this comparison. Firstly, that Russia falls into the category of transitional systems, which sets her apart from established democracies such as the UK. Secondly, that among transitional democracies, post-communist cases such as Russia face special obstacles to party development. And thirdly, that even compared to most other post-communist cases, Russia exhibits several signs of especially low party institutionalisation; among these signs is the phenomenon of independents' proliferation.

To get a sense of the distance between established and transitional democracies, one need only note that in the latest UK election to the House of Commons (the elections of 2001), 118 independent candidates ran in about 20 percent of 659 UK constituencies (compared to 643 conservative and 640 labour candidates). As noted at the start of this chapter, none of these independents managed to win a seat, except for the "single-issue" winner of constituency n.654 (see fn.2). Before that, it had come as a surprise when in 1997, for the first time since 1950, one independent had managed to win.¹⁷

¹⁶ See Chapter 3 for a discussion of the electoral rules discouraging regionalist parties in the Russian case.

¹⁷ Independent Martin Bell won with over 60 percent of the district votes in the Tatton constituency, where Liberal Democrat and Labour candidates had withdrawn in order to support his candidacy. Before Bell, the 1945-1950 Parliament included three MPs who had been elected as independents in by-elections. Similarly notable as an exceptional occurrence, independent Ken Livingstone was elected mayor of London in 2000.

In contrast to the entrenched role of political parties in UK politics, as well as the experiences of other third-wave countries, political parties in all post-communist countries have, in general, been initially relegated to secondary roles. Thus, parties in post-communist democracies "formed after or during the first elections, rather than preceding these fundamental democratic initiatives or playing much of a role in channelling the pressures that led to them being held at all". That the organisation of the opposition "took the form of social informality in contrast to the officialdom and patterns of authority set by party bureaucracy", is doubtless related to the fact that previously compulsory participation in party activities had produced a deep aversion to the very notion of party (Lewis 2000: 19-20, 33). And, unlike in post-1945 Western Europe, where, Von Beyme reminds us, "encompassing notions such as 'Union', 'Front' and 'Rassemblement' were [also] preferred" to the idea of "party" (1996: 125), democratic party identification in post-communist countries didn't have a legacy of party institutions left behind by prior democratic or liberal regimes upon which to draw.

Moreover, while parties in all third wave democracies are personalistic, weakly organised, and unstable, unlike in Russia, in both Latin America and East-Central Europe they do nonetheless monopolise access to national legislatures. Tellingly, while Russia's parties could be considered similar to those of Peru or Ecuador on several dimensions of (under)institutionalisation, only Ukraine has reached the same low levels as Russia in terms of party candidate recruitment (Moser 2001a: 48-49). The uniqueness of Russia's party failure in candidate selection is even more evident in regional Russian elections. Only 13.8 percent of the elected candidates in 1993-94, and 16.8 percent in 1995-97 has had any party affiliation (Stoner-Weiss 2000: 12).¹⁸

To show the distinctiveness of Russia's low level of party institutionalisation, it is useful to use Mainwaring's (1999) and Mainwaring and Scully's (1995) framework, elaborated for third-wave party systems.

¹⁸ In the first post-communist elections held in Ukraine, parties played an even more marginal role than in Russia. In 1994 non-party candidates received a large majority of the vote, with only 34 percent of the vote cast for emerging parties (Lewis 2000: 20). A similar pattern in Belarus has been associated with more openly authoritarian tendencies of the president Lukashenka. Here also the first parliamentary elections, in 1995, saw a majority of winners nominated as independents (Lewis 2000: 25).

Party system (under)institutionalisation

One key dimension of party system institutionalisation is electoral volatility. According to Mainwaring, "party systems range from very stable (the United States, Switzerland, Finland and Sweden) to extremely volatile (Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Peru, Poland and Russia)". Mainwaring measures party system volatility as the sum of the percentage of votes gained or lost by each party from one election to the next divided by two (Mainwaring 1999: 28). The US average volatility for Congressional elections (1944-94) is only 4 percent of the aggregate vote, in Peru it is 58 percent and in Russia (between the 1993 and 1995 elections) it is 54 percent (Mainwaring 1999: 28-9). A lack of stable party identities in the electorate and of social roots among parties is shown also by high levels of split-ticket voting across tiers of a mixed electoral system. White et al. (1997, reported in Mainwaring 1999) have estimated that in Russia 70 percent of the voters planned to split their vote across the two tiers of the election in 1993, and that only 22 percent identified in any sense with any party.

A more precise notion distinguishes between two types of electoral volatility: a) voter volatility, and b) elite volatility. In the first case, large numbers of voters shift their electoral support across parties in consecutive elections, but the supply-side of the equation remains broadly the same (i.e., the same parties contest consecutive elections). Such volatility reflects a lack of party identification in the electorate, which in turn testifies to the absence of clear and stable social constituencies "frozen" in their relationship with parties. Clearly, social cleavages are either missing or are not activated at the political level.

In the second case, electoral volatility is due to elite volatility. Here, the supply-side of the electoral equation changes markedly from one election to the next. It is the politicians who have weak party loyalties, with new parties formed and previous parties disappearing. To enhance their electoral prospects and visibility, the most prominent political personalities create their own parties, or join into personalistic and unstable alliances (blocs). Richard Rose has stressed the supply-side sources of volatility for Russia (Rose 2000; Munro and Rose 2002).

"Supply-side initiatives of political elites are the primary cause of Duma seats changing hands . . . There is a big turnover in parties on the ballot from one election to the next. In the 1993 Duma election there were 13 parties on the proportional representation ballot; in 1995, there were 43; and in 1999,

the number was down to 26. In a new democracy, party formation invariably involves a certain amount of trial and error, but in Russia the turnover of parties has been so abnormal that it has become an obstacle to accountable government" (Rose 2000: 3).

In particular, the last of the elections considered in this thesis –the 1999 election, held after almost a decade of post-communist transformations– lends support to Von Beyme's observation that "literature on Russian parties seemed to describe each year a new phenomenon" (1996: 122). Probably the most striking feature of the 1999 Duma election is the high level of electoral volatility, due overwhelmingly to changes in the supply side of the electoral equation.

Table 1.1: *Transience of major Russian parties in the 1990s*

Duma elections	1993	1995	1999
	(% proportional representation vote)		
Three elections	51.3	45	38.2
Communist	12.4	22.3	24.3
Liberal Dem./Zhirinovsky	22.9	11.2	6.0
Yabloko	7.9	6.9	5.9
Women of Russia	8.1	4.6	2.0
Two elections	30.3	18.2	1.2
Russia's Choice	15.5	3.9	n.a.
Agrarian Party	8.0	3.8	n.a.
Russian Unity & Concord	6.8	0.4	n.a.
Our Home Is Russia	n.a.	10.1	1.2
One election	18.4	36.8	62.6
Democratic Party of Russia	5.5	n.a.	n.a.
Unity (Medved)	n.a.	n.a.	23.3
Fatherland	n.a.	n.a.	13.3
Union of Right Forces	n.a.	n.a.	8.5
Others	12.9	36.8	17.5

Source: Rose (2000: 4).

Table 1.1 lists all Russian parties that have crossed the 5% PR barrier in at least one election in the 1990s. They are grouped according to the number of elections they contested, thus showing their transience. In 1999, more than 50 percent of the PR votes went to parties that not only were contesting their first election, but also were very new (Unity, OVR and SPS). All of them had formed within one year before the election, with Unity, the second most successful party, formed less than six months before the

polling day. This means that most participating parties had few roots in society and that the electorate was extremely "available"; in the sense of "electoral availability" adopted in Bartolini and Mair's study of electoral change in Western Europe (Bartolini and Mair 1990).¹⁹

The spectacular rise of 'Unity' was largely due to the 'Putin factor'. The popularity of Unity skyrocketed when the popular President publicly endorsed it in November.²⁰ This suggests that in this election, a very large proportion of the electorate was still lacking any stable party identity nearly right up to the polling day and was available for last-minute mobilisation.

With reference to party system institutionalisation, Mainwaring explicitly mentions the issue of independent candidates: "the ability of non-partisan and antiparty candidates to win office serves as another indicator of party [lack of] rootedness in society" (Mainwaring 1999: 33). In Russia, non-partisan candidates are not confined to parliamentary elections. Presidents have also been elected as, and have remained, independents. President Yeltsin was never committed to any party allegiance (except, of course, to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in pre-democratic times, of course), President Putin's association with 'Unity' in 1999 was not institutionalised either, and one can also note the initial success of the independent presidential candidate Alexander Lebed in 1996. In Poland a prominent presidential candidate, Stanislaw Tyminski, also ran as independent in 1990, but the trend in the post-communist countries of Eastern and Central Europe has been largely for partisan elections.

In Latin America independents are also popular, though not in the same proportions as in Russia or Ukraine. Several examples can be mentioned in Chile's congressional and presidential elections, as well as in Paraguay and in Peru in the second half of the 20th century (Mainwaring and Scully 1995: 126, 304, 320 & 347).

¹⁹ To be sure, the quick success of new parties is also known in the West, although it takes similar dimension only in conditions of party-system transition, like in the Italian case. Here, in 1994, Berlusconi's 'Forza Italia' emerged as the first party in an election held within a few months from its founding.

²⁰ This is revealed clearly by public opinion surveys conducted at that time by the VTsIOM (VTsIOM 2000: 11, 13).

Patterns of independents' proliferation in Russian SMDs

The previous sections have set up the conceptual link between independents' proliferation and party under-institutionalisation and, within a comparative perspective, have located the Russian case as presenting extreme examples of both. It is now necessary to describe more closely the proliferation of independent candidates in the territorial districts in the three Russian Duma elections of the 1990s. The description starts with some statistics of central tendency (mean) and dispersion (standard deviation, maximum and minimum values). The focus subsequently shifts to the spatial variation in the success of the independents across the country. It is this geographical variability that constitutes the phenomenon the present study seeks to explain; i.e., geographical variability is the dependent variable of the statistical analysis to follow.

For the 1995 and 1999 elections, the data on the dependent variable comes from the official publications of the Russian Central Electoral Commission (CEC) (TsIK, 1996, 2000). For the 1993 elections, I have used an unpublished report by the CEC, kindly provided by Timothy Colton and Robert Moser, as well as data included in a CD-ROM published by the CEC and the Merkator Centre in Moscow (TsIK and Merkator 1999).

Table 1.2 provides a quick glance at some basic indicators of electoral competition and independents' proliferation for the first post-communist competitive vote of 1993. The first line of the table shows that the average district-level success for the independents, measured as the joint vote share of all non-partisans running in an SMD, was 50.2 percent. However, around this all-Russian average, independents' success varied markedly: it was null where no independent ran at all, but it reached as much as 99 percent of the district vote, in Ingushetiya (SMD n.12), where they did run. The second line describes the distribution of the number of candidates, both party and independent, across SMDs. This statistic ranged from the legal minimum of 2 (in nine SMDs) to 20, around a mean of about 7.

The third line of the table shows that in the 1993 election, the independents made up over half of the candidates of a typical SMD. However, in some districts they did not run at all (in ten SMDs), while in as many as 22 SMDs voters could only choose among independents (and the "against all" option). That this variability was not simply due to "outlier" districts with extreme values, but was a main feature of the distribution, is shown by the large standard deviations associated with mean values. The following line

shows that, in the typical 1993 SMD, as much as 16.6 percent of the voters took advantage of the remarkable possibility, granted by the Russian ballot, to vote "against all candidates".

Table 1.2: *Cross-district variability in key traits of electoral competition (1993)*

1993	Mean	StDev	Min	Max
Independents Success*	50.2	24.0	0.0	98.9
Number of candidates	6.9	3.2	2.0	20.0
% of Independent candidates**	55.1	24.7	0.0	100.0
Against All	16.6	5.9	1.1	38.1
Effective number of candidates	4.8	2.0	1.5	15.6
Total candidates 1,519 (700 Party, 819 Indep)				

* Measured as the joint vote share of all independents running in an SMD.

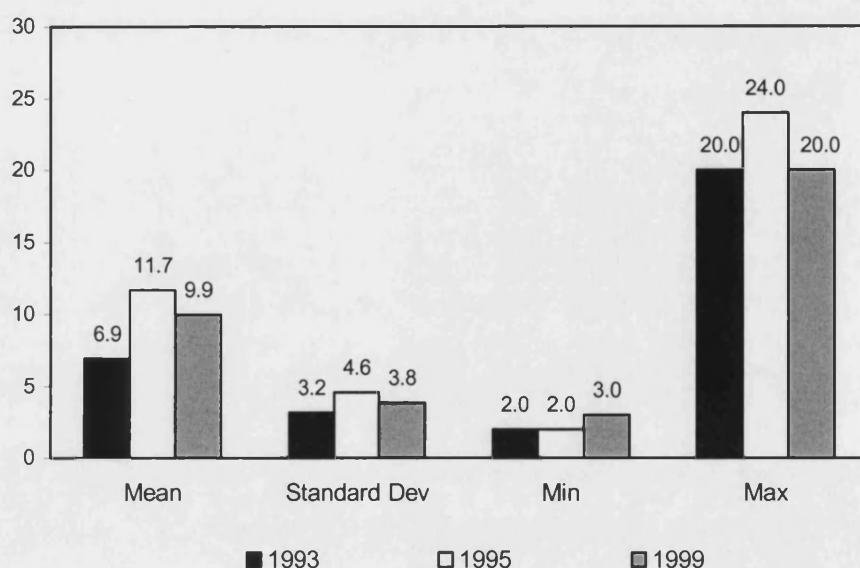
** The percentage of candidates running as independents in an SMD.

Source: own elaboration of data from the Central Electoral Commission of the Russian Federation (CEC), see text for details.

Finally, the fifth line of Table 1.2 records the effective number of candidates; a widely used statistic in political science to detect the number of viable candidates and vote fragmentation (Laakso and Taagepera 1979). Here it shows that the fragmentation of the vote was rather high for a plurality system, with a mean of almost five effective candidates per district, ranging up to the very large maximum of 15.6.

These descriptive statistics point to the fact that electoral competition in SMDs took many different shapes across the huge territory of Russia. However, the description above is focused on the 1993 election only. It is often noted in the literature that the first Duma elections were marked by exceptional circumstances, such as their abrupt timing, unstable political context, unprepared political forces, etc. (Lentini 1995; White, Rose and McAllister 1997). Does that mean that this picture of spatial volatility and variability was also exceptional? Or was it a stable feature of the majoritarian tier of Russian elections in the 1990s? An answer to this question is suggested by comparing the indicators of spatial variability for the 1993 election and those of the following two elections (1995 and 1999).

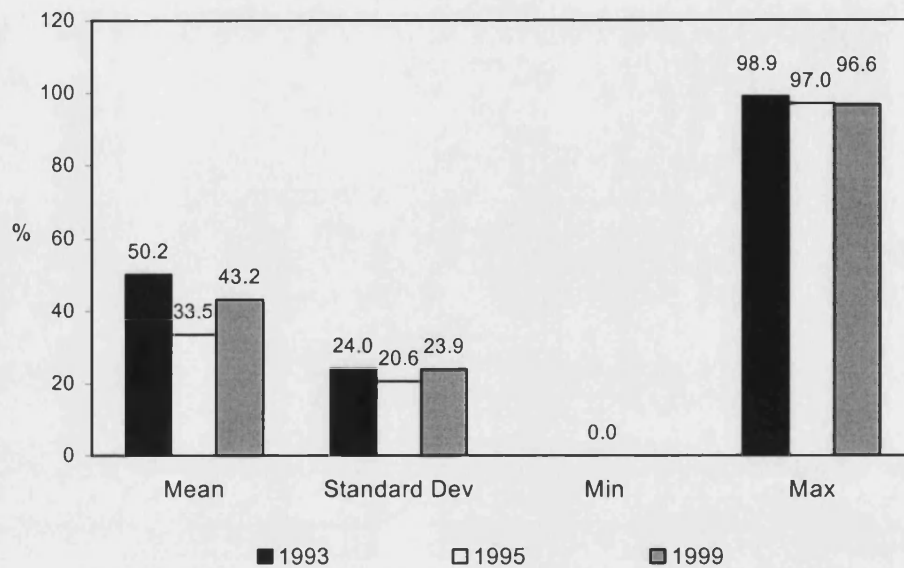
Figure 1.1 reports the number of candidates per SMD. The average number of candidates running in an SMD significantly increased from 1993 to 1995, to decline somewhat in 1999.

Figure 1.1: *Total number of candidates, 1993, 1995 and 1999*

Source: own elaboration of CEC data.

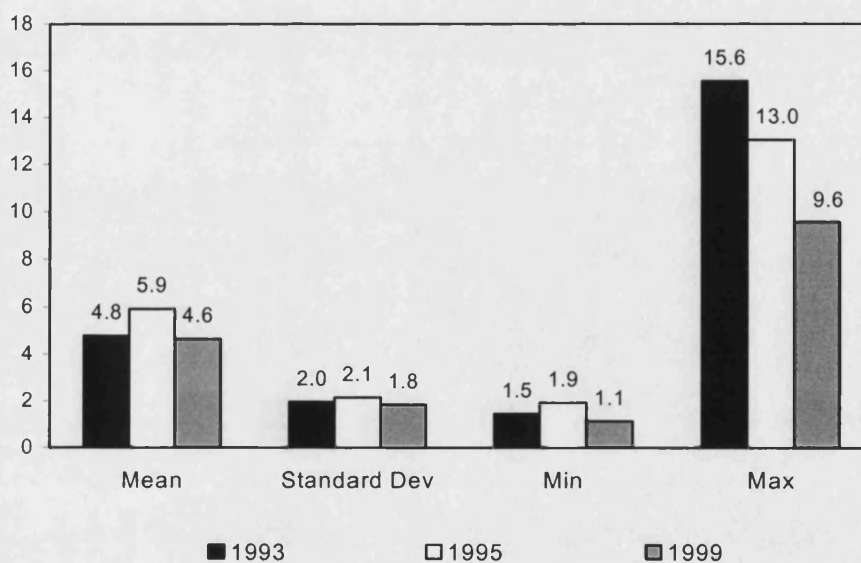
To assess whether the high cross-district variability observed in 1993 was repeated in 1995 and 1999, however, it is necessary to focus on the change in the standard deviation. This is a measure of the average gap existing between the average value and the value recorded in each SMD. This indicator shows that the variability in the number of candidates did not subside in 1995 or 1999 compared to 1993. Thus, if the first Duma elections were more fluid and unstructured due to their exceptional circumstances, this is not reflected in the longitudinal change of this key trait of SMD competition. Not only did the number of candidates increase on average, but its territorial variability also increased, as confirmed by the larger range of the variable (from a minimum of 2 to a maximum of 24 in 1995).

Figure 1.2 deals with the success of the independents, measured as the vote share for all independents running in an SMD. The graph shows that both the average value and the variability around that value decreased from 1993 to 1995, but rose again in 1999. Indeed, independent candidates were less successful in 1995 than in the other two elections, while the territorial spread of their electoral support was more homogeneous in 1995.

Figure 1.2: *Average independents' success, 1993, 1995 and 1999*

Source: own elaboration of CEC data.

An impression of consolidation is suggested by the fact that the range of the effective number of candidates decreases with time, as shown by Figure 1.3. However, there is no consolidation in terms of spatial (cross-district) variability, as the standard deviation of the indicator remains virtually unchanged.

Figure 1.3: *Effective number of candidates, 1993, 1995 and 1999*

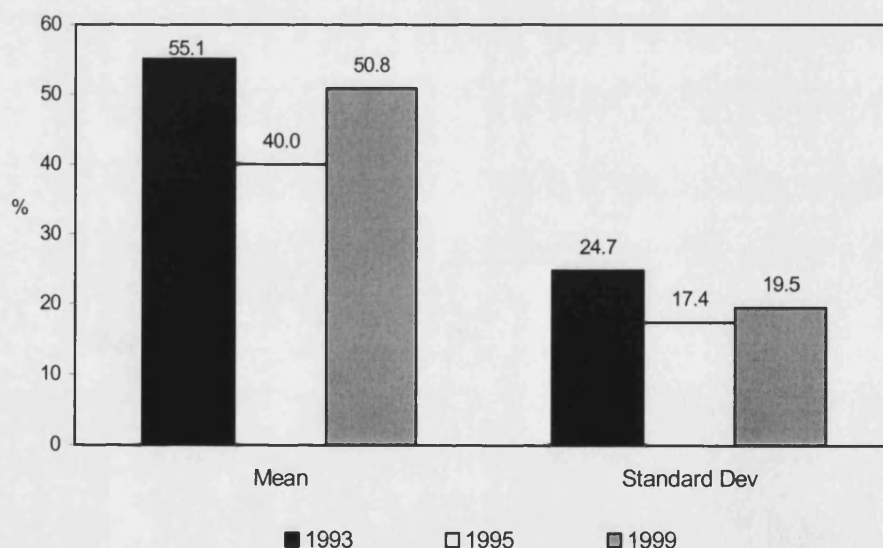
Source: own elaboration of CEC data.

The average number of effective candidates actually increases in 1995 and remained high in 1999. Fragmentation of the vote has remained a stable feature of Russian voting behaviour in the SMD races of the 1990's.

An indication of a gradual national homogenisation in electoral competition is provided by Figure 1.4, on the "visibility" of the independents (i.e. the proportion of SMD candidates running without party affiliation). While the share of candidates running as independents in the typical SMD goes down in 1995 and then up again in 1999, following the pattern of their success (Figure 1.2), the territorial variability of this indicator does decrease rather markedly from 1993 in both 1995 and 1999. This seems consistent with expectations expressed in the literature on the nationalisation of politics through territorial penetration by parties (Rokkan 1970; Duverger 1959 [1951]).

Not only are less independents running on average (i.e., there are more party candidates), but the territorial variability in their visibility is reduced. The average becomes more representative of central tendency.

Figure 1.4: *Percentage of SMD candidates running as independents, 1993, 1995 and 1999*

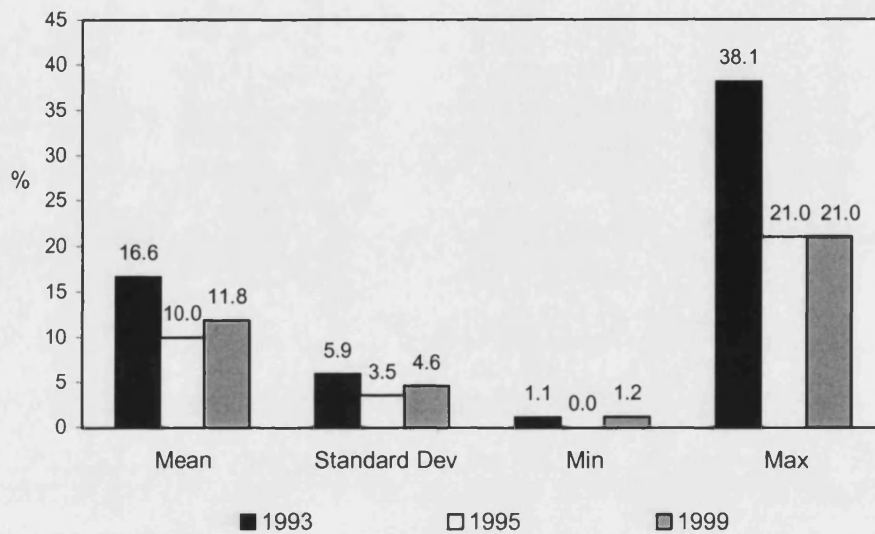


Source: own elaboration of CEC data.

Further indication of the stabilisation of electoral competition over time is provided by the changes in the vote cast "against all" candidates in the SMDs, shown in Figure 1.5. The fact that cross district variability (standard deviation) of this indicator

decreased between 1993 and 1995 (but rose again in 1999), is compounded by the parallel observation that the top value registered dropped from almost 40 to 21 percent.

Figure 1.5: *Average vote share "against all", 1993, 1995 and 1999*

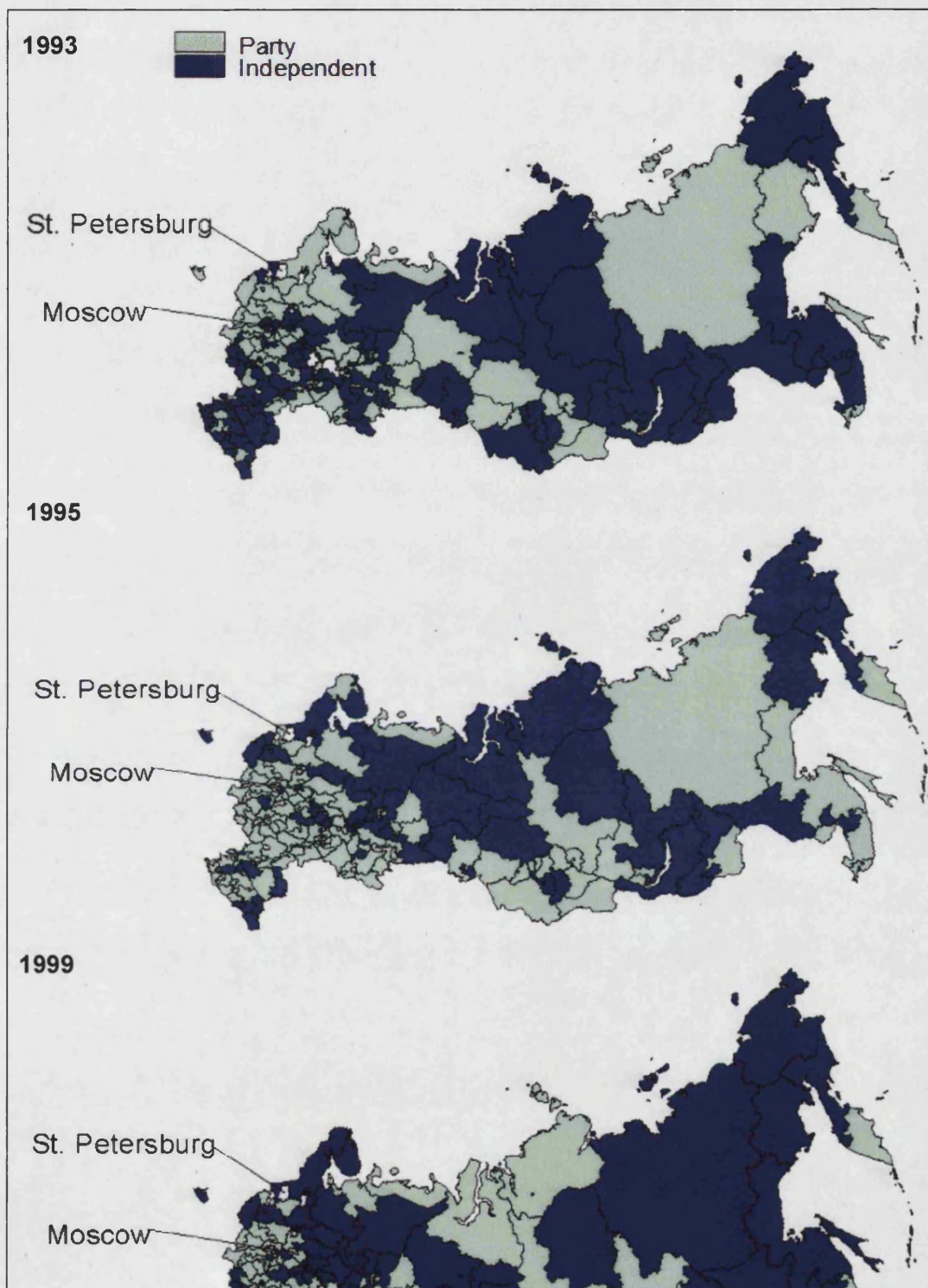


Source: own elaboration of CEC data.

The descriptions provided by Figures 1.2-1.5 suggest that the high territorial volatility of competition in SMDs, masked under national averages, is not a feature of the "exceptional" 1993 elections only. Rather, it remains a prominent feature of the two subsequent waves of SMD races as well. However, this can only suggest tentative interpretations in terms of trends and temporal patterns, as a much longer time span

green, were won by party candidates. This means that the maps show "electoral success" measured as victory of the district seat. This is different from the measure of success discussed so far, and summarised in Table 1.2 and in Figure 1.2, which is the total vote share received by all the independents in an SMD, regardless of who won the district seat. The latter measurement will be used in the statistical analysis. A full discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of different measures of electoral success is provided in Chapter 5 of this thesis. The maps, by focusing on the district winner, provide a clear dichotomous picture of the territorial distribution of the proliferation of independent candidates.

A survey of spatial patterns can conveniently begin by exploring the distribution of independents' success among the constituent units of the Federation. The Russian Federation is made up of 89 such "constituent units". When referred to collectively, all units are called "regions" in this thesis. The 89 regions vary dramatically in terms of territorial size, population size, population density, and economic and geographic outlook. Moreover, regions differ in "federal status". Differences in federal status denote different degrees of autonomy within the Russian Federation and are associated with different ethnic make-ups.

Map 1.1: *District winners, 1993, 1995 and 1999*

As summarised in Table 1.3, twenty-one regions are recognised as *republics*, ten are *autonomous okrugs* ("districts") and one is an *autonomous oblast* ("regions"). These units possess relatively larger shares of non-Russian ethnic groups. The 1993 constitution granted special rights of cultural and linguistic autonomy to all of them, while the republics also enjoy political rights, such as having their own republican constitutions.²² The remaining 57 regions (*oblasts*, *krais* -territories-, and the two *federal cities* of Moscow and St. Petersburg) are non-autonomous and overwhelmingly Russian in ethnic composition.

Table 1.3: *Regions' federal status*

Category of Federal Status	Number of regions
Republics	21
Autonomous Okrugs	10
Jewish Aut Okrugs	1
City of Federal Status	2 (Moscow and St. Petersburg)
Oblasts	49
Krais	6

A close look at Map 1.1 shows that some districts consistently returned independent winners in all three elections, while others consistently returned party winners. In terms of federal units, there are 12 regions where Duma seats were *always and exclusively* won by independent candidates (Table 1.4). Among these regions, republics and autonomous okrugs are relatively more represented than non-autonomous units (*oblasts*, *krais*). Indeed, one fifth of all republics and one third of all autonomous okrugs, appear in this list of regions, while less than one tenth of the Russian oblasts and krais do (Table 1.4).

At first glance, it appears that these regions are located in remote and sparsely populated areas, some in the extreme outreaches of Russia, or in areas of ethno-national concentration. It is interesting to contrast this pattern to the one revealed by the set of regions that consistently returned party winners in all three elections (Table 1.5). It is apparent that these nine regions include mainly non-autonomous units (*oblasts*).

²² In fact, the distribution of autonomy rights and fiscal privileges, even among republics, is rather uneven. This is mainly a product of bilateral agreements signed by Yeltsin with individual republics in 1994-95, and is a feature of Russian "asymmetric federalism", discussed in greater detail in chapters 4, 6-8.

Table 1.4: *Regions with independent winners in all of their SMDs, in all three elections*

Region	Location
4 Republics	
1. Daghestan	North Caucasus
2. Udmurt	Urals
3. Ingushetiya	North Caucasus
4. Komi	North
4 Oblasts	
1. Amur	Far East
2. Kurgan	Urals
3. Magadan	Far East
4. Tyumen	West Siberia
4 Autonomous okrugs	
1. Aga-Buryat	East Siberia
2. Koryak	Far East
3. Chukotka	Far East
4. Evenk	East Siberia

Source: own elaboration of CEC data.

Table 1.5: *Regions with party winners in all their SMDs, in all three elections*

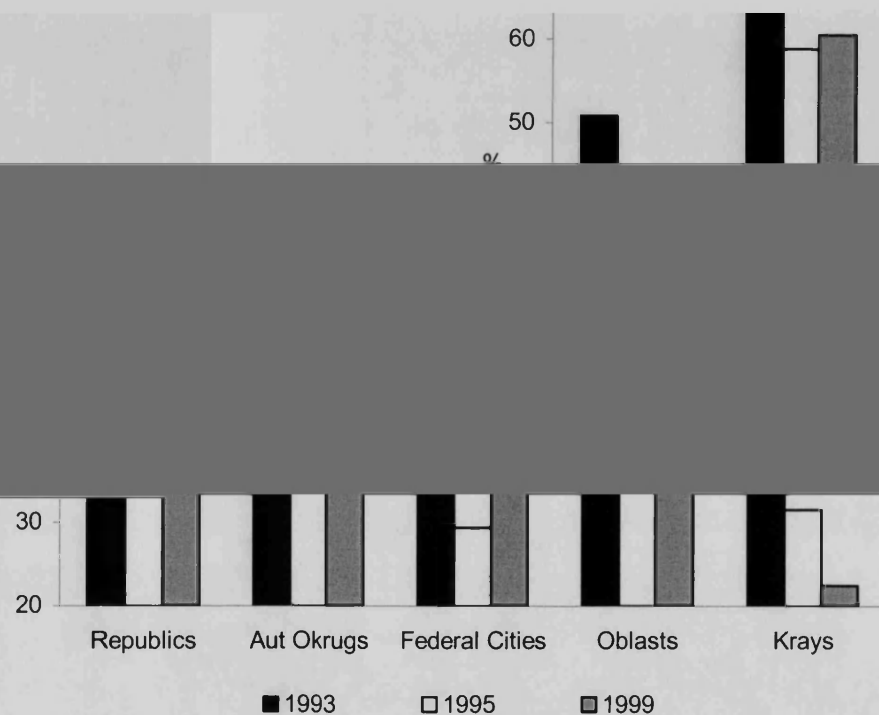
Region	Location
7 oblasts	
1. Bryansk	Central
2. Smolenks	Central
3. Tambov	Central Black Earth
4. Tver	Central
5. Kaluga	Central
6. Penza	Volga
7. Saratov	Volga
1 autonomous okrug	
Nenets	West Siberia
1 republic	
Adygeya	North Caucasus

Source: own elaboration of CEC data.

These considerations impressionistically point to the possible impact of federal status on independents' success. It is therefore useful to directly compare levels of success across categories of federal status, and across elections, to explore more closely the

possibility of a relationship between the two variables. Success is again measured as the joint vote share for the independents running in an SMD. The comparison is presented in Figure 1.6, where each bar of the figure represents the average electoral success of the independents in the SMDs belonging to the regions with a given federal status, in a given election. It emerges that, of the units endowed with autonomous status, it is really the autonomous okrugs, more than the republics, which provide fertile ground for the proliferation of independents. The oblasts, by contrast, tend to discourage this phenomenon. However, this pattern is less evident in 1999, when the independents saw increased success in the oblasts. Moreover, autonomous okrugs are related to independents' success particularly in 1995, while in oblasts and krays these candidates fare particularly poorly in that year.

Figure 1.6: *Independents' success by federal status and year*



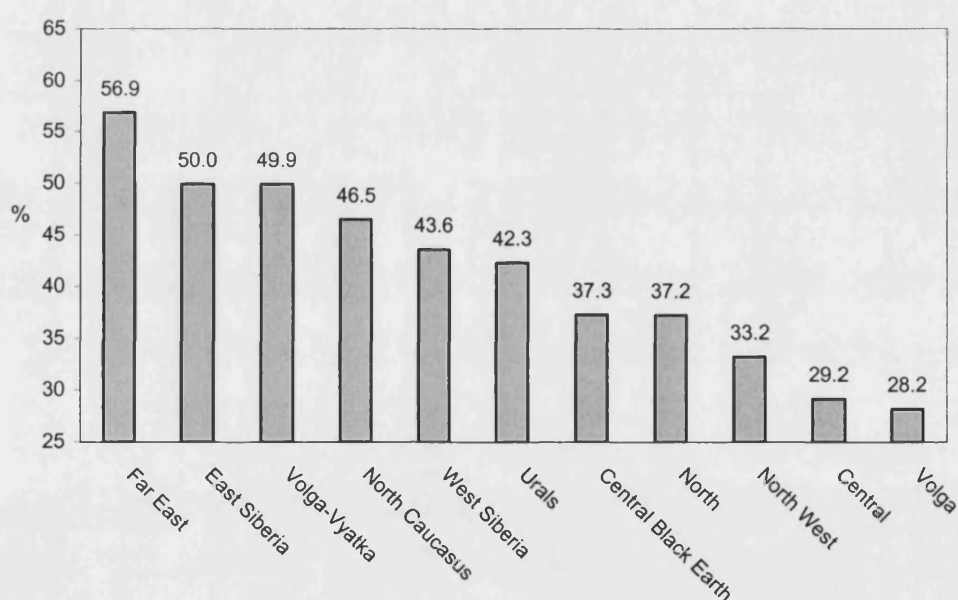
Source: own elaboration of CEC data.

Therefore, the picture of the relationship between region's federal status and independents' success that emerges from these comparisons seems more complex than

the federation, called "economic regions". The subdivision of Russia into eleven such "economic regions" dates back to Soviet times, when it was used for planning purposes. It is preferable to the more recent division into seven macrodistricts implemented by Putin, as the former is more sensitive to the economic and geographic clustering naturally existing among regions. The location of a federal unit in economic regions speaks of its distance from Moscow, its peripheral status, and its possible inclusion in areas of historical autonomism (such as North Caucasus and the Urals, or West Siberia).²³

Figure 1.7 shows some stark differences in average independents' success across economic regions. Considering all three elections in the aggregate, the areas of spatial concentration of independents' success are the Far East, East Siberia, the North Caucasus and Volga-Vyatka.

Figure 1.7: *Independents' success by economic region.*
Averages across the three elections



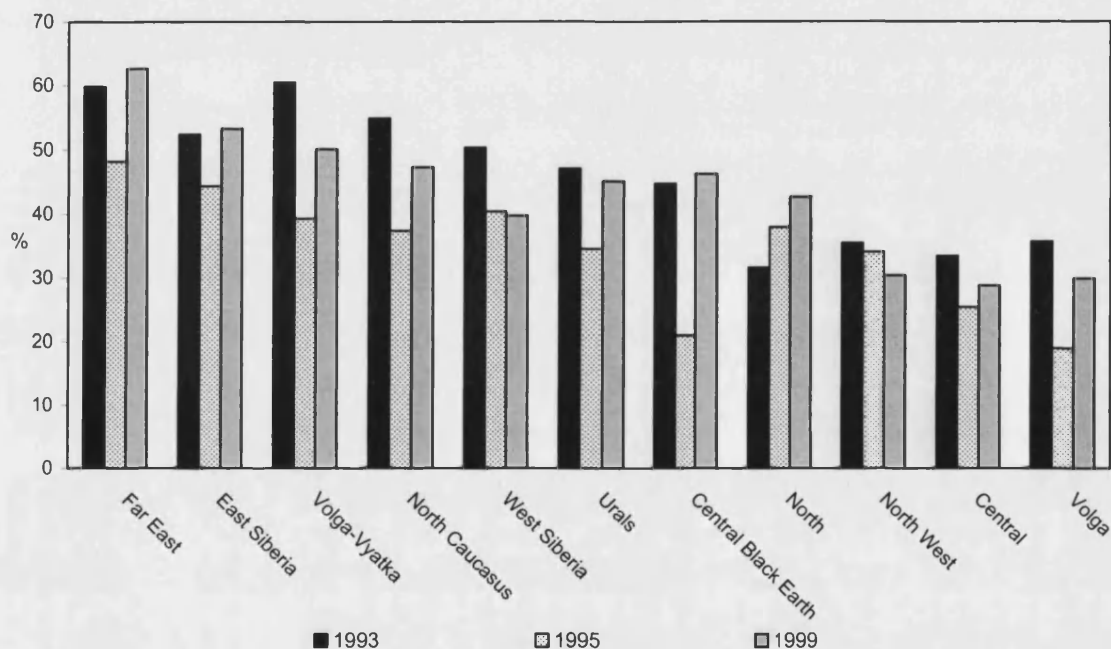
Source: own elaboration of CEC data.

Breaking down these trends by year of election, however, allows for a more precise picture. This is done in Figure 1.8, which reveals that, for example, the Volga-Vyatka region was the most conducive to independents' proliferation in 1993, but not in 1995.

²³ See Table A.1.1 in the Appendix for a list of Russian units belonging to each economic region.

Similarly, as far as the North Caucasus is concerned, it is only in 1993 and 1999 that independents win disproportionately (compared to national average success). In the Central Black Earth region, 1995 constitutes a particularly negative year for independents (reflecting the strength of the KPRF in the SMDs that year). It is in sum the Far East, and more moderately East Siberia, that, in all three elections, show a marked improvement of independents' chances well over the national average. These are the most distant areas from Moscow.

Figure 1.8: *Independents' success by economic region and year*



Source: own elaboration of CEC data.

These comparisons aim at showing the wide spatial variability of the phenomenon under study. This emerges whether the region or the wider economic region is taken as the spatial reference unit. Clearly, however, these comparisons cannot provide a systematic account of the causal factors at play. The patterns of proliferation of independent candidates described above appear kaleidoscopic and provide little ground for inferring (even impressionistically) a causal mechanism. The description resembles the cartographic approach typical of the first studies of electoral geography, pioneered by André Siegfried in 1913, when maps were juxtaposed to one another in the search for associations in the distribution of dependent and independent variables (Taylor and

Johnston 1979: 24). A crucial improvement of modern statistical analysis over this approach is that it makes it possible to test for explanatory hypotheses derived from the literature *while controlling for a number of other relevant factors*. This allows the analyst to posit a complex explanatory framework.

1.3 Research design

This thesis adopts a large- n , statistical approach based on multiple regression. A detailed discussion of the analysis design can be found in chapter 5. At this point, it is worth outlining the basic features of the present research design. The basic unit of spatial aggregation of electoral results is the Single-Member District (SMD), thus the 225 districts constitute the number of cases. Because SMDs are grouped within regions, and regional effects are deemed to be important in explaining independents' success (this is discussed in detail in chapter 3), the correct tool for quantitative analysis is multilevel modelling. This technique takes into account the nested nature of the data (i.e., SMDs are nested within regions) and avoids the problems of estimation that conventional, one-level, OLS (ordinary least square) regression would produce given the data structure (see chapter 5 for details).

It should be noted that the quantitatively inclined student of Russia is often confronted with problems of data availability and reliability. Official statistics on many important economic and social indicators are not available, are incomplete or are aggregated at higher levels than needed. In some cases regional authorities have their own statistical services, but adding together regional estimates will almost certainly impair consistency of measurement across the territory. These considerations seem to point to the advantages of the single-case study design, in which one or two regions are studied "in depth" through extensive fieldwork research. The objective here is not to review in detail the merits and problems of case study vs. large- n designs. However, a number of considerations are worth noticing that have tilted the balance in favour of the large- n statistical approach for this research. Most importantly, one task of this thesis is to link the scholarly understanding of Russian regional-level politics to federal-level

elections; in particular, to independents' success at the federal level. In order to uncover patterns and regularities, this should be done systematically across the whole territory.

In fact, in the absence of systematic accounts of cross-regional variation in the proliferation of independent candidates, there appears to be little theoretical ground to select a small subset of regions for a deep case study. Thus, the relationship between case study and large-*n* designs need not be considered to be mutually exclusive. Existing case studies of SMD elections in single regions provide valuable descriptive material and conjectures that can (and do) inform the explanatory framework of the present statistical analysis (see chapter 3). In this sense, the present approach can be seen to complement the small-*n* approach. The value of the large-*n* approach consists in being able to derive estimates of the effect of some indicators upon independents' success, while case studies can only suggest these effects. Case studies can also aptly follow the large-*n* investigation. Once the latter has highlighted significant relationships, a case study can focus on an outlier case that does not conform to the expected pattern. While such a case study could not constitute a valid test of the relationship (King, Keohane and Verba 1994: 209-212), it could point to previously omitted variables.

Among large-*n*, quantitative, studies of voting behaviour this research is atypical. Since the 1950s, most researchers have relied on opinion surveys of a sample of voters representative of the whole national electorate. Several important studies of Russian elections have followed this approach (e.g., White, Rose and McAllister 1997; Colton 2000; Munro and Rose 2002), and some of their conclusions are noted in the review of the literature in chapter 2. This is a highly useful method, especially in order to investigate the impact of individual characteristics – such as education, exposure to media, interest in politics, income, religious affiliation, ethnic group membership, etc., – on voting choice. A limitation of this approach, however, lies in the difficulty (or virtual impossibility) of obtaining large enough samples for each region (Linz 1969). Hofferbert has stressed this problem with regard to the US (1972: 22-23, quoted in Erikson et al. 1994: 7):

"To make equally accurate estimates about the residents of all fifty states, one would have to interview fifty times as many people as are included in the national sample. Neither the resources, nor the motivation to do a sample survey of 75,000 people has yet risen to the task".

This type of geographically comprehensive opinion survey is certainly not available, and indeed would be very difficult to conceive of, for such a huge country as Russia.²⁴ Thus, rather than focusing on individual voting behaviour, this thesis takes the district aggregate of such behaviour as the unit of analysis. Indeed, even if suitable individual-level surveys of opinion were available, some interesting questions on voting behaviour are not best asked at the individual level (Erikson, Mackuen and Stimson 2002: 10). In this thesis, the questions asked are about the cross-district and cross-regional variability of the outcome. As a consequence, the impact of individual characteristics within SMDs is less interesting than variables aggregated or measured at the level of SMD or higher (King 1991: 17-18). This strategy also has the advantage of considering all 225 SMDs and all 89 regions of the Russian Federation.

Naturally, this macro design prevents the findings that it generates from being applied to individual voters, as cross-level inference would lead to the problem of ecological fallacy (Robinson 1950, Alker 1969). However, the macro approach (i.e., using aggregate data) of this thesis does not preclude the examination of SMD traits based on the aggregation of lower level variables. For example, information pertaining to the candidate level, such as candidate's occupational status, incumbency or the support received from financial-industrial groups and/or from the regional governor, can be aggregated at the SMD level by considering the proportion of candidates of a given kind running in the district.²⁵

Conclusion and plan of the thesis

This introductory chapter has covered a number of tasks. Firstly, it has presented the research task at hand – namely, the explanation of sub-national variations in the success of independent candidates. In the light of conventional accounts of party weakness, which apply at the national level, these sub-national variations constitute an "intellectual

²⁴ Another way in which the phenomenon at hand could be studied is by asking candidates about their decisions to stand as party or independent candidates. Regina Smyth (1998), for example, studied the nature of the mass-party link emerging in early post-Soviet Russia with a survey of candidates. While this method has the benefit of depth of analysis, practical limitations similar to those encountered by voter opinion surveys make it difficult to obtain a representative picture of candidates' choices showing regional variations, let alone SMD variations.

conundrum". Secondly, this chapter has argued that the subject of the thesis deserves attention because the under-institutionalisation of political parties, of which independents' proliferation is an aspect, has important negative consequences for democratic consolidation and federal stability.

After situating the Russian case through a brief comparison with other transitional settings with poorly institutionalised party systems, the attention moved to the description of the diachronic and, especially, of the sub-national variability in independents' success in the Russian case. Spatial variability was considered at several levels of aggregation (SMDs, regions, economic regions, etc.). Aggregation by federal status was seen to suggest the potential importance of levels of autonomy and ethnic composition as explanatory factors. The acknowledgement that this "cartographic" descriptive approach could not, however, provide firm leads into the casual mechanisms behind what appeared to be a kaleidoscopic variability led to the presentation of the main features of the research strategy that this thesis adopts in order to explain such variability. It is a large-*n*, statistical investigation that takes the district vote share for the independents as the unit of analysis. The advantages of this kind of aggregate, macro approach have been highlighted through comparisons with taking the individual voter as the unit of analysis (with opinion surveys) and with case studies of individual regions. The rationale for its use here can be reduced to the fact that the research question being asked here is of the "macro" type, as well as to the all-Russia scope of the independents' phenomenon.

The remainder of the thesis consists of seven chapters (numbered 2-8) and a conclusion. The first part (chapter 2) contains a review of the existing literature concerned with party underdevelopment in Russia. The vast majority of the most influential studies have confined themselves to the *national* dimension, focusing on the PR tier of the election.

Those who have dealt with the *sub-national* dimension of variability could not consider all areas of the country (Colton and Hough 1998; Moser 1999; Hutcheson 2003); have chosen to look at regional instead of federal elections (Golosov 1997, 1999; Gelman and Golosov 1998) or could not advance solid explanations (Moser 1999; Golosov 2002). Studies that specifically focused on regional factors, such as the use of

²⁵ The operational definition of the independent variables is the subject of chapter 4.

regional administrative resources (e.g. Matsuzato 2000; Hale 1999, 2005), or that are based on the direct observation of Duma campaigns in the SMDs (the case-study chapters in Colton and Hough 1998), are more useful. These contributions can suggest hypotheses for addressing the present research question.

Following from the discussion of the existing literature, chapter 3 sets out to improve current explanations by devising an original explanatory framework, which is subsequently empirically tested in chapters 6-8. The main explanatory hypothesis is based on the linkage between the electoral process and the wider process of federal bargaining that was unfolding in Russia in the 1990s. In dealing with the centre, regions advocated different ideal types of federalism (from very decentralised to highly centralised). The greater the autonomy demands of the regions, the lower the popularity of *national* political parties based in Moscow. Given the virtual absence of *regionalist* parties, which are discouraged by electoral rules, the independents were left in a privileged position to articulate and represent the territorial cleavage created by the federalisation process. Therefore, the main hypothesis of the thesis is that the greater the anti-centralist assertiveness of a region, the greater the advantage of independent candidates over political parties. Parallel to this relationship, one has to take into account Moscow's response to regional demands, which often managed to appease and defuse anti-centralist sentiments. Other explanatory factors presented in chapter 3 include the partisan use of regional administrative resources and financial backing for the 1999 vote; the inhospitable geographic conditions of some regions; and the strategic posture of key actors of SMD races -political parties and notable candidates.

Bridging the hypotheses to actual empirical testing, the following two chapters present the operational definitions of the variables (chapter 4) and discuss the methodology to investigate expected relationships (chapter 5). Given the posited explanatory framework, a crucial task is to find a quantitative indicator of regionalist assertiveness. This is located in an index elaborated by Kathleen Dowley (1998). The operationalisation of other variables is more straightforward. As for the design of the empirical analysis presented in chapter 5, the most important aspect is the presentation of the general characteristics of multilevel models, which are necessary to take into account the properties of the hierarchical data structure (SMDs nested within regions).

Finally, the empirical models testing the hypotheses of the explanatory framework are presented in three chapters, one for each Duma election (chapters 6, 7, and 8). The first two elections, held in 1993 and 1995, conform closely to the expectations of chapter 3. In particular, controlling for instances of central appeasement, regionalist assertiveness is confirmed to be a significant factor of independents' success. Although the 1999 election exhibits a different dynamic, it can still be understood within the explanatory framework of the thesis. In 1999 a number of leaders of assertive regions, with a view to increasing their influence on federal politics and in preparation for the key electoral prize of the presidency (which would be at stake the following year), managed for the first time to form an interregional political party. This development meant that regionalist feelings could be, to a large extent, channelled through the new party, instead of sustaining independents' success.

The concluding chapter summarises the main steps taken by the research and the main results of the analysis. More importantly, it explores the implications of the findings for the scholarly understanding of Russian electoral politics and for broader debates in comparative politics, with a view to suggesting qualifications to some prevailing assumptions in the field.

As mentioned, the task of next chapter is to review the existing literature in search for explanations for the intellectual conundrum presented above: why have independent candidates been more successful in some areas (districts, regions) than in others, given that most explanations of party weakness apply at the national level?

Russian Party Underdevelopment: The Existing Literature

"Party rivalry distorts the national will. The principle of party-mindedness necessarily involves the suppression of individuality, and every party reduces and coarsens the personal element. An individual will have views, while a party offers an ideology"

Alexander Solzhenitsyn²⁶

This chapter is devoted to reviewing the existing literature on Russian party politics in the search for explanations to the empirical problem outlined in the Introduction. It will emerge that, despite its theoretical importance for democratic consolidation and federal stability, the phenomenon of the independents has received relatively little attention compared to other concerns of Russian electoral and party politics.

The literature related to Russian party politics over the last ten to fifteen years has approached it from many different aspects. Key works have been published on the legislative behaviour of party groups in the Duma, and the institutional rules governing that body (Remington and Smith 2001, Ostrow 2000), on the overall role of the Duma vis-à-vis the presidency (Chaisty and Gleisner 2000; Chaisty and Schleiter 2002; Morgan-Jones and Schleiter 2004), on party organisation (Fish 1995a; Gelman 1998; March 2002, Ishiyama 1998, 1999, 1999b, 2000, Hutcheson 2003), and on the link between party formation and the peculiarities of the Russian transition (McFaul 1993, Golosov 1995). Naturally, studies of individual elections and electoral cycles have also flourished, considered in the aspects of voting behaviour, campaign strategies, electoral

geography, etc.²⁷ Within this burgeoning literature, studies impinging on the issue of the independents are of three types:

- 1) Works on the underdevelopment of political parties in Russia. These constitute the overwhelming majority of the relevant contributions. They may or may not include a specific reference to the proliferation of independents, but they are relevant to the present inquiry in so far as party weakness contributes to the proliferation of non-party candidates. If these studies make express reference to the independents, it tends to be incidental to their broader aims; the success of independents is seen only as a consequence of party underdevelopment. The scope of these analyses is usually Russia as a whole (examples include Fish 1995a, McFaul 1993, Urban and Gelman 1997).
- 2) Studies that stress the regional, sub-national, dimension of party development (e.g. Golosov 1999), or regional factors of voting behaviour (for example, Hale 1999, Matsuzato 2000). Unfortunately, the numerous contributions on Russian electoral geography (most importantly, Clem and Craumer 1996, 2000a, 2002) only focus on the proportional tier of the electoral process.
- 3) Studies directly concerned with independents. These are mostly focused on the effect of personal resources (e.g. occupational status), as opposed to party nomination, on candidates' success (for example Golosov 2002). The only study touching upon the causes of political elite's weak attachment to parties is an article by Robert Moser (1999) on the effect of a candidate's occupational status and of urbanisation on his/her decision to run as an independent or as a party candidate. However, Moser's study does not take into account variables related to the regional political context and, as discussed below, deliberately excludes important cases (i.e. all autonomous units) from the analysis.

In the first type of literature, explanations of party underdevelopment have clustered around a) cultural, b) institutional or c) socio-structural variables that apply to the nation

²⁶ Solzhenitsyn (1991: 70), quoted in Sakwa (1993: 10).

²⁷ Key authors, whose work is discussed below, include Hosking, Aves and Duncan (1992), Dallin (1993), Lentini (1995), Sakwa (1993, 1995, 1995a), Fish (1995, 1995a), Urban and Gelman (1997), Slider (1996, 2001); Belin and Orttung (1997), White, Rose and McAllister (1997), Rose (2000), Munro and Rose (2002), Colton and Hough (1998), Colton (2000), Golosov (1999, 2000, 2001), Gelman and Golosov

as a whole. Each of these three perspectives is reviewed in section 2.1 below. Taken together, they account for the general weakness of Russian parties, and therefore they provide the background knowledge needed to understand the proliferation of the independents. However, because they focus on countrywide effects, they cannot explain cross-regional variations in the phenomenon under study.

The second type of literature provides some hypotheses on regional factors of party development and can, therefore, shed some light on the cross-regional variation in the proliferation of independent candidates. Finally, the third approach takes a more direct interest in the independents, but not necessarily in the cross-regional variation in their success. The closest such studies get to the spatial perspective is when they consider such space-related variables as levels of urbanisation (Moser 1999, for the 1993 and

mselves to the
estion of *what*
referred over

present purposes. Unfortunately, however, these studies have confined the analysis of the proportional side of the vote only; thus asking only the question of *what* party is preferred by whom, and not *whether* parties as such are preferred over

that of the first type highlighted above – i.e. that literature concerned with the underdevelopment of political parties in Russia.

The third section is then devoted to the literature focused on sub-national trends in party politics (regional elections, regional variations in federal elections, federal races in single-member districts). This body of literature is the closest to the concerns of this thesis and, for that reason alone, provides a useful starting point. More than that, however, the exposure of its deficiencies identifies the gap that this research aims to fill and thereby locates this study within the scholarly debate.

2.1 Early investigations: from description to explanation (1988-1993)

The first wave of scholarly publications on Russian parties traced the origins of the emergence of multiple parties; in the comparative literature, such origins are believed to carry long-lasting consequences for the further development of parties (Panebianco 1988). This phase includes several steps. The first was the proliferation of social, informal movements spurred by Gorbachev's liberalisation of 1988. This was followed by the formation of independent political groups in parallel to the officially sponsored Popular Fronts. Finally, political parties other than the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU)²⁹ were legalised in 1990. The literature on this phase produces a picture of highly fragmented, fluid and precarious formations (Hough 1997; Hosking, Aves and Duncan 1992; McFaul 1993; Urban and Gelman 1997). Some of the patterns of late Soviet social mobilisation became stable. These include a popular distrust of organised, disciplined parties (McFaul 1993: 18), the related rejection by party founders of rigid organisations and hierarchies, and the difficulty in establishing social roots and links with specific social constituencies (Fish 1995, 1995a).

At a time when the popular Fronts were still the dominant form of popular mobilisation (Sakwa 1996: 78), Democratic Union (founded 1988) was the first group to call itself a "political party", long before this would be legal. It represented the typical umbrella organisation observed in other post-communist transitions: highly informal in

²⁹ CPSU stands for Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

structure, made up of heterogeneous forces with fluid and overlapping memberships (Lewis 1996, 2000).

An early encounter with semi-competitive elections came with the 1989 selection of the USSR Congress of People's Deputies, and the 1990 votes at the level of Soviet Republics and lower levels. Most authors agree that the democratic potential of these elections, which formally introduced the possibility of non-CPSU nominations, was seriously limited by several factors. Most importantly, limitations derived from the persistence of a legal ban on political parties other than the CPSU, and from the *de facto* power of the "CPSU and other reactionary forces to manipulate or obstruct meetings' proceedings" (Lentini 1995: 44) where common citizens were to present their candidates. Better chances for independents' nomination materialised in the 1990 elections than the 1989 ones, though, with the average number of candidates per district passing from 1.9 to 6.3 (Hough 1998: 43).³⁰ On both occasions, political parties other than the CPSU could not legally support candidates.³¹ Therefore, those who were not supported by the CPSU³² were known as "independents" (Smyth 1998: 180). Indeed, in 1990 the label 'independent' designated candidates opposing the de-legitimised and unpopular CPSU establishment. It seems reasonable to assume that the positive connotation to this label which persisted in later Russian electoral discourse may have originated at this stage. The most effective of the 1990 electoral associations supporting the "independents" was Democratic Russia, an umbrella organisation whose affiliated MPs won 40 percent of the seats in the Russian Congress. The party was able to reach a relatively solid organisational presence (counting 3-400.000 members at its founding in October 1990) and an unprecedented territorial penetration. It supported Yeltsin's election to the chairmanship of the Russian Supreme Soviet, and later his June 1991 electoral bid for the Russian presidency, while managing to mobilise masses of demonstrators against the 1991 August putsch. However, in the absence of

³⁰ In her study of party activity in the Astrakhan, Samara and Chelyabinsk Oblasts, Ruth Brown has noted the effect of a smaller size for SMDs in the 1990 elections: "the smaller and more numerous constituencies in the local elections gave members of the new political groups more opportunity to compete than in 1989" (Brown 1998: 11-2).

³¹ While the historic constitutional amendment of Article 6 of the constitution put an end to the power monopoly of the CPSU in March 1990, the new Law on Public Associations which disciplined party activities would come into effect only on January 1st 1991, thus testifying to the Soviet authorities' tactic of liberalising on paper, while reducing the practical impact of reforms (Lentini 1995: 50).

³² The CPSU "supported" but did not directly nominate candidates in 1990, nor in 1989 (Hough 1998: 43).

parliamentary elections after 1990, Democratic Russia disintegrated.³³ Urban and Gelman have noted how the democratic forces of this phase represented the greatest victims of the transition to democracy, showing the largest share of intra-party divisions and conflict among leaders and between leadership and members (Urban and Gelman 1997: 189).

After 1990, the legalisation of pluripartism (effective from 1991) spurred party formation. But the new forces were atomised groups: Richard Sakwa reported that in May 1993 around 1800 political organisations were registered with the authorities, prompting him to comment that from a mono-party system, Russia had morphed into a system without parties (Sakwa 1996: 80). Indeed, for reasons addressed below, the political organisations of this phase were inward looking, ridden by divisions and debates on their own identity, rather than concerned with the "politics of interests", i.e. the search for electoral support from social interests (Urban and Gelman 1997: 185).

Incipient Russian political parties were highly fluid and weakly institutionalised, had little organisational strength and small memberships, showed little capacity for coalition building and consolidation, and were created "from above"³⁴ by members of bureaucratic factions or by second-order *nomenklatura* personalities for their own access to power (Gudkov and Dubin 2000: 4). They did not aim at representing clearly defined social groups (which themselves lacked collective organisation) and generally did not possess social roots. Some of these traits are still observable in Russian parties to the present day. And one can see in them the reasons why even the three most visible of the early party organisations – the Social democratic Party of Russia (SDPR),³⁵ the Russian Democratic Party (DPR), and the Republican Party of Russia (RPR); all three originated within the CPSU – could not escape extinction. The DPR, led by Nikolai Travkin, in fact showed a more pragmatic and effective approach to internal

³³ Its remnants joined Gaidar's Russia's Choice at the 1993 Duma elections; it then re-emerged as a distinct party at the 1995 Duma elections, only to withdraw before the vote in support of the liberal party Yabloko.

³⁴ The practice of creating parties from above, "parties of power" created by will of executive authority, is not new in Russia. This point was recently stressed on the *Izvestiya* (Leskov 2003: 5), which reported the archival finding, by Irina Glebova, of a letter written in September 1905 by interior minister Dmitri Trepov to Tsar Nicholas II, asking for the creation of a conservative party in the Duma.

³⁵ This party, derived from an informal movement, achieved some organisational presence in towns across the union. It relied on an effective self-financing method, and created an independent trade union (SOTSPROF) and managed to publish a relatively large range of newspapers at national and regional levels (Urban and Gelman 1997).

organisation (Fish 1995a). It was the only party among those that emerged in the last years of the Soviet Union to run as a distinct political party in the 1993 Duma elections and to cross the 5 percent proportional representation barrier. Nonetheless, it did not outlive the 1995 elections.

This period was characterised by the absence of fresh elections and the institutional conflict between the Russian Congress of People's Deputies and the presidency. Lacking the electoral incentives that normally drive their development, "parties" constituted small and fluid factions in the parliament, where their role was increasingly subordinate to the leadership of the speaker Kashbulatov. In this, party weakness both drove and was driven by Congress's conflict with the Presidency. These two institutions came to represent the only two real parties – one allied with the regional Soviets, the other with the presidential administration. The only two organisations belonging to that Parliament that became stable parties, and are still represented in the Duma at present, are Zhirinovskiy's LDPR and the Communists (KPRF); Yabloko (formed to contest the 1993 Duma elections) also gained representation in all three post-communist Duma elections of the 1990s.³⁶

The causes of the initial underdevelopment

As for the causes of the underdevelopment, studies on this stage of Russian politics have pointed to a number of factors, broadly falling into two categories: short-term, contingent factors and long-term, structural factors. To be sure, structural factors also impact upon contingent choices, by limiting the range of possible courses of action for political actors. The latter, however, retain an important degree of purpose and independence, so that their choices cannot be understood as totally endogenous to inherited structures. Indeed, the early failure in party development is explained by a combination of structurally entrenched long-term factors and contingent short-term choices.

Structurally entrenched factors

The structurally entrenched factors that hindered party development in the Russian Federation share a common root in the type of non-democratic regime that preceded the

³⁶ But Yabloko failed to gain any list seat in the 2003 elections.

transition to democracy. They include the peculiarities of the post-Soviet social structure and political culture.

Identity crisis and "flattened" society. The engineered social structure of the Soviet system curbed social differentiation and ensured the systemic allegiance of the (state-dependent) middle classes; defined as the well-educated, white-collar, higher-income part of the population (Zaslavsky 1994; Fish 1995, 1995a). An influential study by Linz and Stepan (1996: 62, Table 4,3) describes the kind of civil society produced by a totalitarian system as "flattened", in the sense that it has few resources for independent organisation and does not show clearly demarcated social groups for parties to represent.³⁷

In the last years of the Soviet Union, informal groups and protoparties had defined their identity in negative terms; namely, by means of their opposition to the CPSU and its political system. With the collapse of the old regime, these organisations abruptly lost their reference point, and found it difficult to redefine themselves in positive terms (Fish 1995a: 81-82; Urban and Gelman 1997: 186). Seventy years of Soviet rule made it particularly difficult for parties to "locate a constituency" (Fish 1995a: 97), and most groups claimed to represent all of society or the "average citizen". The absence of private property and, therefore, of the market, effectively prevented the emergence of what in the West is commonly understood to be the foundations of civil society: the independent self-organisation of society from below (Fish 1995a).

This legacy of the Soviet system is often linked to the absence of traditional social cleavages in Russia which could spur party development. However, if traditional cleavages such as State-Church, ethnic, centre-periphery, management-working class, etc. (Lipset and Rokkan 1967) are weak, new patterns of voting behaviour are emerging. Indeed, socio-demographic traits such as youth and higher levels of education are positively associated with pro-reform voting (and vice versa). This is a general post-communist regularity, which reflects different positions toward change. Those who are

³⁷ Along the lines of the convergence thesis of industrial systems, and contrary to the argument presented here, authors such as Jerry Hough (1977) have argued that the Soviet Union had by the 1970s reached levels of social pluralism and differentiation similar to those of Western advanced economies. This perspective seems misleading as it overlooks basic differences in social organisation. Even when regime modernisation spurred and required the emergence of a highly educated and urbanised white collar stratum, the Soviet regime successfully co-opted these sectors by granting them privileged life standards. As a result, even though social stratification indicators came to resemble western middle-class-dominated

better positioned to take advantage from the opening of the economic system (i.e. the young and the educated) vote differently from those whose age and skills militate against adaptation to the transformation (Kitschelt 1995: 458-59). Moreover, one traditional cleavage that does structure Russian voting behaviour is based on rural-urban differences; these have given rise to what several analysts have called a North-South divide (Hahn 1997: 159-60; Myagkov, Ordeshook and Sobyenin 1997). This North-South pattern is discussed in section 2.3. The fact that some cleavages are in fact emerging, but that political parties nevertheless failed to develop, calls for alternative explanations.

The present study argues that another geographical cleavage also contributed to structure voting behaviour for much of the 1990s and helps explain an aspect of party underdevelopment - independents' success. This is a line of division that runs between individual subsections of the territory and the rest - a territorial cleavage - based on centre-regional relations. This point is developed in chapter 3, where it is placed at the heart of the thesis explanatory framework.

The mentioned lack of independent bases of social organisation meant not only that there were no constituencies ready to hand, but also that no counter-elite could emerge and press for democratisation from below by participating in roundtables and pact-making, as in other Eastern European cases. The early protoparties which campaigned in 1989-1990 often supported the lower echelons of the same *nomenklatura*, rather than of regime outsiders. These candidates had adopted the reformers' ideological banner in a bid for power against the (higher-level) incumbents (Gudkov and Dubin 2000). Ruth Brown notes that "it is a significant indication of the influence of the informals that their endorsement was sought by the members of the *nomenklatura* – even ones as elevated as the First Secretary of the Chelyabinsk *gorkom* (communist party city committee), Vadim Solovev, who was endorsed by the local popular front". Similarly, "the Samara Voter's Union had to reach an agreement with the *gorkom* on backing 'progressive CPSU candidates' in exchange for registration" (Brown 1998: 12). Friedgut and Hahn (1994) stress that *nomenklatura* candidates won most of the seats in the elections prior to the 1994 regional elections. Due to the historic lack of independent professional politicians and the lack of institutionalised parties, elections "served as legitimisation

configurations, in fact all groups always remained state-shaped and state-dependent (Zaslavsky 1995a:

for the status of party officials and party-appointed members of the *nomenklatura*" (Hahn 1994, 8; Hughes 1997). This view is also shared by Helf and Hahn, who note that elections in 1990 reproduced the effect of the Soviet practice of *nomenklatura* recruitment, with the winners representing the members of the local administrative and economic elite. They had the skills of political participation and local recognition that allowed their adaptation to post-Soviet electoral politics (Helf and Hahn 1992).

Gudkov and Dubin (2000) see a continuation of the Soviet mentality in the fact that the general public understand politics to be a matter for the administrative official or the bureaucracy to deal with, on the basis of a supposed expertise in administrative matters (*upravlenie*). This technocratic assumption leaves little room for programmatic or ideological motivations at the polls. Laura Belin and Robert Orttung (1997: 87) also report a similar approach by voters in the 1995 Duma campaign. They make note of the widespread assumption that ideological convictions hindered the ability to solve problems and were incompatible with professionalism. This led to attempts by electoral associations to portray themselves as "non-party" associations ("Transformation of the Fatherland") or supra-party associations (KRO and "Power to the People"). This strategy is especially linked to independents' success in the SMDs. Indeed, "professionalism was a common theme among independent candidates ... A director of a local gas enterprise in Perm, for example, successfully campaigned for a single-member seat as someone who knew how to provide steady work at a good salary" (Belin and Orttung 1997: 88).

The emphasis on professionalism as the key quality of candidates can also help explain the success of "machine politics"; a notion used by Brie for Moscow (Brie 1997), and by Hale for Bashkortostan and other regions (Hale 1999), to indicate the mobilisation of voters from above by regional authorities (Matsuzato 2000: 144-7).³⁸ Arguably, it could also contribute to the fortunes of the technocratic "party of powers" created by the authorities.

Distrust of political parties. Virtually all observers of Russian party politics have mentioned that party development was hindered by the psychological and cultural rejection by Russian citizens of the very idea of "party", due to their previous

266).³⁸ More on this in section 2.3.

experience with compulsory and routinised participation in CPSU activities and in non-competitive elections. This is thought to contribute to the low figures observed for party membership. For example, Miller, White and Heywood (1996) write that "the dominance of 'the party' through 70 years of Soviet experience left voters in the former Soviet Union peculiarly allergic to the idea of committing themselves to any party" (quoted in Miller, Reisinger and Hesli 1998). Similarly, Peter Lentini stresses that "because of its experience under CPSU rule, the Russian electorate harbours negative attitudes towards political parties" (Lentini 1995a: 247).

To this, some observers have added the widespread fear that candidates, and especially list candidates, would be prisoners of party leaders, of Yeltsin's administration or of regional bosses, and wouldn't represent popular interests but, instead, narrow interests – a pattern reminiscent of the "democratic centralism" of Soviet times.³⁹ In Smyth's interpretation, reform leaders feared that "membership rules, dues, hierarchical structures, clearly articulated programmes would decrease their popular support" (Smyth 1998: 182). Along similar lines, Fish (1995a) explains that party distrust led to a lack of organisation and party discipline in most early Russian parties. Interestingly, such fears of the anti-individualist, oppressive aspects of party's internal workings⁴⁰ have been likened to the distrust of parties by the American "founding fathers" (Sakwa 1993: 10, Smyth 1998: 182). However, the latter distrust reflected the mentality of that age, well before the advent of mass politics (Hofstadter 1969).

Similar observations have been made not only about Russia, but also more generally about post-communist transitions. Linz and Stepan have noted the wide currency of anti-political attitudes among post-communist citizens; attitudes which include the reluctance of voters to give their allegiance to *a part*, rather than to *the whole*. This explains the anti-party mentality of many leaders in post-communist transitions (Linz and Stepan 1996: 272-75; Taras 1998: 105) and facilitates the emergence of personalistic or charismatic movements, rather than real parties.⁴¹ In his study of

³⁹ Yurii Buida, "Russkii noyabr: oppozitsionnost vkhodit v modu", *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 2 December 1993, pp.1, 3, reported by Lentini (1995: 248, fn.5).

⁴⁰ As exemplified by the quote from Solzhenitsyn (1991) in the epigraph of this chapter.

⁴¹ Although, admittedly, this attitude is not confined to post-communist polities (Poguntke and Scarrow 1996; Schedler 1997), it has there specific roots and intensity and it is not primarily associated with extreme right positioning as in the West.

political culture in the two Russian communities of Sktyvkar and Kirov, James Alexander also notes that "Soviet rule conditioned people against self-initiated, independent participatory activity" (Alexander 2000: 150), thus reinforcing the Tsarist legacy. In fact, in addition to the cultural/psychological explanation for low levels of popular political participation, Alexander also mentions the impact of material deprivation, in as much as "Maslow's hierarchy of needs predicts that subsistence living leads to a politically inactive population" (Alexander 2000: 151).⁴² The structural legacy of an authoritarian political culture and patterns of patronage has also been suggested to explain the Russian predisposition for patrimonial or clientelistic modalities of mass-party linkages, as opposed to programmatic ones (Kitschelt et al. 1999; Kitschelt and Smyth 2002).

Kosteletzky has also noticed a strong repulsion to the idea of party at the beginning of all Eastern European transitions. Just as it is in Russia, the idea of party was associated in those countries with the past experience of the communist party, which used coercion, did not represent society and lacked legitimacy. New formations chose to avoid labelling themselves "parties", often preferring to call themselves "movements". Only the ex-communists and historic parties used that word. Similarly to the pattern followed by Russian reformers, the idea of party as a tight organisation has also been rejected in Eastern Europe in favour of very open and decentralised structures, which allow for building loose alliances among heterogeneous local forces.

However, despite the similarities, "in Russia internal conflict in organisations has been deeper, more pervasive, and more crippling in its effect than in most other cases of transition polities" (Fish 1995a: 66). In view of this, Fish stresses that the cultural/psychological explanation of party weakness based on anti-party feelings cannot be decisive. In the light of the experience of other advanced post-communist transitions, the question arises as to why, despite a similar initial distrust of parties, party organisation grew substantially in the Czech Republic or Slovakia. A key difference with Russia is that in the most advanced transitions of Eastern Europe (Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic) political practice has demonstrated the advantages of tighter organisational formats.

⁴² For the theory on the hierarchy of needs, see Maslow (1968).

It should also be noted that Eastern European countries are mostly parliamentary, therefore a cohesive majority in the parliament is necessary for government formation and survival. The necessities of electoral campaigning and parliamentary work have gradually brought about a transformation towards more hierarchical internal structures (Kostecky 2002: 154-55).⁴³ Moreover, once they came to dominate parliaments, major parties could define "the rules of the game" to benefit themselves and penalise movements, associations and independents, not only in national but also in local elections.⁴⁴ Thus, however important, the indisputable influence of long-term structural factors on party weakness should not lead one to overlook the role of the state. Indeed, "the character and development of Russia's new autonomous political society has been shaped above all by the structure, nature, and policy of the state, rather than by socio-economic modernisation, political culture and psychology, or the cumulative weight of centuries of Russian historical tradition" (Fish 1995a: 77).

The importance of state institutions with respect to the underdevelopment of parties is discussed below. But before moving on to the role of contingent factors, it should be emphasized that this structural interpretation, which stresses the distinctiveness of the Russian situation, is more convincing than that interpretation which links Russian party weakness to the general crisis of mass parties and traditional cleavages, due to the emergence of post-material values, as currently experienced in advanced democracies (Sakwa 1995: 190). True, nowadays parties are characterised by "light" organisational structures, changing bases of support and high electoral volatility also in the advanced democracies of the West (Wattenberg 1996; Pharr and Putnam 2000; Dalton and Wattenberg 2000). However, it is necessary to distinguish the different degrees to which this applies to the two settings, as well as the trajectories which produced this state of affairs in the two cases. Indeed, it is not post-industrial affluence, the growth of middle classes, the blurring of class boundaries, the emergence of post-material "values" (feminism, environmental concerns, etc.) that are confronting post-communist parties, but rather a weak civil society, embryonic social differentiation into groups and interests,

⁴³ Already at the time of the 1992 elections, five of the six main parties in the Czech Republic possessed real internal structure and organisation. Also in Slovakia, by 1994, the repeated electoral victories of Meciar and his party, made the organised party the dominant format (Kostecky 2002: 155, 157).

⁴⁴ For example, in the Czech Republic the law has gradually increased the number of signatures which is required to support candidates and has extended the territorial size of districts, while a law passed at the start of 2000 only allowed national parties to contest regional elections (Kostecky 2002: 158).

the rejection of the very notion of "party", and mass poverty. It is, in sum, still the bitter legacies of Soviet-type regimes.

The importance of Russia's pre-democratic regime type, with its crippling legacies, is also likely to reduce the validity of comparisons of Russia with other democratic systems in other ages, such as, for example, with the long-term and gradual democratisation process occurred in Great Britain (Hough 1998: 40). The point is not so much that party consolidation takes time, which is generally true, but that in Russia the process is significantly slower than in other post-authoritarian and post-communist countries.

Contingent factors

Contingent explanations of party weakness found in the literature include the modality of the Russian transition process, the strategic choices of the main actors, institutional rules and the timing of elections.

Founding elections? The negative impact on party development of the institutional conflict between the Congress and the presidency between the end of 1991 and the Fall of 1993 has already been mentioned. This conflict hindered the programmatic differentiation of the parties making up the Russian Congress, which sided as a whole against the president. In the same period, in the absence of elections, there was little incentive for party building outside the Congress. Steven Fish has noted that, not only the delay in calling fresh elections after 1991, but also the sequence of partially open contests in 1989 and 1990, negatively affected party development. "The 'opening' of 1989-90 was both too sudden and too partial. It strongly – and negatively – influenced the growth and effectiveness of alternative political parties" (Fish 1995a: 73).

Of general importance is that Russia did not have clear-cut founding elections of the kind typically observed in transitions to democracy (O'Donnell, Schmitter and Whitehead 1986: 44), where they play a major role in stimulating party development and structuring of the vote. 'Founding elections' are defined as the first competitive elections by which key positions of authority are filled, and in the Russian case, no single election qualifies. The effect of founding elections was "spread" over more than one consultation ranging from the 1993 Duma elections – the first competitive elections for the legislative assembly – to the 1996 presidential vote, the first post-Soviet vote for the top position of authority in the country (Gelman 2003).

Institutional design. The negative impact of a presidential form of government, like Russia's, on party development has been noted by many (e.g. Sakwa 1996: 91). In the comparative literature, Juan Linz (1994) has forcefully proposed this line of argument, drawing from Latin American examples. Linz has argued that weak party systems and weak parties are a structural necessity for presidential systems. In the event he cannot count on a sympathetic majority the lack of internal discipline in individual parties allows the president to overcome legislative deadlock through co-optation of parliamentarians and thereby pass his policies through the assembly (Linz 1994: 34-35). In fact, a similar observation was already made by Epstein with regard to the US system (Epstein 1975: 264). As Shugart and Carey remind us, Bagehot also had already stressed the positive effect of parliamentarism on the chances for the emergence of programmatic parties in *The English Constitution* (Shugart and Carey 1992: 8-9):

“Because governments were made and unmade according to the composition of the majority of parliament, a voter's choice of parliamentary candidate was also a choice of executive. Elections thus came to turn on the voters' preferences for government and, by extension, on policy rather than on more purely local concerns (such as 'pork' and patronage). As a result, neither elections nor the legislative process turned on distribution of particularistic goods by means of logrolling across districts. Instead elections offered an 'efficient' choice from among competing policy options, and legislation is the domain of the majority party and its cabinet”.

According to the Russian Constitution of 1993, the President can bypass the Parliament and enact legislation by decree in areas not yet covered by legislation. The president can also veto legislation approved by the parliament and his veto can be overridden only by two thirds of the members of each of the two chambers of the Federal Assembly. Finally, it is the President who appoints the Prime minister and the other ministers. The Duma can reject his nominee but risks being disbanded by the president (with new Duma elections being called) in the event that opposition is repeated in three consecutive votes. To indicate the dominance of the presidency in Russia's form of government, Stephen Holmes (1994) and, more recently, Steven Fish (1997; 2001), have used the term "superpresidentialism". Others, on the other hand, have stressed that the Duma did play a key role in enacting a high number of important pieces of legislation (Remington 2001; Chaisty and Schleiter 2002), and in influencing government composition (Morgan-Jones and Schleiter 2004). These authors tend to

consider the Russian system as "president-parliamentary", following Shugart and Carey's typology (Shugart and Carey 1992).

The standard argument that relates the weakness of Russian political parties to the presidential form of government posits that a weak Duma represents a relatively small prize for parties to win and provides only moderate incentives for party organisation building. Moreover, presidentialism also means that government stability does not directly depend on the presence of a stable majority coalition in the Duma, thus reducing the incentives for the emergence of cohesive and disciplined political parties.

On the other hand, it should be noted that party weakness can also have a negative feedback into the weakness of the Duma itself. Paul Chaisty and Petra Schleiter conclude that in the Yeltsin years "the weakness of parties in structuring the work of the lower house, and in linking the legislative priorities of different branches of government" explained the poor public image of the Duma. This is due to the fact that 1) it prevented "the effective prioritisation" of pressing issues, such as the Chechen war or the August 1998 financial crisis, and 2) it hampered co-ordination with the executive branch of government and induced the latter to legislate by decree (Chaisty and Schleiter 2002: 717).

Yeltsin's attitude. In addition to the impact of institutional design, the personal attitude of Russia's first president, Boris Yeltsin, towards party building also undermined the emergence of stable parties. Although he had been part of Democratic Russia, once he was elected chairman of the Russian Congress in May 1990, Yeltsin soon withdrew membership in, and his commitment to, this umbrella organisation. In keeping with the noted propensity of post-communist leaders elsewhere, he instead cultivated as much as possible the image of a charismatic and paternal leader above parties (White, Rose and McAllister 1997: 169). Exemplary of Yeltsin's charismatic approach was his April 1994 attempt to reach a 'social pact' by pressing for the adoption of his 'Charter of Civic Accord'; an accord drafted with no consultation of parties, and claiming to represent the 'national interest' above party divisions.

Along the same lines, a bridging function between centre and periphery was the preserve, not of a national party, but of federal agencies which had the task to recruit 'promising' regional leaders for promotion to the national level (Huskey 1999: 191, 201). Finally, the institute of Yeltsin 'presidential representatives' in the provinces should also

be mentioned in this respect. Drawing from local cadres, these appointments were to provide the kind of 'eyes and ears' of the centre which, in Soviet times, were provided by Party functionaries and performed essential co-ordinating and feedback tasks. It is possible to see these institutions as administrative substitutes for national political parties. The recruitment function was carried out not by political parties, but through "informal networks" and "direct co-optation" to state posts (Sakwa 1993: 11).

Electoral system. The electoral system figures prominently in the literature on institutional factors affecting party development (classics are Duverger's book of 1951 and Sartori's of 1976). As noted, Russia adopts a mixed system for the State Duma.⁴⁵ Half of the seats (225) are allocated through party list proportional competition (PR) in a single all-Russian electoral district. Party lists must meet a 5 percent threshold at the national level. The composition of the other half of the Duma is decided in 225 single-member districts (SMDs) where a plurality of the vote is required to win the contest, provided that turnout reaches at least 25 percent of the eligible voters. The requirement that parties collect no more than 15 percent (7 percent starting from 1995) of the required 100,000 (200,000 from 1995) signatures from any one region of the federation, makes it very difficult for parties based in one or only a few regions to contest Duma elections.⁴⁶ The importance of this in explaining party underdevelopment, will become clearer in the next chapter, where it is argued that one cleavage Russia did have to articulate was territorial and regionally based.

The way legislative work is carried out by the Upper Chamber of the Russian Parliament, the Federation Council, is also credited with limiting the ability of parties to articulate regional issues. Thomas Remington notes that the Federation Council, while primarily devoted to debating issues pertaining to centre-regional relations, is totally deprived of party factions and groups. In this sense, centre-regions issues are not channelled through political parties also because of the non-partisan principle of organisation of the Federation Council (Remington 1998: 220). In addition to this, one can also assume that parties' ability to channel regional concerns was hampered by the sheer size of the country (Sakwa 1993: 13).

⁴⁵ Within the post-communist camp, mixed systems were also employed, with different degrees of continuity, in Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania (Shvetsova 1999), and Ukraine.

⁴⁶ On the details of party and candidate registration rules, see Remington and Smith (1996); Hough (1998); White and McAllister (1999) and Moser (2001a).

Belin and Orttung note that the local elite found a congenial arena in the SMDs. "Because half of the deputies were elected in single-member districts, the national parties had great difficulty in signing up members of the local elite. Regional notables could easily win election in the districts on the strength of their reputation among local voters and gained nothing from being associated with a party. Many well-known figures even saw party membership as a liability because of the negative connotations attached to the very idea of political parties at that time [1993 elections]" (Belin and Orttung 1997: 21).⁴⁷

If, as expected, the SMD tier leads to parochialism in district races, the expected reductionist effect on the number of parties, typically produced by majoritarian electoral formulas in advanced democracies, did not materialise. In the absence of institutionalised parties, voters lacked the information on the (expected) relative strength of contestants that is assumed to be at the root of strategic voting (Moser 1999a: 364). In fact, the majoritarian tier produced a higher proliferation of under-(institutionalised) parties than the PR tier.

Between the 1993 and the 1995 election the boundaries of several SMDs were also altered and the electoral law was amended to the effect that candidates appearing on the party lists beyond the 12th position had to appear in regional sub-lists. Their electoral chances would then depend on the amount of votes received by the party in the region (or grouping of regions) linked to the party sub-list. This represented a concession to regional elites, who aimed at correcting the tendency of party lists to be filled with Moscow politicians (White and McAllister 1999: 32). One unintended consequence of this change was to encourage party proliferation for the 1995 elections, as candidates who could not be included in the first 12 positions on a party list, tried to form their own lists.⁴⁸

Anti-incumbent sentiment. Belin and Orttung note that candidates standing for re-election often preferred to leave their parties to avoid the general resentment towards

⁴⁷ In fact, in 1993 the SMD ballot did not record the party affiliation of candidates. However, the affiliation of many could be found on the PR ballot, if they occupied the first three positions on party lists (both federal and regional sub-lists). Ninety-six percent of the party candidates running in the districts were also running on PR lists in 1993 (Colton 1998: 21). Moreover, the ballot paper did report some biographical information about the candidate (year of birth, place of residence and occupation). Therefore, when the occupation declared was "party official" or "activist", party affiliation could be revealed (Gould-Davis 1998: 450).

⁴⁸ Twelve is the minimum number of seats that a party crossing the 5 percent threshold can hope to win.

incumbents in times of widespread economic hardship, thus trying to escape accountability. In this sense the typical advantage enjoyed by district incumbent candidates may not be as strong as usually expected, or may benefit independent incumbents more than party incumbents. Consistent with this phenomenon, the campaign banner of the (minor) formation 'Bloc of independents', for example, "urged voters to pick new faces in December [1995] and not to trust anyone who had been elected two years earlier" (Belin and Orttung 1997: 86-87).⁴⁹ The two co-authors argue that anti-incumbent feelings made politicians not just change party, but also run as independents. Especially candidates belonging to NDR and KPRF, "saw advantages to posing as independents in single-member districts" (Belin and Orttung 1997: 87), while "in Nizhnii Novgorod, an NDR candidate was denied registration after she was caught posing as an independent while collecting signatures."⁵⁰

2.2 The unfolding of party politics (1995-1999): pessimists and optimists

The lines of interpretation discussed above emerged quite clearly in the literature dealing with the mobilisation phase of Russian post-communist politics; that is, from 1988 up to the 1993 Duma elections. The 1995 Duma election contained some elements of discontinuity with the preceding one: it was the first election to be regularly scheduled, the first under the new constitution, and the first to be held during ordinary times (as opposed to the institutional crisis that had preceded the 1993 vote). In terms of electoral results, another novelty was represented by the success of the Communists (KPRF). The KPRF dramatically improved its performance, especially in the SMDs, and emerged as the only territorially organised party of Russia, or "the party of the provinces in 1995" (March 2002: 178). This will remain a stable feature in the following election, along with the decline of the LDPR. Finally, the share of independents, both among candidates and among winners in the SMDs decreased from over 60 percent to about 30 percent.

⁴⁹ St. Petersburg television, "Vybory-95", 8 December 1995. Reported in Belin and Orttung (1997: 87).

⁵⁰ *Nizhegorodskii Robochii*, 11 October 1995, p.3. Reported in Belin and Orttung (1997: 87).

However, elements of continuity with 1993 are also evident. In the intervening two years most parties did not dramatically improve their organisation, their membership levels and there were little signs of party system consolidation. On the contrary, new parties proliferated, with the entry on the PR ballot box of a large number of marginal groupings. These forces have been labelled "irrational", due to the fact that they had little hopes of crossing the 5 percent proportional representation barrier (White, Rose and McAllister 1997: 198). Indeed, of the 43 parties registered, only 4 cleared this hurdle. The tendency for "parties of power" to disappoint was also replicated (with NDR and the 'Bloc of Ivan Rybkin', taking the place of Russia's Choice and PRES).

The 1999 elections also did not provide much scope for confidence in the consolidation of Russian parties. On the positive side, three parties (Yabloko, KPRF, and LDPR) confirmed their ability to win representation in all three Duma elections by clearing the 5 percent hurdle. However, the most striking phenomenon of 1999 was the sudden emergence of powerful blocs created from above, by regional governors (OVR, "Fatherland-All Russia") and/or by instigation of the presidential administration and government ministers (Unity). As noted in the introductory chapter, their success testifies to the extreme volatility of Russian party politics, and shows a lack of stable party identification among voters. Gudkov and Dubin explain the success of the pro-Kremlin party Unity with reference to the concept of "negative mobilisation from above". The presidential administration, along with the state media, managed to mobilise citizenry to vote "against an enemy". The enemy in question was represented by the Chechens who allegedly had planted bombs in Moscow apartments and other locations in Russia at the end of the summer preceding the 1999 vote. This campaign portrayed Putin as the necessary energetic and determinate leader who would bring back order (Gudkov and Dubin 2000: 8), and 'Unity' benefited in this environment as the party closest to president Putin.

Munro and Rose have pointed out that in September 1999, i.e. two-three months before the vote, pre-election polls revealed that "47% of the electorate had no inclination toward a party with a chance of winning list seats in the Duma" (Munro and Rose 2002: 123). 'Unity' had not even been formed yet. The two co-authors stress that "in NRB [New Russia Barometer] surveys, political parties are consistently the most distrusted of all institutions in society, and the Duma comes a close second. In the

survey immediately after the Duma election, only 9 per cent expressed trust in political parties, compared to 75 per cent actively distrusting parties, and the remaining sixth neutral" (Munro and Rose 2002: 123). The conclusion is that in Russia a "floating system of parties" is observed, characterised by the appearance and disappearance of parties from one election to the next, where no stable political accountability is possible (Munro and Rose 2002: 8).

On the other hand, it is apparent that, with the partial exception of OVR, the new parties fared much worse in 1999 than older ones in the territorial districts. Indeed, even though 'Unity' came very close to KPRF in the proportional count, its total number of seats was significantly smaller than the communists' because of its very different performance in the SMDs. Unity managed to participate in only 18 percent of the constituency contests. Moreover, the number of majoritarian seats contested is not necessarily correlated with the number of *successful* nominations. As it did in 1995, Zhirinovskiy's bloc made a tremendous organisational effort to be present in nearly all SMDs. Similarly to its 1995 campaign, however, Zhirinovskiy's candidates performed very poorly: in 1999 they could not win any territorial race. As for the independents, in comparison with the previous Duma election, the number of successful non-party candidates rose again, this time to 112 (half of all SMD winners).

The picture that emerges from this account is one dominated by negative conclusions and pessimism about the development of Russian parties and party system. However, there is a pattern traced parallel to this one in the literature, one that has generated more positive findings and more encouraging interpretations. Positive assessments of party development in Russia have tended to rely on opinion surveys, although not all studies using opinion surveys reach optimistic conclusions. One strand in this literature measures party development as the degree to which citizens are "attached to" or "identify with" political parties (Miller, Erb, Reisinger and Hesli 2000; Miller and Klobucar 2000; Pammett and DeBardeleben 2000; Miller, Reisinger and Hesli 1998; Evans and Whitefield 1998; McAllister and White 1998; Wyman, White and Oates 1998; Tóka 1998; Miller, White and Heywood 1996; Wyman, White, Miller and Heywood 1995). Significantly, some authors who figure prominently in this survey literature, such as Arthur Miller, were previously interested in party identification in the USA or in other established western democracies (for example, Miller and Wattenberg

1983). The fluid use to which party identification is put within the context of Russian politics serves as a reminder that concepts that are standard in the analysis of advanced democratic systems can be misleading when imported to post-communist contexts such as Russia.

Matthew Wyman, Stephen White, Bill Miller and Paul Heywood (1995), were among the first observers to use the concept of party identification with reference to voting behaviour in the 1993 Duma elections. They find evidence of an emerging multi-party system that consists of a number of established parties. These parties, according to the authors, are beginning (in 1993) to undertake some of the critical functions necessary to the development of a stable democracy, while levels of party identification have risen quickly. Geoffrey Evans and Stephen Whitefield (1998) also write of party "identification". With regards to cleavages, they too found that, contrary to assumption of a flattened or homogeneous society, societal cleavages – mainly in the form of sharply different positions towards economic market reforms; not ethnic or confessional ones – were emerging and becoming stable, despite the fluctuation of parties and candidates. In direct contrast to the theory of political cleavages, which credit institutions such as political parties with activating societal cleavages (Bartolini and Mair 1990: 216), Evans and Whitefield conclude that "the absence of strong parties or institutions of civil society should by no means be expected to prevent such divisions from emerging", and therefore, that post-communist Europe should not be seen as a "social wasteland" of "voters deprived of their social identities". Nonetheless, at the same time they admit that Russia is something of a special case in this regard, as "Russian politics contains relatively few distinctive independent bases for ideological divisions" (Evans and Whitefield 1998: 70).

One of the boldest statement in the optimist camp is perhaps that authored by Ian McAllister and Stephen White (1998) who find party identification to be the most important determinant of electoral behaviour, as opposed to institutional or sociological factors. Miller, Reisinger and Hesli (1998), for their part, realign the aim of these contributions on identification with their finding that it is in fact voters' attachment to *leaders*, rather than party identification, that constitutes the best predictor of voting behaviour. Even more explicit in circumscribing the optimism of works based on opinion surveys, are the editors of the 1998 volume to which both mentioned

contributions belong. They observe that "seeing voting as a result of party identification would be, to say the least, eccentric in Russian conditions. . . . The lack of strong parties is likely to mean low levels of partisanship for years to come" (Wyman, White and Oates 1998: 6).

The lucid tone of the latter statement, however, appears to be rather exceptional among scholars using opinion surveys. In general, such surveys tend to lead the analyst to overestimate party attachments among voters. The respondent may be induced to indicate a party preference by the very fact that the questionnaire asks him/her to do so, sometimes presenting him with a list of party labels. His choice may reveal which party or leader he feels closest to *on the list of possibilities presented to him*, but this is quite different from the deep, stable and positive link that is implied by the concept of "party identification". In any case, because it designates a lasting and deep attachment over time (White, Rose and McAllister 1997: 134), the concept of "party identification" can by definition only be applied after a number of elections have been held. This seems to rule out any rigorous use of the concept with reference to the 1993 Duma elections, the first competitive ones, and even casts doubts on its validity for the 1995 Duma elections, held only two years after the first.

One strong exception to the optimistic readings that prevail among the public opinion research is White, Rose and McAllister's highly informative and comprehensive account of Russian elections, *How Russia Votes* (White, Rose and McAllister 1997). On the issue of party identification, the authors find that "more than three-quarters of the electorate lack any party identification", which is also confirmed by the high levels of split-ticket voting (White, Rose and McAllister 1997: 135, 139).⁵¹ More recently, Munro and Rose have reached similar negative conclusions, also based on opinion surveys (Munro and Rose 2002). Timothy Colton seems to take the middle ground between optimists and pessimists in his analysis of Russian voting behaviour.⁵² While sceptical about whether party identification in the Western sense is already emerging, he finds evidence that a sizeable share of Russian voters are developing a "precursor" to it, an "elective affinity" to parties, which he refers to as "transitional partisanship" (2000:

⁵¹ A survey conducted by VTsIOM before the 1993 elections found that 70 percent of the respondents who knew how they would vote, were planning to split their votes in the two tiers of the Duma election (White, Rose and McAllister 1997: 139).

25, 110). The survey questions used by Colton were carefully worded so as not to prompt an answer in the positive or negative sense, and are designed to detect degrees of partisanship (Colton 2000: 114). The results show that slightly over 50 percent of Russians are absolute non-partisan. Most of the remainder fall within the category which Colton labels "weak partisans"; those still free from any stable or deep attachment to any party. In sum, less than a third of Russians clearly identified a party as "their own". Nevertheless, the author concludes, "Russian political parties, . . . do seem to strike a chord with the public" (Colton 2000: 115).

There is another reason one must conclude this approach based on opinion surveys tends to portray parties as more real and important than they are. Namely the fact that studies of Russian voting behaviour are heavily biased; focused as they are on the proportional tier of the election. As much as half of the electoral process – the majoritarian half – is overlooked by these studies, while cross-regional differences go unnoticed because opinion surveys cannot be implemented in 225 SMDs, nor in 89 regions (Colton 2000: 3).⁵² As a result, sweeping conclusions about voters' attitudes and attachment to parties are often reached ignoring the fact that in the three Duma elections about 60, 30 and 50 percent (respectively) of the candidates elected in SMDs were independents. Moreover, if bases for partisan attachment are emerging, the more recent elections of 1999 have demonstrated how feeble and superficial these are. Indeed, these 'party attachments' were easily overridden by other determinants of voting behaviour, such as Putin's charismatic appeal, or the "negative mobilisation" (Gudkov and Dubin 2000) against a security threat (the Chechens as terrorists). The forces of emotion and circumstance driving so much voting behaviour militates against the institutionalisation of programmatic parties and, after 1999, drove existing parties to converge towards blurred centrist positions, with even the KPRF assuming a more conciliatory stance towards presidential reforms in the new parliament.

It is not just the neglect to consider the SMD races that has led to overtly optimistic interpretations of party politics in Russia, it is also the neglect of the regional political

⁵² Although published in 2000, this volume only studies the first two Duma elections (PR tier only) and the 1996 presidential election.

⁵³ As mentioned in the Introduction to this thesis, surveys would need thousands of respondents in each region to be representative of regional variations. Such numbers are beyond the resources of even the most reputable agencies for the study of public opinion. A point confirmed in a personal talk with Lev

dimension as such. The emphasis on social cleavages and the programmatic differentiation of parties as decisive factors for voting behaviour must be contrasted with the evidence of such regional-level phenomena as "the boss", "machine politics" and the partisan use of "administrative resources". These concepts indicate that votes are mobilised from above by regional authorities and do not always reflect voters' ideological or socio-economic profile. In many of the 89 regions, these forces are able to limit the competitive character of the elections by means ranging from media control, partisan use of state resources and personnel, biased rulings by local courts or biased decisions of local electoral commissions, to outright falsification of results. The discussion now turns to the literature that, more recently, has shed light on these regional-level factors affecting party development.

2.3 Territorial districts and territorial politics

The explanations of party weakness highlighted above rely on cultural/psychological and social structural explanations based on the legacy of the Soviet system, as well as on contemporary institutional factors. They apply generally to the Russian political system and thus can only account for general, Russia-wide party weakness. The analysis of cross-regional differences in party development and independents' proliferation, on the contrary, demands explanations at the level of region.

And Russian regions do differ greatly in many aspects. The Russian territory is huge and diverse, stretching across ten time zones, encompassing very heterogeneous territorial conditions, highly variable regional resource endowments, and highly variable economic and social conditions. The Russian Federation's adopted form of state (as resulting from the Russian constitution and bilateral treaties with individual republics) is "asymmetric federalism", which grants different degrees of autonomy to different units of the Federation, some of which are characterised by distinct ethnic/religious outlooks. In such a fragmented and heterogeneous context, all-Russia averages, in most field of social inquiry, are bound to give a very partial account if not an outright misleading and distorting one.

It is by now well known that Russian regions differ, for example, in their degree of openness and political pluralism. This is shown in studies of individual regions (for example Orttung 1995; Melvin 1998; Farukhshin 2002),⁵⁴ and in comparative cross-regional studies (Tsygankov 1998; Gelman 1999; McMann and Petrov 2000; Reisinger and Moraski 2003). Federal units also present different degrees of democracy in terms of local self-government. In Tatarstan not only counties, but also cities are "statified" (i.e. headed by unelected administrative officials), while, in the ethnically Russian regions, chief executives of all levels of government are popularly elected (Matsuzato 2001: 183). More generally, with respect to "civil society", Richard Sakwa has pointed out that western notions have little meaning in the Russian context, where "dependency networks" dominate the scene and are "rooted in local production and supply communities, and regional identities" (Sakwa 2002: 5). Not only in relation to the federal level, but also relative to the sub-regional local and municipal levels, the regional dimension plays a key role. Indeed, "regional governance provides a better analytical tool than local governance in Russia at this time. Alliances form, interact, and implement policy at the regional scale, not at the urban scale" (Mitchneck 2002: 174).

In terms of electoral results, cross-regional differences are also evident. A clear geographical pattern is observed starting from Yeltsin's April 1993 referendum and continuing with the two Duma races and the 1996 presidential elections. According to this pattern, Yeltsin's supporters were concentrated in the areas north of the 60th parallel, while his support was weakest "in a more or less contiguous band to the south and south west of Moscow, stretching from Bryansk to Novosibirsk." (Treisman 1999: 82; O'Loughlin, Shin and Talbot 1996; Clem and Craumer 1996; Slider, Gimpelson and Chugrov 1994).⁵⁵ Explanations for this North-South divide have focused on respective degrees of urbanisation. Conventional wisdom holds that rural areas, concentrated in the South, see higher turnout rates and vote predominantly for conservative forces, while Northern urban areas tend to support reformers and have low levels of turnout. However,

Levada"), at their headquarters in Moscow, in February 2002.

⁵⁴ For example, with respect to Tatarstan, Farukhshin concludes that "the degree of autonomy they won, essentially independence from the federal centre, was used to establish a regime based on personal power" (Farukhshin 2002: 194).

⁵⁵ Even as early as the 1989 elections, Kolosov, Petrov and Smirnyagin (1990) noted a division along the 55th parallel, with CPSU establishment candidates winning in the South, and reformers in the North.

this interpretation has been questioned by Kimitaka Matsuzato, who stresses that "the famous 'Red Belt' is not agrarian" (Matsuzato 2000: 143).

Matsuzato notes that, contrary to widespread assumption on the explanatory power of socio-economic conditions for voting behaviour, in 1996 the reformer Yeltsin received an "unexpectedly large" share of his votes from voters with low levels of education, low income, over 50 years of age, living in rural areas or towns under 10,000, and thinking that "their economic situation had worsened in the previous year". Indeed, Yeltsin only got less than half of his 40.2 million votes from the 100 largest cities (Matsuzato 2000: 193-5). Hough and Lehmann also note the "mystery" of anti-reform voters voting for Yeltsin in the 1996 presidential elections. They find "part of the explanation lies in Yeltsin's obfuscation of his own position on economic reform in the early part of the campaign and his offering of subsidies to every group and region he visited" (Hough and Lehmann 1998: 192). Instead of taking root in society as an all-national formation, the Russian 'party of power' artificially extends its territorial and social reach using regional power structures as a resource (Kholodkovskij 2000: 187).

Matsuzato has proposed an interpretation of voting behaviour that, while rejecting the North-South argument and the related explanations based on urbanisation and living standards, is sensitive to the regional dimension of Russian politics. In his view, the key factor is mobilisation from above (Matsuzato 2000: 143). This means that regional authorities are able to influence the vote in their regions, albeit to different degrees. They do so through their control of the regional media, the use of administrative personnel for campaign purposes, and their control of the regional economy. This has also been observed by Henry Hale, who writes of administrative influences on the 1993 SMD contests. In addition to the region considered in Hale's case study, Bashkortostan, such resources appeared to play a key role in Tatarstan, Kalmykia, Mordovia, Kemerovo and Orel. Indeed, these are regions where elections in general (i.e. including, and especially, regional ones) seem to be particularly 'controlled' (Hale 1999: 106).

Given these forces corrupting local competitiveness, mere organisational efforts by parties toward territorial penetration are not a guarantee of success in the SMDs. This is exemplified by the case of the LDPR, which managed to nominate its candidates in a very large number (188) of SMDs in 1995, but obtained only one victory. The same pattern occurred in the regional legislative elections of 1995-98, where Zhirinovskiy's

LDPR nominated candidates in 58 regions, but won seats only in six (Golosov 1999: 1341). In his analysis of this cycle of regional elections, Golosov explained cross-regional differences in party development in terms of the nature of intra-elite conflicts, an hypotheses already proposed for the case of Sverdlovsk oblast in an article co-authored with Vladimir Gelman (Gelman and Golosov 1998). If regional elites are divided and unable to subdue one another, then the chances of one side starting to build a local political party as a tool of political competition are higher. In most cases, on the contrary, regional politics is monistic and controlled by the governors, who "simply do not need the 'party of power' as a means of translating their influence into assembly seats" (Golosov 1999: 1339). This means that the most common scenario in the 1995-98 regional legislative elections can be summarised as follows. "Where executive power belongs to left-wing governors, Our Home is Russia has disappeared, to be replaced with the Communist Party (KPRF) or its local mutants . . . Non-communist governors prefer to support independent candidates -or anybody who is willing to co-operate" (Golosov 1999: 1340). The marginality of national political parties in regional elections is even more apparent in gubernatorial elections. Petrov notes that a number of strong gubernatorial candidates choose not to publicise their party links and even distanced themselves from parties, movements and blocs with whom they had previously closely collaborated. They appeared mainly as representatives of the 'party of voters' (Petrov 2001: 4).

Most recently, Hutcheson (2003) has also addressed the issue of party development at the regional level. Based on fieldwork in three regions of central Russia, his work is primarily concerned with the role of the regional branches of national-parties in regional politics. It examines six parties chosen for their ability to clear the 5 percent representation threshold in the proportional tier of the latest 1999 Duma elections. The choice of the regional dimension of party activity is a welcome novelty for a single-authored book. However, the focus on party organisation, and the reliance on interviews with party officials may have produced a false impression of party solidity. In fact, the input of national-party branches in regional politics is negligible in most cases, as most such branches had a precarious and volatile life in the 1990s (Golosov 1999). Moreover, Hutcheson's work, while rich in information and insight into local party activity, cannot provide a solid basis for generalisations. This is because it is based on only three regions

(Tatarstan, Samara, and Ulyanovsk), all located in the same economic macro-region, and jointly representing under 1 percent of Russian territory and 6 percent of the population, as the author admits (Hutcheson 2003: 5). What is perhaps most different from the perspective adopted here, is that the selection of parties that form the object of Hutcheson's study is based on their clearing the 5 percent threshold *in the PR tier*. In so doing his work continues the sidestepping of Duma races in the territorial districts. This is even more surprising given the focus on territorial party organisations, which should find their proper arena in the SMDs.

In general national political parties have played a uniformly marginal role in regional elections in the 1990s, with the partial exception of the communist party (KPRF). This means that there is too little variance along this dimension to consider it as a potential explanatory variable in a model predicting different regional levels of independents' success in Duma elections. Petrov and Titkov (2000), however, do note an example of regional-level dynamics likely to affect the independents' success in a federal election. In their study of the regional dimension of the 1999 Duma election, they stress the increased role of regional elites against the background of a centre weakened by the 1998 political crises and the August default. While at the time of the 1995 Duma elections most regional governors had been appointed by Yeltsin, by 1999 most had been popularly elected. This gave them a stronger hold on regional political and economic power, and, in turn, sharply increased the role of administrative resources in elections. In 1999 regional governors started to see Duma elections as important channels of influence and, therefore, began to employ considerable resources in these races, including forming a number of electoral alliances that effectively challenged the independents (Petrov and Titkov 2000: 231).⁵⁶

Up to this point, this section has noted prominent examples in the literature that indicate the importance of the regional dimension in politics and electoral politics in particular. How does this relate to the study of independent candidates? It is a central contention of this thesis that the region represents an important political context that significantly shapes the district races and levels of independents' proliferation (see chapter 3). The existing literature, however, has overlooked the link between SMD results and regional politics. Even political and electoral geographers, who have

⁵⁶ This point is developed in chapter 3 and 8.

emphasised regional variations in electoral patterns, have focused on the proportional vote only, rather than studying the 225 electoral districts (O'Loughlin, Shin and Talbot 1996; Clem and Craumer 1996, 2000, 2000a, 2002; Marsh and Warola 2001).

One contribution that can illuminate cross-regional differences in SMD results is Hale's study of the 1999 elections, in which the success of non-party candidates is linked to the availability of electoral resources other than those supplied by political parties. These "party substitutes" are, namely, the support that a candidate may receive from the regional governor, and the backing of regional industrial and financial groups (Hale 2005). This is an example of how regional factors can account for cross-regional differences in the success of the independents. Thanks to data provided by Henry Hale, this thesis will incorporate these two factors in its model of 1999 independents' success.⁵⁷

Another factor that this thesis is able to draw from the existing literature is closely related to the stress on "party substitutes" – governor's control of administrative resources. This phenomenon has been described in the Matsuzato (2000) and Hale's (1999) contributions discussed above. Different regional governors "control" their regions to different extents. The degree of control is likely to play a role in the possible support that a candidate or a party may receive from a governor; the greater the degree of control the governor is able to exert on the regional politics – e.g. on the regional media – the more valuable his support. Therefore, this dynamic could account for part of the cross-regional variance in the success of independent candidates.

Moreover, a "classic" spatial hypothesis that can be used here is the positive effect of urbanisation on party development. According to this thesis, already proposed by Huntington (1968) and by Rokkan (1970), parties initially thrive in urban settings and then try and penetrate the countryside. Moser has investigated the effect of urbanisation on "elite partisanship" and found no confirmation of this hypothesis (Moser 1999). However, this may be due to some limitations applying to Moser's methodology. Most importantly, no firm conclusions on a relationship between two variables can be derived from a two-way cross-tabulation, as this does not allow the analyst to control for other factors. Additionally, Moser excludes all autonomous units from the analysis, bringing

⁵⁷ Details on these data are provided in chapter 4.

the number of SMDs considered down to 179 in 57 regions, compared to a total of 225 SMDs in 89 regions. Urbanisation will be included in the statistical models of this thesis.

Moser does find a relationship between candidate's non-partisanship and occupational status. Indeed, this is the standard explanation for independents' proliferation. Independents are successful because local elites (defined as having a prominent occupational status; primarily membership in regional or federal political structures⁵⁸) can rely on their own personal campaign resources and do not need party sponsoring to win an election. Golosov originally advanced this thesis in terms of the regional "bosses" avoiding party affiliation (Golosov 1997). The "bosses" (*nachalstvo*) are local "administrative and economic managers" who already occupy a "prominent position in Russia's power structure" before running in national elections (Golosov 1997: 6). Other formulations of this phenomenon include Hughes's analysis of "directorates" of "interlocked" elites (Hughes 1997: 1031). And an important effect of personal resources on candidates' success was found in the statistical analysis of one of the few studies of the Duma elections specifically focused on the SMD races (Golosov and Shevchenko 2000, 2002).⁵⁹

The hypothesis that occupational status is at the root of independents' success is well grounded. Indeed, prominent local elites, or notable candidates, face an advantage over other candidates thanks to their personal resources. They do not need party nomination and often run as successful independents. This hypothesis, however, does not have much purchase on the question of cross-regional variations in independents' success. Why are independents more successful in some regions than in others? Is it because notable candidates tend chose independent nomination only in some regions? If so, what can explain this difference? These questions are the core of the thesis. Answers are suggested in the next chapter and tested with the statistical models of chapters 7 and 8.

Another widespread explanation of independents' success posits that they portray themselves as the defenders of local interests, something to which elections in territorial districts tend to give a premium. Indeed, "candidates in single-member districts

⁵⁸ See chapter 4 for a more comprehensive definition.

⁵⁹ Occupational status was also at the heart of John Ishiyama's analysis of the Duma members elected in 1993 and 1995. Ishiyama derived an index of 'notability' for each deputy, which expresses the degree to which he is endowed with personal resources as opposed to being dependent on party sponsoring for his candidacy. He finds support for the traditional view that cadre parties are fluid organisations that tend to

frequently promised to lobby for local interests". But it was specifically independent standing that was perceived as a more credible avenue to represent local/regional interests (Belin and Orttung 1997: 84). This is an important insight and is developed in the next chapter. However, similarly to the explanation above, on its own it does not account for cross-regional variation in independents' success. In fact, this hypothesis should guarantee the same high levels of success to the independent in all SMDs, in all regions, given that the territorial nature of district races makes local interests salient in all SMDs.

In sum, what is still missing in the literature is an explanatory framework that is sensitive to regional political context. This is needed in order to transform the dominant explanations relying on the occupational status of notable candidates and on the salience of local interests from national constants into variables that produce different effects in different regions. Golosov and Shevchenko have explored the effect of one regional structural factor on party development, as "the strategies of candidates are to be understood in their social context" (Golosov and Shevchenko 2000: 135). However, the factor they consider, i.e. the negative impact of networks inherited from Soviet times, seems rather weakly operationalised as migratory flows between regions (Golosov and Shevchenko 2000, 2002).

In the next chapter, another structural factor is suggested – namely centre-regional relations and the process of federal bargaining of the 1990s. This is the main explanatory hypothesis of this thesis.

Conclusion

Ten years after the first competitive elections in the new Russia, the literature on party development is both copious and heterogeneous in focus. Apart from the initial descriptive emphasis, there have been two broad perspectives. On the one hand, most authors have stressed the underdevelopment of Russian party politics. They have pointed to the genetic defects of Russian parties in the early mobilisation phase at the end of the Soviet era and in the early post-Soviet years. Causes have been found in a

rely on local notables, while programmatic mass parties are more cohesive and disciplined, and tend to

wide range of factors, broadly falling into either long-term, structural factors rooted in the regime type exemplified by the Soviet system, or short-term, contingent factors.

On the other hand, some observers have reached more positive conclusions and have detected increasing levels of party attachment (if not traditional party identification). Some of these optimistic conclusions, however, seem contradicted by recent events, namely the 1999 Duma elections.

Both streams of literature, however, have failed to provide a comprehensive picture of the electoral process in Russia, as they are largely limited to the all-Russian, average, perspective. This is the product of an over-reliance on the PR tier of the electoral process and has led many analysts to overlook cross-regional differences in voting patterns. In particular, works interested in voting behaviour have based their conclusions on opinion surveys that could not take into full account territorial differences.

To be sure, a rich literature has also addressed problems of party development at the regional level. Recent studies have shed light on non-competitive practices of voter mobilisation used at the regional level (machine politics, administrative resources, and the "bosses"), which provide useful tools to investigate Duma races in the SMDs. However, most studies of party development in the regions have dealt with regional elections, in individual regions or in a comparative fashion, and have not investigated the impact of regional politics on federal elections through SMDs. When the link between territorial politics and federal electoral results has been considered – mostly by electoral geographers – the focus has been confined to the spatial distribution of PR voting.

Works that have studied Duma races in the SMDs have produced highly valuable accounts, but have been largely limited to only a few districts, or to only one election, or have focused on explanations on the supply side of the elections only (i.e. candidates' personal resources). A systematic explanation of cross-regional differences in party success, which can integrate the experience of the three Duma elections and the most perceptive findings on Russian regional-level politics, is still missing.

3

Explanatory Framework

“Even in highly centralized systems, there will be marked local differences in the range and character of the alternatives presented to the citizens on polling day, not just because of the variations in the group appeals of the party candidates but even more because of the variations in the extent of local resistance to partisan conflict”.

Stein Rokkan (1970: 15).

The preceding chapters have developed two key determining points of this research project. Namely, that the success of independents varies widely across Russian regions (the Introduction), and that with respect to explaining this variability, existing accounts of party underdevelopment, including those few works that briefly touch upon the issue of the independents, are found wanting (chapter 2).

The task of identifying the causes of spatial differences in the electoral outcomes necessarily involves finding explanatory factors that also vary across regions and electoral districts. The main hypothesis of this investigation is based on two considerations. Firstly, the electoral process cannot be abstracted from the context of the broader political transformation. Secondly, in the 1990's one key dimension of this transformation was the process of defining centre-regional relations. After seventy years of fictitious federalism under the Soviet system, the transition process of the late 1980s/early 1990s opened the door to the process of federal bargaining between the constituent units of the federation (the regions) and the federal central government.

Differences in regional stances towards the federalisation process (ranging from demands for greater regional autonomy to calls for stronger centralisation) gave rise to a

territorial cleavage that political parties failed to represent or absorb. The reasons for this failure lie in the nature of Russian political parties, national in rhetoric and Moscow-based in fact. More specifically, the absence of parties appealing to the most assertive regions was favoured by electoral regulations that strongly discouraged regionalist parties.

This set of circumstances opened up a window of opportunity for non-party candidates to fulfil the function of representing the territorial cleavage. This window of opportunity was wide open in the early 1990s, but became increasingly narrow by the time of the 1999 elections. Indeed, by that time, the gap between regionalist assertiveness and the party system had narrowed considerably due to the direct involvement of regional leaders in party building. Therefore, for the 1993 and 1995 elections, the main hypothesis is that different levels of regionalist assertiveness across regions are associated with cross-regional differences in independents' success. For the 1999 elections, regionalist assertiveness is not expected to operate in the same way. Rather, independents will be more or less successful depending on whether the regional governor supports a party or an independent candidate, and on the extent to which he is able to stir his region's "administrative resources" towards influencing the district campaigns.

Clearly, not only do spatial variations in the outcome variable occur at the level of regions, but also across electoral districts *within* regions. Indeed, the district level context is the most proximate to electoral returns. There is a large literature on factors affecting district electoral outcomes in established democracies adopting SMDs. In the Russian case, data availability constrains the range of factors that it is possible to consider. However, such conventional dimensions of district races as the effect of incumbency, the candidates' elite status, financial backing, the support of regional governors, and the effect of challenger candidates can all be assessed to some extent. Moreover, region-level and district-level factors should be thought of as forming a two-stage causal order (Davies 1985). In other words, district factors not only influence the dependent variable, but are also "caused" by regional factors. Regional factors, then, have both direct and indirect (i.e. mediated by district factors) effects on the outcome. For example, the decision of the incumbent to run as an independent or as party candidate is likely to be influenced by the region's autonomist sentiments. In a highly

assertive (autonomist) region, the incumbent may well prefer to avoid any connection with Moscow-based parties and run as independent. If this is the case, regionalist assertiveness will have two types of effects on the outcome. One effect will be direct, favouring independents' success, and another effect will be indirect, favouring the decision of the incumbent to run as independent, thus further increasing the share of votes received by non-party candidates through the positive effect of incumbency.

In terms of causal paths, this means that two arrows will link regionalist assertiveness to independents' success: one reaching the outcome directly, and the other passing through incumbency. In technical terms, this typical causal path is often said to involve a "mediating effect" between the dependent and the independent variable. The causal relationships posited by the explanatory framework of this thesis are graphically represented in the path diagram of Figure 3.1.

Unfortunately, the available data do not support a comprehensive model for the 1993 elections. However, more complex designs can be implemented for the 1995 and, especially, for the 1999 elections. A summary of which hypothesis can be tested for which election is presented in the last column of Table 3.1. The following four sections of this chapter discuss one explanatory hypothesis each, with the exception of section 3.3 which deals with several - candidates' personal resources, party challengers and geographic accessibility.

3.1 The main hypothesis: territorial cleavages and independents' competitive advantage

As discussed in the previous chapter (chapter 2), the literature suggests a number of explanations for the proliferation of independent candidates. Most observers stress that independents' success is favoured by party weakness (organisational underdevelopment, lack of voter attachment, or general distrust in parties as institutions). They note that weak parties cannot offer significant campaign resources to viable candidates. As a consequence, candidates who can rely on personal resources (especially the local notables or "bosses") do not need political parties and are able to run as independents.

The conventional wisdom, in sum, paints a picture of independents' success centred on the generalised malaise of the Russian party (or pseudo-party). Under such conditions, the story goes, the candidates who are well equipped with personal resources self-select into independent nomination (Golosov 1997, 2002; Golosov and Shevchenko 2000; Moser 1999).

These explanations are meaningful, but overly general. They cannot explain why parties do attract viable candidates and do win seats in *some districts, but not in others*. For example, the hypothesis that the success of independents can be traced to their personal resources (notability) is not sufficient in the light of the spatial variation in their level of success. More precisely, while notable candidates are present in every district, they do not always run as independents, and, moreover, notable independents are not equally successful in all districts. Clearly, in districts where independents are *not* successful, either personal resources are not effective, or candidates with personal resources choose to run as party candidates. Additional takes on the sources of independents' advantage over party candidates have been proposed, which, however, also fall prey to the same inadequacy. In a passage of her doctoral thesis, Regina Smyth has suggested that independent candidates enjoy an advantage over party candidates because the former can move "more freely anywhere on the political spectrum" (Smyth 1998: 273). A more specific version of this hypothesis is the very widely shared perception that independents capitalise on their proximity to their constituent base, which enables them to declare themselves to be the genuine representatives of local interests and above ideological divisions. In support of this, Laura Belin and Robert Orttung note that "candidates in single-member districts frequently promised to lobby for local interests. A successful candidate in Khabarovsk Kray, for example, claimed that all Duma deputies should be independent of parties and 'be guided only by the interests of their own voters and regions'".⁶⁰

To a large extent, this dynamic is part and parcel of any plurality electoral system based on SMDs. Robert Moser recognises that "plurality elections parochialize the competition for seats to the Duma, enhancing the role of regional elites and counteracting the dominance of the Moscow-based elites on the PR lists" (Moser 2001:

⁶⁰ Election appeal by Valentin Tsoi, published in *Tikhookeanskaya zvezda* (Khabarovsk), 3 November 1995, p.2. Quoted in Belin and Orttung (1997: 84).

514). This perception that the results of SMD elections are determined by local interest has been widely maintained ever since the first free elections of 1993, when it was noted that "in the local constituencies the voters supported representatives of local interests rather than party people, for 129 of those elected were classed as independents" (Friedgut and Hahn 1994: 9).

Indeed, the salience of "local interests" is also observed in other countries' SMD systems, where it is said to enhance the value of personal candidate recognition (the "personal vote") over the value of the party label. About the USA, it has been noted that "...in single/member district systems, representatives have geographical areas to call their own. These systems present an opportunity and create motivations for relationships between represented and representatives that are more personal, particularistic, and idiosyncratic than in any other kind of system. Such relationships are often based on relatively non-partisan, non-ideological, and non-programmatic constituency service" (Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina 1986: 8).

The idea that the independents enjoy an advantage over party candidates because they can move more freely over the ideological spectrum (Smyth 1998), or because they can claim to be closer to "local interests" (Moser 2001, Belin and Orttung 1997, Friedgut and Hahn 1994) provides important clues to the question regarding spatial variability. However, on its own, this line of explanation cannot shed light on why independents are not equally successful from district to district. In the face of cross-district variability in the outcome, it leads inescapably to one of two conclusions: in districts where independents fail, either 1) local interests are not important; or 2) they are better represented by parties.⁶¹ Clearly, it would be difficult to find a district entirely free from important local interests, thus the question becomes: why do voters in some districts see parties as able to represent sufficiently their local interests and voters in others do not? As yet, no study has attempted to find out which local interests elude party representation. The main hypothesis of this thesis suggests an answer to this question.

⁶¹ Indeed, Smyth notes that in some SMDs the independents' advantage of greater mobility along the issue spectrum does not prevent communist candidates "to win the day" (Smyth 1998: 273). Unfortunately, the author doesn't pursue this point any further, thus leaving open the question of why the independents' advantage should vary systematically across districts.

The independents' representation function

An important precondition for answering that question is to see independents' success as more than a result of general party failure. In fact, under Russian conditions, both parties and independents should be seen as constituting distinct forms of political representation, each best suited to carry out a specific representational function. Namely, parties are the most effective channels of *national* representation and political co-ordination *across* districts, both for politicians and voters. The independents, on the other hand, are best suited to channel not just any "local interest", but territorial cleavages.

In Rokkan's language of cleavages, national parties arise from and stir up *functional* cleavages that cut across territorial units (Flora, Kuhnle, et al. 1999: 281-84). By contrast, regionalist parties and, in Russia, independents activate and express *territorial* cleavages, i.e. lines of political opposition dividing individual territorial units from the rest of the country.

The class fracture constitutes a typical example of a functional cleavage, uniting workers *across* territorial units. On the other hand, the peripheral resistance to the centralising drive of nation builders, in Rokkan's analysis, has typically given rise to territorial cleavages, which express and cement voters' bonds *within* territorial units (Flora, Kuhnle, et al. 1999: 320-26). Therefore, depending on whether the dominant cleavage in a given SMD is territorial or functional, independents and regionalist parties, or national parties, respectively, constitute the most apt form of political representation. In the Russian case, as mentioned, regionalist parties face high thresholds for entering, and succeeding in, national elections, which virtually leaves it up to independents to represent the territorial cleavage.

As already suggested, the notion of territorial cleavage does not coincide with the more general notion of "local interest". It is necessary to distinguish between predominantly *functional* "local concerns" and *territorialised* local issues, because without this distinction, attention to "local concerns" could hardly explain the cross-district variability of independents' electoral success, as all voters in all districts care about "local conditions". As noted above, the SMD system itself tends to produce territorial patterns of representation in all districts. The point is that "local concerns" can lead to demands for *functional* representation. For example, drawing from the US's

experience, Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina explain that local interests may coincide with functional representation, “territorial and functional representation are not always and everywhere in conflict. A sponsored union candidate in a heavily unionised constituency, for example, might feel no conflict about representing union and local interests at the same time” (Cain et al. 1986: 19).

There is only one kind of “local concern” that is salient in several Russian units and is utterly territorialised – demands for regional autonomy. Given the tendency for Russian parties to have national scope, these demands, which vary in intensity from region to region, are best represented by the independents. In sum, *while all voters have local concerns, only in some regions local concerns take the form of autonomist or regionalist demands*, thus constituting a territorial cleavage and giving independents a competitive advantage over national parties.⁶²

To be sure, this framework does not assume a rigid division of labour between party candidates and independent candidates, with the latter only articulating territorial cleavages and the former only concerning themselves with national issues. It is important to stress that this is not the case in practice and that the present hypothesis does not assume so. The key point is not what type of issues candidates articulate, but what types of issues they alone can *credibly*, and therefore effectively, articulate. The hypothesis is that a party candidate (of a national party) who portrays himself as a defender of local interests is less credible than an independent who attempts to play the same card, *if the district has a strong territorial cleavage, and all other factors are equal*. Similarly, independents can and do win by campaigning on national issues in districts with or without territorial cleavages. Independents can be electorally strong for all sorts of reasons, not just because they can credibly claim to represent local interests. The point is that, *other reasons for success being equal*, an independent has a competitive advantage over a candidate of a *national* party if he runs in a district with a territorial cleavage.

Before passing to discuss in further detail what constitutes a “territorial cleavage” in the comparative literature and in today’s Russia, it is helpful to clarify the assumptions behind the main hypothesis; which is, namely, that independents more successful where

⁶² Not only are regional parties strongly discouraged under electoral rules, but, also, regions have found it very difficult to coordinate their efforts due to the divergent positions taken by autonomous and ordinary regions on the preferred federal arrangement (Solnick 1996).

territorial cleavages are salient. Beyond the obvious requirement that the electoral system legally allows independent nomination (as opposed to systems fully based on list votes), the validity of the hypothesis requires three conditions:

1. *Territorial electoral districts (like Russia's SMDs) in which political representation is linked to a sub-national constituency territorially defined.* This is necessary for a territorial cleavage to become an electoral cleavage; something a candidate can articulate. To illuminate this point, the Russian *presidential* electoral system can be considered. It is also a majoritarian system allowing independent candidates, but it is based on one all-Russian constituency. In such conditions an independent candidate that promises to advance the interests of one region only does so at his own risk and certainly does not face a competitive advantage over national party candidates.
2. *Early stages of electoral competition and party formation.* As party development unfolds, not only are national parties more and more able to respond to social cleavages, but also to shape and selectively activate them. A national party, through its organisational presence over the territory, can help integrate the national electorate into one community. Advanced democracies characterised by long-standing centre-regional conflicts can have successful branches of national parties in their most restive regions (this is the case, for example, the Spanish PSOE in Catalonia. See Blondel 1981: 327). At its best, a national party can approximate the "integrated party" ideal type.⁶³
3. *Electoral rules that strongly discourage regionalist parties.* Regionalist parties are "based on linguistic, territorial, and ethnic claims that refer specifically to the distinctiveness of the cultural and economic region from which they draw support" (Caramani 2004: 162). In principle, regionalist parties face the same competitive advantage as independents when opposed to national party candidates. In practice, if the electoral rules discourage regionalist parties from appearing on the ballot in the first place, this competitive advantage belongs only to independents.⁶⁴

⁶³ As discussed in the Introduction the "integrated party" is considered by many to be essential for federal stability (Filippov et al. 2004). The emergence of such a party, however, requires a number of institutional and political conditions, not merely the passage of time.

⁶⁴ As noted, the Russian electoral system of the 1990s includes a PR representation threshold of 5 percent. This is a very high barrier, considering that it applies at the level of one huge, all-national constituency. Despite demanding registration rules and a very high representation threshold, at least one regionalist party did appear in Russian elections. In some cases, national parties attempt to spouse regionalist themes. The possibility that these parties effectively challenge the independents will be investigated.

These then are the necessary conditions for this hypothesis to work. They are not sufficient conditions for independents' success, which is why the hypothesis predicts independents' success only in some districts. The mentioned conditions apply to the country as a whole; to promote independents' success, they require high levels of regionalist assertiveness, which is only present in some regions.

What is a territorial cleavage and what is it in the Russian context?

Social structure and social cleavages have provided a standard framework with which to approach the study of elections and party systems, most prominently since Rokkan and Lipset's famous contribution (1967). It is worth briefly reviewing this approach. According to Rokkan and Lipset, West European party systems have been shaped by different combinations of four types of social cleavages (Rokkan and Lipset 1967). Two cleavages were produced by the "national revolution": 1) the contrast between the nation building drive and the "resistance of ethnic, linguistic, religious subject populations in the provinces";⁶⁵ and 2) the opposition between the "centralising, standardising and mobilising nation-state versus the corporate privileges of the Church". Two additional cleavages originated from the industrial revolution: 1) the conflict between landed interests and the "new industrial entrepreneurs"; and 2) the division between owners and employers versus "tenants, labourers, and workers" (Rokkan, in Flora 1999: 285).

The typical example of a territorial cleavage in Rokkan's treatment is the first of the four types listed in the previous paragraph. This is the centre-periphery fracture, opposing traditional local communities to the modernising drive of the centre in the newly established nation-states of Western Europe in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The typical example of a functional cleavage, on the other hand, is the class cleavage. As Lipset and Rokkan explain, the difference between territorial and functional cleavages is the following: "in the one case the decisive criterion of alignment is *commitment to the locality and its dominant culture*: you vote with your community and its leaders irrespective of your economic position. In the other the criterion is

⁶⁵ Rokkan and Lipset further point out that this may be a territorial cleavage but is not necessarily so, because the cultural or religious resistance movement may "find allies in the central areas and thus contribute to the development of *cross-local* and *cross regional* fronts".

commitment to a class and its collective interests: you vote with others in the same position as yourself whatever their localities, and you are willing to do so even if this brings you into opposition with members of your community" (Lipset and Rokkan 1967: 13; quoted in Johnston 1990: 124). This means that a functional cleavage is potentially national in scope, in the sense of allowing and requiring cross-regional political co-ordination. The class cleavage (workers versus employers), for example, typically divides territorial communities into two camps, each of which is part of a national camp.

In a district where the dominant cleavage is territorial, on the other hand, the main source of political identity for voters is membership in the local community. Membership in functional groups (as defined by occupation) is secondary. This means that the line dividing the main opposing camps is drawn by territorial boundaries. Under such circumstances, a national political party is not well suited to mobilise voters. An institution claiming to provide genuine representation must have a local *raison d'être*. History shows that the cleavages of Western Europe rarely remained purely territorial after the completion of the industrialisation phase, the universal extension of suffrage and the advent of mass politics at the turn of the 20th century (Caramani 2003: 434, Rokkan 1970). But where the territorial component did remain key to the identity of local communities, it supported the emergence of regionalist parties (Spain and Canada are examples).

In most cases, cleavages are functional, but functional cleavages may have a pronounced territorial dimension if their support base is geographically concentrated. Thus it is worth noting the difference between a *territorial cleavage* and a *territorially-concentrated functional cleavage*. In the first case, "territorial defence" (demands for cultural, linguistic or administrative autonomy) is the content of the cleavage and territorial boundaries are essential to its definition. In the case of a functional cleavage, the fact that electoral support may be territorially concentrated is accidental to its policy contents. A district predominantly inhabited by working-class dwellers does not for that reason constitute a *territorially* distinct group if workers are also present, albeit in lower numbers, in other parts of the country. This distinction is connected to the difference between a *regionalist* party and a party with regional support (or *regional* party). The first mobilises a territorial cleavage, the second mobilises a territorially-concentrated

functional cleavage. Examples of the former are the Basque 'Partido Nacionalista Vasco' and the Italian 'Northern League', while the German 'Christian Social Union' provides an example of the latter.⁶⁶

Russia, of course, has long passed through the historical phases that gradually reduced the relative importance of territorial divisions in Western Europe (masses have been politically mobilised and the country has long achieved the industrialisation of its economy). However, one of the challenges produced with the collapse of the Soviet Union has been the redefinition of Russia's state structure, or the process of "refederalisation" (Hughes 2002). This means that, particularly in the 1990s, aspects of the state-building process have been reopened. The relationship between the federal centre and federal units had to be bargained and defined. The centre-regional fracture was particularly deep for a small number of federal units, whose leadership adopted sharp autonomist stances. This increased the salience of an existing territorial cleavage opposing the territorial community (unit of the federation) to the centre. Indeed, "evidence suggests a relatively strong and growing identification of Russians with their regions and regional leaders rather than with the nation as a whole or central leaders in Moscow" (Lapidus and Walker 1995: 106).

With the exception of Chechnya, the units that advocated strong autonomist requests entered a process of bargaining with the centre that saw different and alternating degrees of success in the 1990s. Some authors have adopted the metaphor of a pendulum to describe the ebb and flow of centralisation/decentralisation phases in 1990s Russia (Petrov 1999). Not only did the strength of regionalist demands vary across regions, but also across time; often growing when the federal centre was in a weak bargaining position. With the Federal Treaty of 1992, the units endowed with republican status⁶⁷ – especially Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, and Sakha, – obtained extensive rights and prerogatives, most importantly in the tax sphere. They lost some of these rights with the new Russian constitution of 1993, and regained specific concessions with bilateral treaties starting in 1994.

⁶⁶ In keeping with his centre-periphery model, Rokkan labels "peripheral parties" what are here called "regionalist parties" (Rokkan and Urwin 1983: 154-65). I prefer to avoid the ambiguity of the term "periphery", which implies a peripheral geographical location, or a subordination of a culturally and economically backward region towards the centre. These connotations are potentially misleading as many "peripheries" see themselves more as alternative "centres". For this reason the more neutral term "region" is preferred, as in "centre-regional relations" and "regionalist party".

The regions that did not initially receive special rights were of two types. One group was made up of regions heavily dependent on central subsidies (for centre-regional financial flows, see Lavrov and Makushkin 2001). The second group includes wealthier regions, net contributors to the federal coffers, but lacking an ethnic component to their populations (e.g. Sverdlovsk oblast). The first group of regions resented and opposed "asymmetric" federal arrangements, advocating a more centralised federation, or even a unitary form of state. The second group resented the ethnic principle at the basis of the distribution of benefits among units and demanded greater autonomy from the centre, but also the elimination of asymmetric arrangements benefiting the ethnic republics. These differences added to the variation in the intensity and kind of autonomy demands emanating from the regions.

The dynamics of Russian refederalisation is briefly reviewed in the chapters devoted to the analysis of individual elections (chapters 6, 7 and 8). As a result of these processes, it is theoretically possible to locate Russian federal units along a continuum according to their stance on centre-regional relations. At one extreme, independence and strong autonomism are advocated; at the opposite extreme, centralisation and even unitarism are demanded. It is important to note that regionalist assertiveness is taken here as exogenous to the explanatory framework. This means that the variable is taken as a given and that the focus is not on its causes, but on its effect on electoral outcomes.⁶⁸ Indeed, the consequences of a strongly autonomist stance in a region include the emergence of a territorial cleavage aligning the region against the federal centre. This, in turn, is taken to reinforce the necessity for territorially based channels of political representation, which give a competitive advantage to independent candidates over national party candidates. As mentioned above, regional (and regionalist) parties would also benefit from a territorial, centre-regional, cleavage, but they are virtually

⁶⁷ See the Introduction for a description of regions' federal status.

⁶⁸ On the explanation of the different levels of autonomistic assertiveness of the Russian regions, James Hughes lists several factors: border vs. enclave location of the region; self-dependent economy vs. dependency from federation; ethnic composition; historical assimilation into the Russian empire (Hughes 2002: 44). Gorenburg adopts an institutionalist perspective that, following Brubaker's (1996) seminal approach, emphasises the legacy on the Soviet nationality policies, which resulted in the institutionalisation of ethnicity (Gorenburg 2003). Dowley (1998), in her statistical analysis, finds that factors pertaining to the theoretical framework of "essentialism" increase the chances of autonomistic assertiveness. These factors are 1) the historical legacy of stalinist ethnic persecution; 2) the presence of a non-orthodox religious plurality, and 3) the percentage of regional population using its native language (ethnic regions only).

absent from Russian federal elections because they are strongly discouraged by Russian campaign laws and by the 5 percent representation threshold at the national level.

3.2 The moderating effect of (pseudo-) regionalist parties and central appeasement

The relationship between autonomism (here called "regionalist assertiveness") and independents' success is complicated by two sorts of potential moderating effects, which can explain why even highly autonomist stances in a region may fail to translate into popular support for independents. The first possibility is that, rather exceptionally under Russian electoral incentives, a regionalist party emerges to compete with independents as a genuine channel of territorial representation. (The closest approximation of this was the 1995, Sverdlovsk-based, party 'Transformation of the Fatherland'). An alternative to a regionalist party as such could also emerge if leaders of assertive regions overcame difficulties of co-ordination and formed/joined an *interregional* party. If this were the case (as for several regions in 1999, with the OVR party), the popular vote would flow towards party support, and away from independents.

The second moderating effect would be the appeasement of the strongest autonomist challenges by the federal centre. This may come in the form of financial transfers or the political/legal recognition of rights and privileges. This accommodation strategy can defuse autonomist demands thus reducing the basis of independents' success.

(Pseudo-)regionalist and interregional parties

With regard to the first moderating effect – the emergence of "parties of the regions" – it should be noted that even national parties may indeed portray themselves as defenders of the interests of the regions. This is a difficult task because different regions have different agendas with regard to centre-regional relations. If this strategy is successful, it can be expected to close the credibility gap between party and independent candidates with respect to advocating local interests, thus reducing the suggested positive effect of autonomist sentiment on independents' success. In the Russian case, the only example of such a party is Shakrai's 'Party of Russian Unity and Accord' (PRES) which, although

a national party, claimed to represent the interests of the regions along a centre-periphery issue dimension in its 1993 campaign. However, the effectiveness of this strategy was limited (it ran candidates in 63 SMDs, but won only three of them). Shakrai was, after all, a key figure in Yeltsin's administration and had moreover organised the (unelected) constitutional assembly which proposed a recentralisation of the federal arrangement counter to the Federal Treaty of 1992, a move naturally opposed by the leaders of the most vocal regions.

In contrast to PRES, the 1995 party "Transformation of the Fatherland" was genuinely regional, as it originated from one region: Sverdlovsk oblast. The party represented an extension of 'Transformation of the Urals', and was led by the oblast governor Rossel. This party had an interesting trajectory in the light of the main hypothesis of this thesis. Conflict with Moscow first spurred its formation (by Sverdlovsk authorities) as a regional party, initially to contest regional elections. As Gelman and Golosov put it, "the rich resource potential of Sverdlovsk oblast makes such claims [against Moscow] feasible, and this provides for the very possibility of independent locally based parties" (Gelman and Golosov 1998: 41).⁶⁹

The regional party then provided the springboard for the project of a *regionalist* party in the 1995 federal elections. Predictably, given the 5 percent representation threshold, the project failed to make any noticeable impact on the PR tier of the Duma elections. Even in the Sverdlovsk portion of the SMD tier, however, "Transformation of the Fatherland" did not achieve much. It nominated candidates in four out of seven regional SMDs, and won only one seat (and achieved a second place). By contrast, the independents won four seats out of seven in that region. Perhaps this disappointing performance can be explained with reference to the fact that Rossel, recently elected governor of the region, had been sacked by Yeltsin in 1993 for his regionalist challenge and was dropping his most vocal anti-centralist rhetoric. In fact, around the time of the 1995 Duma vote, he was negotiating with Moscow the rather advantageous terms of a bilateral treaty to be signed shortly after the election (Solnick 2000: 155, fn 49).

⁶⁹ However, the decisive reason for the exceptional success of party building in this region is more to be found in intra-elite conflicts that did not result in a winner-take-all scenario, and that therefore found expression in the electoral arena. This differs from most regional settings, where "generally, conflicts with Moscow, if waged by unified regional elites, tend to reduce political competitiveness on the regional level, so impeding party development" (Gelman and Golosov 1998: 42).

Finally, before the 1999 election, the political context had changed and several regional governors, traditional advocates of greater autonomy, took active participation in the formation of two national electoral blocs, OVR and Unity. This new phenomenon of party building by a coalition of regional leaders should be taken into account as a moderating factor against the suggested relationship between autonomism and independents' success. Given that Unity was in fact a creature of the Kremlin, it is OVR that deserves greater attention. This party constituted an important challenge to the independents because of two considerations, both linked to the kind of regions behind its formation. Firstly, it was formed by regions that had previously showed high levels of regionalist assertiveness and that wanted to defend the autonomy and privileges they had already gained. This means that OVR, contrary to other parties based in Moscow, could provide a party channel of articulation and representation for regionalist sentiments that, according to the key hypothesis of this study, would also be effectively articulated by the independents.

Secondly, the founders of OVR included governors and presidents of some of the most tightly controlled and illiberal Russian regions (Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, the City of Moscow, etc.). This means that OVR would have the support of these regions' administrative resources and that, even if the party should fail to appeal to regionalist sentiments, there would be other good reasons to expect a strong showing in those regions. In this way, the independents would face a very strong competitor and their ability to mobilise a potentially sympathetic constituency would be severely limited.⁷⁰

Central appeasement in response to regionalist demands

The second possible moderating effect is the response by the centre towards the most vocal regions. Indeed, the process of Russian re-federalisation was shaped by two levels of actors, the centre and the regions. The task has been complicated by the legacy of Soviet federalism, which had already granted (largely nominal) rights to constituent units in an asymmetric way. At the early stages of Soviet federalism, Russian administrative sub-divisions were created with different (formal) status on the basis of the overriding principle of ethnic diversity. The result was a federalised RSFSR, "a

⁷⁰ The emergence of OVR and its impact on independents' success is discussed in greater detail in chapter 9.

Federation within the larger Federation of the USSR" (Shaw 1999: 53). In fact, the degree of real autonomy granted to constituent units of the USSR and of the Russian 'sub-federation' was rather limited. Although, to some important extent, regions were free to manage the linguistic and cultural plans for themselves, in practice, the Party firmly kept together a unitary structure of administration.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the CPSU (Communist Party of the Soviet Union), what amounted to an effective mix of co-optation and coercion, which used to underpin the hierarchical line of command of the Party from the centre outward, ceased to exist. It is possible to identify several stages in the 1990s in the search for equilibrium in centre-regional relations, each stage characterised by different dominant models of federalism (Hughes 2002). Part of this process included attempts by the Kremlin to appease the most recalcitrant regions. Solnick notes that the centre effectively split the generally recalcitrant camp of the republics by offering "selective benefits" to a subset of them (Solnick 1996: 22). An example of the centre's success at dividing regional coalitions seeking greater autonomy (this time a coalition of oblasts) is provided by the fate of the Grand Urals Association (Hughes 1994). When the regional association threatened to transform itself into a "Urals Republic" in 1993, the centre offered selective inducements to one member region, Orenburg Oblast, managing to divide the association (Solnick 2000: 148).

This strategy arguably weakened the saliency of the territorial cleavage in these regions, and therefore reduced the competitive advantage of the independents based on that cleavage. In other words, despite (or thanks to) the strongly autonomist average stance of the 1991-1995 period, a number of regions had some of their autonomist demands met by the centre. Thus, according to the above hypothesis, the level of independents' success should be lower than in regions with the same degree of autonomist grievances but deprived of Yeltsin's selective accommodation measures. One form of central appeasement that gets particular mention in the comparative literature is tactical financial transfers by the incumbent government (for an example outside Russia, see Dahlberg and Johnsson 2002). In the Russian case, the motivations behind federal transfers to the regions took several forms. They were aimed at defusing secessionist and autonomist threats (Treisman 1999); at rewarding compliant regional behaviour (Popov 2002: 72); or at alleviating the need for heavy subsidies (Solnick

1996: 18). However, regardless of the motivations, federal transfers are likely to correlate with a moderation of regionalist demands (either through economic cooptation or dependency), thus reducing the chances of independents' success.

These means for coaxing regionalist stances towards the centre (ranging from legal/symbolic to financial appeasement) amount to different sorts of "carrots". To be sure, in addition to the "carrot", the centre may also wish to use the "stick". Namely, those covert repressive measures and threats that the Kremlin has been able to wield against "recalcitrant" regions when the centre is strong, such as at the start of the economic recovery of 1999-2000, and with Putin at the moment (Chirikova and Lapina 2001: 391). However, for much of the 1990s, the federal centre was too weak to wield such negative incentives effectively and consistently. This weakness was due to the institutional conflict between the parliament and the presidency escalating in 1993, Yeltsin's difficult re-election bid in 1996, and the economic and political crisis of 1998. Because the centre was not in a position to consistently use a repressive approach, it had to resort to accommodation and appeasement with the most vocal restive regions.⁷¹

Sub-regional assertiveness?

It should be clear from the above discussion that positions on the federal arrangement are articulated and advocated primarily by the regional authorities, not by sub-regional units. The region is the administrative unit that is immediately below the federal level in the Russian Federation. As constituent units of the federation, they are entitled to some degree of self-rule and their executive and legislative branches are popularly elected. In short, the regions are the main subjects facing the centre in the negotiations of centre-periphery relations of the 1990s. Conversely, sub-regional units, even regional capital cities,⁷² are constitutionally subordinated to the regions to which they belong and are not primary actors of centre-periphery bargaining. The degree of autonomy granted by the regions to their sub-regional units, such as municipalities, varies in practice from region to region, but it has been relatively small, so far. This is in part due to the lack of

⁷¹ One phase of attempted recentralisation occurred in 1997, starting with the initiatives of premier Chubais to bring the regions under greater central control (Petrov 1999: 58). This, however, was interrupted by the August 1998 financial crisis.

⁷² Moscow and St. Petersburg are "regions" (units of the federation) themselves, not sub-regional municipalities.

financial resources for municipalities to effectively exercise the degree of self-rule attributed to them by federal law (Friedgut and Hahn 1994).

Along these lines, a more plausible alternative locus of autonomist demands is represented by the case of gas-rich Yamal-Nenets and oil-rich Khanty-Mansi autonomous okrugs. The formal status of autonomous okrugs within Russian federalism is particularly uncertain as "they are both administratively subordinate to the regions within which they are situated, and constitutionally equal to them" (Nicholson 1999: 18). Thus, Yamal-Nenets and Khanty-Mansi are characterised by autonomy demands towards the centre, and towards another region, Tyumen oblast, in which they are located. Since the disintegration of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), and its vertical chain of command, the two resource-rich okrugs have started claiming and obtaining substantial portions of independence, in a struggle against Tyumen oblast administration (Glatter 1999: 147-49). The example of these two units shows how the endowment of natural resources can fuel an assertive regionalist position even in *autonomous okrugs*, units formally subordinated to the oblasts they are located in. Indeed, the level of regionalist assertiveness of the Nenets and Khanty-Mansi autonomous okrugs is well above average, as measured by the indicator utilised in the present research and presented in the next chapter (see Table 4.2, next chapter).

This section has confined itself to the presentation of hypotheses that apply at a macro level, the level of regions. Electoral competition, however, takes place in territorial districts. The discussion now turns to the treatment of hypotheses applying to the SMD level. If elections can be compared to a market, where candidates "supply" representation to voters that "demand" policies in a competitive environment,⁷³ then the regionalist assertiveness hypothesis belongs primarily to the demand side (demand for greater autonomy). The SMD-level factors explored in this study, by contrast, pertain to the supply side (candidates' notability and party support) and to the level of competitiveness of the electoral market itself ("administrative resources"). The next two sections deal with these district-level factors.

⁷³ The market analogy has a long tradition in electoral studies; one of the first systematic treatments is Anthony Downs' *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. A recent application of this perspective to Russian elections can be found in Hale (forthcoming 2005), which discusses problems of party development.

3.3 The "supply side": notable candidates and party challengers

Candidates' personal resources

It has been noted that elections in SMDs are more personalised and candidate-centred than in other electoral systems. The personal qualities of the contestants, or the bases of their "personal vote", are likely to become especially salient in SMD elections (Canon 1990). Among the characteristics that are usually credited with increasing a candidate's chances, the most important include 1) the incumbency advantage, 2) candidate's notability and 3) financial backing. Candidates endowed with these personal resources are viable candidates and their decision to run as independent, vs. party candidates, can be expected to affect the overall success of the independents. In other words, if these "prominent candidates" run disproportionately as non-partisans, independents' electoral returns will be greater, other factors being equal. The measurement of these variables is presented in the next chapter (chapter 4).

The incumbency variable is rather straightforward, measuring the decision of the district incumbent to stand as a party or as an independent (if he stands at all). The only caution here is that this variable does not apply to and thus cannot be measured for the 1993 elections, since those were Russia's first competitive elections and hardly comparable to the electoral process under the Soviet Union, including the relatively liberalised 1989 and 1990 votes.⁷⁴

The notion of notability, on the other hand, can take many forms. However, a common indicator is elite occupational status. This is the variable, for example, that Golosov looks at in his study of the role of personal resources in SMD Duma elections (Golosov 2002). Elite occupational status is one of the variables used here to gauge notability; however, following Golosov, the focus is narrowed to the political elite, distinguishing between *regional/local* and *federal* political elite.⁷⁵ As Golosov admits, it is not possible to take into account the elite status derived from economic positions. This is due to the difficulty of gauging the actual importance of the private-sector occupations declared by candidates to the electoral commissions from the mere

⁷⁴ Moreover, the previous elections comparable to the vote for the Duma would have been the election to the Russian Congress of Peoples' Deputies of 1990. However, due to the higher number of seats to allocate, these elections were held in many more SMDs over the Russian territory, thus potentially leading to several "incumbents" running in each Duma SMD in 1993.

indication of the name of the firm or enterprise (Golosov 2002: 27). With respect to political elite status, the hypothesis is, therefore, that the more the relevant political occupations are found among the independents (relative to party candidates), the greater the chances for non-partisans.

Finally, the literature on SMD elections, especially in the USA and the UK, attributes great importance to campaign funding (Jacobson 1980). Direct data on this dimension is unfortunately unavailable for the Russian SMD races. However, for the 1999 elections an approximation can be obtained by using the data collected by Henry Hale and used in his article on "party substitutes" (Hale 2005).⁷⁶ The variable measures whether a candidate was backed by a major regional or federal financial-industrial group. Clearly, the expectation is that candidates backed by these groups stand greater chances of success, as one can assume a larger availability of campaign finance than for the average candidate.

This subsection has discussed the expected effect of personal resources, namely those resources which allow for the strategic decision of prominent candidates (as described above) to stand as independents as opposed to party candidates. However, it is reasonable to expect that these strategic decisions will also be affected by another variable of the model; namely, regionalist assertiveness. Indeed, nomination decisions of prominent prospective candidates are driven by their expectations of success (they will run as independents where they think this is the winning choice, and vice versa). But expectations of success cannot be separated from the competitive advantage that a territorial cleavage is expected to give the independents.

In other words, the causal path flowing from regionalist assertiveness to independents' success will be both direct and indirect. Direct, in that regionalist assertiveness directly favours independents' success. Indirect, in that regionalist assertiveness strongly influences whether or not a notable candidate will mobilise his or her personal resources as an independent or party candidate. This can be rendered visually in a path diagram (see Figure 3.1 below) by direct and indirect arrows stemming from "regionalist assertiveness" and reaching "independents' success" (the outcome variable). The statistical implications of this complex causal path, based on a

⁷⁵ More details on how these occupational resources are operationalised can be found in chapter 4.

"mediating effect", are discussed in the chapter on the design of the statistical analysis (chapter 5).

Party challenge

Party labels function in established democracies by having a positive value for candidates' campaigning. They reduce the information-gathering costs of voters and provide candidates with a "brand name" that voters know and trust (Aldrich 1995). As discussed in the Introduction and in chapter 2, Russian political parties, by contrast, are organisationally weak and far more transient. In such circumstances only a subset of parties can be expected to have name recognition and provide a "brand name" effect to their candidates. However, should there be parties who were able to provide a brand effect, they would be expected to reduce the chances of independents in those SMDs where they decide to nominate a candidate. As a general rule of thumb, independents are faced with a genuine party challenge only in opposition to candidates from parties that cross the 5% threshold of PR representation, or perpetuate themselves from election to election.

In addition to this "brand name" effect of the main parties, it should also be remembered that national parties with a regionalist rhetoric, as well as genuine regionalist parties should they exist, are expected to present a real challenge the independents in the SMDs where they run (see above, Section 3.2). Indeed, if they have a regionalist appeal, they are expected to neutralise the competitive advantage the independents have in representing territorial cleavages. Thus, to control for this effect, variables can be entered indicating whether either a major party or a (pseudo)regionalist party nominated candidates in the given district.

Finally, considerations similar to those noted for the personal resources variables suggest that the presence of a party challenge in the district should, in turn, depend on the degree of regionalist assertiveness in its region. Especially in the early stages of party development, parties are induced to concentrate their campaign efforts where they stand greater chances of success. For national parties this means avoiding highly assertive regions, while for regionalist or pseudo-regionalist parties the opposite

⁷⁶ I thank Henry Hale for letting me use these data in the present research. Details on his sources follow in chapter 4.

incentive applies. Therefore, another indirect effect of regionalist assertiveness can be expected to be mediated by the party challenge variables (see path diagram in Figure 3.1 at the end of this chapter).

Geographic accessibility of regions

Finally, the geographical location of voters is likely to affect parties' ability to reach them in the campaign. More precisely, remote location and cold weather increase the costs of reaching those voters locally when election time comes in December.⁷⁷ These costs are likely to be higher for national parties than for local independent candidates. As Timothy Colton has observed, "the geography of the largest country on the planet - sprawling and northerly, with tens of millions of people still inhabiting villages and towns with poor and seasonally unreliable transport links and erratic postal services - adds a gruelling aspect to the logistics of a Russian campaign" (Colton 2000: 51). His survey data show that "the larger the local settlement, and so the closer it is to transportation and communication nodes, the more efficiently parliamentary and presidential contenders dispense political materials [literature, posters and billboards] to the electorate in Russia".⁷⁸

Fiona Hill and Clifford Gaddy have recently stressed the economic and social costs associated with the Siberian cold and the un-connectedness of local communities. They remind us, that "because of the continental effect -the large distance of most of Russia to the oceans- it is movement to the east, just as much as to the north, that lowers temperatures. And, for Russians, there is much more room to the east than to the north" (Hill and Gaddy 2003: 33). The particular weight the cold bears in Russia was underlined in 1993 by the programme of one Moscow district candidate entitled "Subtropical Russia", in which he promised to bring about a temperature of 20°C throughout all of the country and in all seasons.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ For a recent study on the "cost of cold" bore by productive activities in Siberia, see Hill and Gaddy 2003.

⁷⁸ However, it seems that, just like party campaigners, the analysts conducting Colton's survey were also overwhelmed by the difficult logistics of Russia. Indeed, as Appendix B in Colton's book reveals, among the areas excluded from the sample are "territories in the north and east of the Russian mainland with very low population density, severe weather, or transportation difficulties" (Colton 2000: 237). To the extent that a "geography factor" affects party campaigning, this strategy of sample selection is likely to miss important information.

⁷⁹ Mentioned in D.A. Levchik (1996), quoted in Colton 2000 (fn.14, p.106).

In addition to low temperatures, the spatial accessibility of regions can also be impaired by a mountainous geography. A combined index of the share of regional populations living in areas too mountainous or too cold to be reached year round by regular means of supply, is used to reflect the problem of campaign accessibility (see next chapter for the operational definition of the variable). The hypothesis is that, due to their deeper local roots, the independents should be advantaged in the areas that national parties find difficult to reach.

It would seem that the flip side of the problems obstructing the campaign activities of political parties in areas that are difficult to access, is the factor of urbanisation – a factor traditionally credited with fostering party emergence. Huntington (1968) and Rokkan (1970) are among the first contemporary scholars to emphasise that parties are originally urban phenomena. Parties find their leaders and their likely followers in urban centres; the first within the intellectual stratum, the second among the literate, educated citizens, or, for leftist parties, among the industrial working classes. Indeed, Rokkan notes that in the historical experience of western European countries, parties spread from urban centres to the countryside, a process favoured by the diffusion of literacy and means of communication in the early twentieth century.

However, the Russian post-communist context is different from that of western Europe at the turn of the 19th century. Russia has already reached advanced levels of literacy and education, as well as developed means of mass communication. Thus, the urban-rural divide is more important as a correlate of pro-reform vs. conservative voting behaviour – which, as mentioned in chapter 2, is also manifest in a North-South divide – than as a factor of party development per se (or of independents' success, for that matter). Nevertheless, while literacy and television are spread nation-wide, levels of urbanisation are still linked to different levels of physical connectedness of Russian communities, e.g. access to railroad and road networks. In this sense, urbanisation continues to give an advantage to political parties, as it allows them to maximise their organisational strengths and conduct effective traditional campaigns on the ground. For this reason, the level of urbanisation of each electoral district is controlled for in the models predicting independents' success.

3.4 Administrative resources

The last element of the market analogy is electoral "competition" itself. In order for results to reflect the free interplay of supply and demand, the competitiveness of the electoral process must be ensured. If this ideal condition is hardly realised in any existing democracy, then here, at least, Russia is no exception. In fact, the partisan use of administrative resources has led many to question the existence of the minimum standards of procedural democracy in the most affected regions (Brie 1997; Hale 1998, 1999; Oreshkina 2000; Tikunov and Oreshkina 2000; Oreshkin 2001).

The governor's support of Duma candidates

Russian regional governors are known to have used state resources to support a party or specific candidates in Duma campaigns, but they varied in their capacity to control regional politics and elections. The administrative resources at governors' disposal range from controlling the local media – mostly heavily dependent on regional subsidies – to pressuring local business to contribute to the campaign of the "right" candidate, up to controlling local law-enforcement agencies and local electoral commissions. Local electoral commissions, in turn, can – and allegedly do – selectively enforce the rules on candidate registration, or disqualify registered candidates for irregularities in their campaign, or even directly rig the vote count. The target of "administrative support" in the SMDs can be a party candidate or an independent. The hypothesis therefore is that independents' success will be higher where the local governor actively supports an independent, and lower where he supports a party candidate. In turn, both effects will be stronger the tighter the governor's control is over regional politics. An interaction effect is thus posited between the success of the governor's preferred candidate and the degree of that governor's control over regional political process.

This pattern of undue gubernatorial influence over the electoral process has been noted during the 1993, 1995 and 1999 elections. In this research, however, this variable can only be taken into account for the 1999 elections. The reason for this limitation is that accounts of this phenomenon in the 1993 and 1995 Duma votes have been impressionistic and do not provide usable systematic evaluations across the regions. Moreover, the extent of the governors' involvement in Duma elections is generally

believed to have increased with the 1999 vote (Petrov and Titkov 2000). This is supported by two considerations. On the one hand, most oblast governors consolidated their grip over regional politics to a much greater extent after they had been popularly elected for the first time in the 1996-98 cycle of gubernatorial elections. On the other hand, a number of "strong" regional governors for the first time felt an additional (and effective) incentive to coalesce and form an interregional party to contest the 1999 Duma elections. After they created the party OVR, these governors would make sure that OVR candidates would receive their backing in their own regions.⁸⁰

The assessment of governors' preferences, i.e. which party/candidate they support, has become the subject of several works in connection to the Duma 1999 elections (Kaspe and Petrokovskij 2000; Petrov and Titkov 2000; Strokanov 2003). However, these are mostly assessments of generic support or loose alliances, except for governors directly involved in party building (and even here with noticeable exceptions). These accounts generally do not detect governor's support for candidates in individual SMDs. One account that does attempt exactly this is a forthcoming study by Henry Hale (Hale: 2005).⁸¹ Data on governor's support gathered by Hale and by Robert Ortung will be used in the analysis of the 1999 election below.

Governor's control of regional politics

The second component of the administrative resources hypothesis, i.e. governors' capacity to control regional politics, has been studied under the labels of "machine politics" (Brie 1997, Hale 1999), "caciquismo" (Matsuzato 2000, 2001) or simply "electoral control" (*ypravlyaemost* in Oreshkina 2000; Tikunov and Oreshkina 2000; Oreshkin 2001). Tikunov and Oreshkina (2000) elaborated an index of the "electoral irregularity" of regions in the Presidential elections of 26 March 2000. Heading the list for such irregularity are almost all Caucasian Republics and virtually all the autonomous okrugs. The only national formations not included are the republics of Kareliya, Khakasiya, Karachaevo-Cherkesiya, while the syndrome is not entirely in place in such republics as Kalmykiya, Komi, Mariy El, Udmurtiya, and Chuvashiya.

⁸⁰ The reasons for, and the dynamics of, the emergence of OVR are discussed in greater detail in chapter 9.

⁸¹ Details on this data are reported in the next chapter.

Tikunov and Oreshkina calculate that in the 2000 presidential elections, 14% of the Russian territory belonged to regions considered "highly controlled", with very high rates of turnout and of support for Putin (Putin received 61.3 percent of the vote, while the main challenger, Zyuganov, received 24.5 percent in such areas). In the 1999 Duma elections, these "highly controlled" regions had even more clearly concentrated their support to benefit the list of "Fatherland-All Russia" (OVR). Three quarters of the total votes received nationally by OVR were cast in those areas (Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Mordoviya, Kabardino-Balkariya and Daghestan), whose executive heads supported OVR and even occupied leadership posts in the movement.⁸²

Unfortunately, Tikunov and Oreshkina only report the first twenty regions or so top-ranking in terms of "controlled electorates". For the purposes of quantitative analysis, it is necessary to have a coherent measure for all regions. One such measurement, used in this thesis, relates to one key aspect of regional administrative resources -control over the regional media. The "Public examination project", conducted by the Russian Union of Journalists and other associations, produced comprehensive indexes of freedom of speech in Russian regions for the year 1999.⁸³

In addition to regional governors, the Kremlin also actively tries to influence Duma elections by means of state resources, mainly by granting favourable coverage on state TV channels to sympathetic candidates and parties. Under Yeltsin, the use of federal "administrative resources" went further, as Yeltsin refrained from seriously attempting to build a national party and thus put federal administration agencies to this use (Huskey 1999: 191). Federal agencies, rather than a national party, were explicitly charged with the task of recruiting 'promising' regional leaders for promotion to the national level (Huskey 1999: 201). However, this strategy did not produce encouraging results and the foundation for presidential influence at regional and local levels remained shaky in the 1990s.

The presidential administration has also tried to influence the outcome of elections in territorial districts. In 1995, it was also a federal agency (the Administration for Work

⁸² In her article, Oreshkina also includes Ingushtiya, and Ust-Ordinskii Buryatskii Autonomous Okrug (Oreshkina 2000).

⁸³ Several reputed independent media organisation took part in the project "Public Examination: Evaluation of Freedom of Speech in Russia (1999-2000)". They compiled indexes for several aspects of freedom of speech in Russian regions. www.freepress.ru/win/english.html. Accessed June 2003, pp.14-15. See next chapter (chapter 5) for details.

with the Territories) that was charged with a task that would normally be of a presidential political party. In co-operation with several presidential representatives in the regions, it aimed at ensuring 'favourable local conditions' for the SMD candidates put forward by NDR ('Our home is Russia'), the party led by the then prime minister Chernomyrdin. Eleven of such candidates were the presidential representatives themselves, but only one succeeded (Huskey 1999: 201).⁸⁴ These indications of a meagre success of federal administrative resources under Yeltsin suggest that it is apt for this research to focus on regional administrative resources alone. Moreover, one key campaign asset for the federal "party of power" lies in its capacity to ensure the favourable treatment by national media, especially national television (Hughes 1994a). In this sense, this advantage applies equally throughout the Russian territory and cannot explain spatial patterns.

Conclusion

This chapter has built an explanatory framework to explain the spatial variability in independents' success. Table 3.1 summarises the hypotheses it has developed to cover the different elements of the "electoral market". On the "demand side", the main hypothesis of this thesis posits that independents will cater for the representation demands that are based on a territorial cleavage. This cleavage takes the form of regionalist assertiveness in the context of Russia's process of federal bargaining of the 1990s. The greater the anti-centralist stance of the region, the greater the success of the independents (as discussed in section 3.1). In studying this effect, however, it is necessary to control for the centre's reaction to regionalist demands. Among strongly assertive regions, those appeased by the centre (with political/symbolic concessions, or with financial largesse), will exhibit lower levels of independents' success than the rest.

⁸⁴ In another attempt to fashion a more manageable Federation Council, the same federal agency worked to enhance the chances of 'sympathetic' candidates in executive and legislative elections in the regions. The degree of success of these efforts appears to have been limited (Huskey 1999: 201). After all, with the 1995-97 round of elections of regional governors, "the federal influence in regional politics became even more insignificant" (Gelman 1999: 93).

Table 3.1: *Theoretical framework to explain the variation in independents' success.*

Electoral market	Hypothesis		Explanatory variable	Level	Data availability		
Demand side	MAIN HYPOTHESIS	Territorial cleavage	1 Regionalist assertiveness	Region	1993	1995	1999
		Appeasement	2 Political appeasement	Region	1993	1995	1999
			3 Financial appeasement	Region	1993	1995	1999
Supply side	OTHER HYPOTHESES	Candidates' Personal resources (notability)	1 Incumbency	District		1995	1999
			2 Political elite status	District		1995	1999
			3 Financial backing	District			1999
		Party challenge	1 Major party	District	1993	1995	1999
			2 (Pseudo)-Regionalist party	District	1993	1995	1999
		Geographic accessibility	1 Share of population in remote areas	Region	1993	1995	1999
			1 Governor's support	District			1999

Regional level.
district. To take

The main hypothesis represents a macro-variable, as it applies to the
Within regions, however, elections take place at the level of electoral

Because no party nominates candidates in all districts, this variable can illuminate the cross-district variability in the outcome. Moreover, parties that are not major players in national terms, but stress regionalist themes in their campaigning, can also be expected to reduce the chances of the independents because they can compete for the same "market niche", i.e. the representation of the territorial cleavage.⁸⁵

Inhospitable geographic conditions are also expected to affect independents' success through their effect on candidate supply. Namely, because campaigning conditions are more difficult in very cold or mountainous areas, national parties will be less visible and even less organisationally present in those areas than in the average region. Therefore, they will attract notable candidates, or generally nominate candidates, more rarely than in other regions.

Finally, district electoral results are likely to be influenced by the possible use of "administrative resources" by the regional governor in support of his preferred candidate. In districts where the candidate supported by the governor is a party candidate, the returns for independents can be expected to be lower than elsewhere, other factors being equal. A positive effect on the outcome is, vice versa, expected when the candidate supported by the governor is an independent.

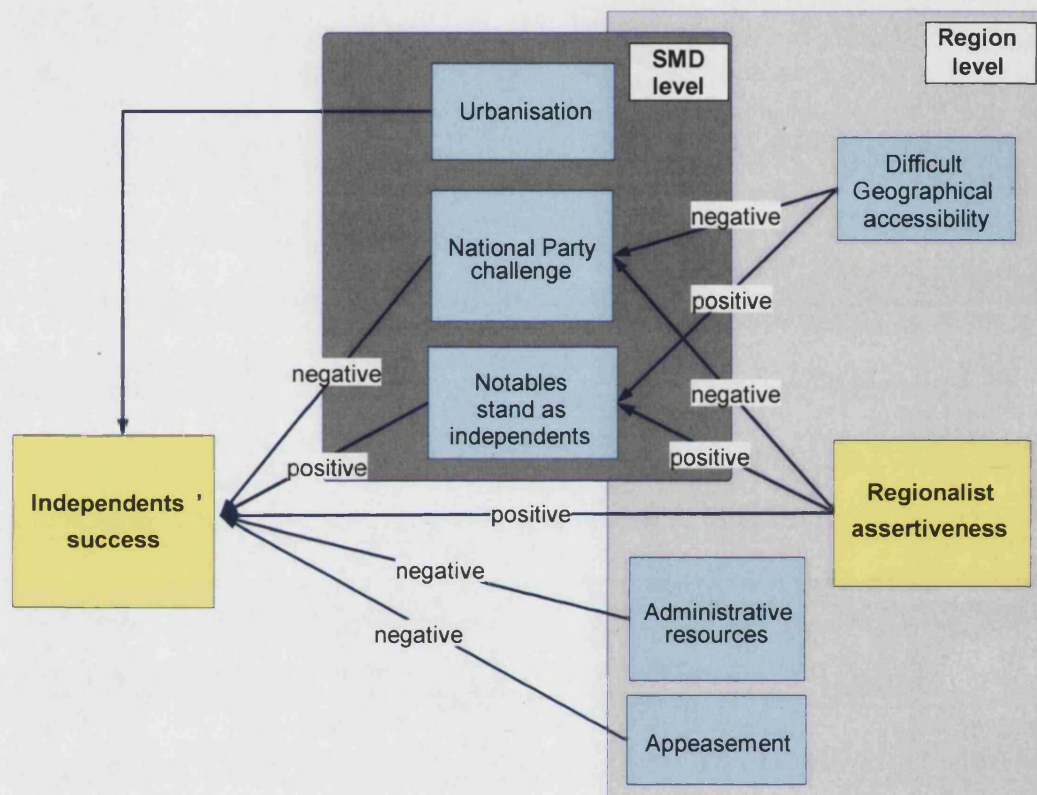
The effect of governor's support, however, is reinforced proportionally to the degree of "control" that he exerts on the political process in his region, which is known to vary from region to region. One key indicator of this "control", used in the following analyses, is the level of control over the regional media. Therefore, a governor's candidate preference and his "degree of control" are expected to interact in their effect on the outcome.

In addition to this, the models posit another complex relationship between explanatory variables (see Figure 3.1). Indeed, not all variables combine linearly to account for the outcome. Two have indirect effects, mediated by other variables. Most importantly, the district-level variables for the personal resources of candidates and for the party challenge mediate (part of) the effect of regionalist assertiveness, as explained in section 3.3. The fact that regionalist assertiveness can have both a direct and an indirect effect is represented in the path diagram of Figure 3.1 by the arrows leading

⁸⁵ As noted in section 3.2 above, electoral rules make it difficult for a genuinely regionalist party to emerge.

from that variable. One arrow is directly connected to the outcome, while the other two pass through the variables related to candidates' supply. This means that the latter variables are both cause and caused, exogenous and endogenous to the model.⁸⁶

Figure 3.1: *Diagram of causal paths posited by the theoretical framework*



For the rest, the path diagram in Figure 3.1 shows each variable in a box and groups regional-level variables to the right (within the pale grey area) and SMD-level variables at the centre (against a dark grey area). The leftmost box represents the dependent variable, as signalled by the fact that all arrows converge to it. The two variables representing the main hypothesis are highlighted in yellow boxes.

Finally, a note on why regionalist assertiveness is here labelled the "main" hypothesis. The expectation of a competitive advantage accruing to the independents in assertive regions integrate and specify the two most-cited explanations for independents'

⁸⁶ For a concise treatment of the problems of "causal order" and "mediating effects", see Davies 1985, or Allison (1999: 60-62).

success mentioned above. Indeed, based on the territorial/functional character of SMD cleavages, one can explain why the personal resources of notable independents translate into electoral success *only in some SMDs*, as well as why local interests are paramount for independents' success *only in some SMDs*. This strategy of explanation for independents' success is the most important in the causal framework of the thesis because it is original in Russian electoral studies and it bridges an unwarranted gap between the study of centre-regional relations and federal elections in the territorial districts in Russia.

The next chapter contains the operational definition of the variables introduced in this chapter. The sources of related data are also mentioned.

From Hypotheses to Data: Operational Definitions

"The difference between quantitative and qualitative measurement involve how data are represented, not the theoretical status of measurement. Qualitative researchers use words like "more" or "less", "larger" or "smaller", and "strong" or "weak" for measurements; quantitative researchers use numbers".

King, Keohane and Verba (1994: 152)

The aim of this chapter is to translate the hypotheses of the explanatory framework outlined in chapter 3 into variables that can be used to test the hypotheses by means of a large-*n*, quantitative analysis. Anyone who has designed a quantitative study in the social sciences is aware of the difficulties inherent in finding faithful indicators for complex phenomena. On the one hand, quantitative measures are often only pale approximations of social reality, and on the other subjectivity is necessarily introduced into the analysis when the analyst decides how best to codify and quantify events and observations.

For this study the difficulties inherent to quantitative analysis are undeniably compounded by the fact that Russia's official collection of reliable political and social data is exceptionally meagre for the first decade of post-communism. This holds especially for the early 1990s. To make the point, one need only note that there is no official release of the vote counts in the SMD races of the first parliamentary elections of 1993.⁸⁷ Moreover, official statistics can be particularly unreliable in some specific

⁸⁷ For his discussion of the 1993 district results Timothy Colton had to obtain an unpublished report by the Central Electoral Commission, see Colton (1998: 20, fn.44). I am grateful to him for passing the same manuscript to me.

areas. For example a large part of centre-regional financial transfers take the form of subsidies to local industries, tax benefits, and other channels that eschew systematic monitoring (Lavrov and Makushkin 2001: xxi). And even under the best circumstances, the sheer size of the country would make the assembly of uniform data at the local level a daunting endeavour. However, while the lack of available data is clearly not unproblematic, in the present study, the problem of locating suitable data is primarily linked to the challenge of finding reasonable quantitative measures for eminently qualitative dimensions. This is the problem with operationalising the concept of "regionalist assertiveness", a key element of the explanatory framework. Fortunately the study was able to draw on a quantitative indicator for this variable that was elaborated independently of the present research, by a different author and for different purposes. This clears all suspicions that the index was twisted or biased in such a way as to produce the expected results. And while it may not present an ideal solution, as the scholarly understanding of political processes in post-communist Russia is still at an early stage – particularly as far as the electoral politics of the territorial districts is concerned – this is an instance in which even less-than-ideal data can generate interesting new perspectives. Thus, even with all of the noted limitations, this study can claim to detect an important part of the regularity or mechanism that was at work in the Russian SMDs of the 1990s.

The chapter proceeds to discuss the choice of variables and the methods of their operationalisation for each of the explanatory hypotheses that have been identified in the previous chapter. The structure of this chapter follows the organisation of the hypotheses in the explanatory framework. The first section tackles the measure for the main hypothesis: the positive effect of regionalist assertiveness on independents' success. The task is to introduce the quantitative index used in the analysis, to show how its original author, Kathleen Dowley, produced it, and how it has been adjusted. The index is then compared to common expectations in the literature as to the correlates of regionalist assertiveness. This is done in order to get at least an impressionistic confirmation that the numbers measure the phenomenon of interest. In the last part of the first section, the measure for the main instances of central appeasement of regionalist demands is introduced.

The second section of the chapter is devoted to the other hypotheses, primarily those belonging to the supply side of the "electoral market". Variables on the supply of candidates include a measurement of the extent to which district candidates endowed with personal resources run as independents in a given SMD. The personal resources considered are district incumbency, political elite occupational status, and financial backing. Other supply-side factors are the challenges posed by party nominations in the SMDs. The section also considers the problem of governors' support for individual candidates in the 1999 district races based on Henry Hale' data, and the geographic factors of party campaigning.

4.1 "Measuring" regionalist assertiveness

It is impossible to quantify a phenomenon such as regionalist assertiveness in a fully objective way. Any analyst will use a good deal of subjective judgement when deciding which observed event or statement counts as evidence of what degree of assertiveness.

This problem can be alleviated in three ways: 1) by using an index produced independently of the research project underway; by a different scholar and for a different purpose, but measuring the same dimension as needed in the inquiry concerned. This heterogeneity of purposes makes it very unlikely that any original bias potentially built in the index will be systematic relative to purposes of the second user. 2) By "triangulating" the index with other indicators conventionally deemed to reflect aspects of the phenomenon being measured. If all indicators are consistent with each other, this can provide a rough confirmation that the index broadly reflects the underlying phenomenon. And 3) by explicitly stating the criteria followed to elaborate the measure, so that the scholarly community can know exactly where the index comes from. This section introduces and discusses the chosen indicator for "regionalist assertiveness" in the light of these three points.

Firstly, the chosen measure is based on an index produced independently from the author of this research by Kathleen Dowley for a study published in 1998. The original purpose of Dowley's index was to provide a measure for the dependent variable of her analysis. Conversely, the index is used here to measure an independent variable

considered with respect to its expected affect on a phenomenon (independents' success) that was totally extraneous to Dowley's interests. This means that if there was any bias or "systematic error" in Dowley's estimates of regional autonomism, it is unlikely to be systematic relative to the present focus of analysis (King, Keohane and Verba 1994: 63-65).

Secondly, in order to get a rough idea of whether the indicator is broadly consistent with widely shared understandings of regionalist assertiveness in Russia, it is compared below to readings of other indicators conventionally taken to express regionalist sentiments. Finally, in her 1998 article, Dowley describes the criteria that informed her decisions on the coding of observations, in order for future scholars to be able to replicate and possibly improve her approach. Drawing on that article, the discussion here starts with a presentation of Dowley's index.

Dowley's index

The concern of Dowley's article (1998) is to explain the different preferences held by Russian regions as to the degree of centralisation/decentralisation that federal relations should embody. In different passages, she refers to her dependent variable as a region's "preferred federal arrangement", its "preferences for economic and political autonomy", or its position along a "political autonomy dimension". The types of federal solutions advocated by the regions range from high centralisation (as in a unitary state), to full independence.

The measure presented in Dowley's article (1998: 370) is built by examining "public speeches, declarations and communications" by regional leaders: heads of regional administrations – called "presidents" in the republics – and speakers of regional legislative assemblies (Dowley 1998: 368). As Dowley explains, "events of relevance" include:

- "Responses to central decrees relating to the division of powers between the centre and the regions";
- "boycotts of federal referendums or elections";
- "withholding of federal taxes";
- "petitions" and "communiqués" to the federal government (Dowley 1998: 364).

In the period between 1991 and 1995, Dowley recorded 1460 such events using the Current Digest of Post-Soviet Press (CDSP) and the Open Media Research Institute (OMRI) Daily Digest as sources. Each event was coded 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5, according to the type of preferred centre-regional relations that it indicated. The code is ordinal in the sense that a greater number corresponds to greater decentralisation, as summarised in Table 4.1 (below). The number of recorded observations (actions, speeches, and statements) varies widely from region to region: from as little as 1 (recorded for the Koriak autonomous okrug and Ryazan oblast) and 3 (for many regions; especially autonomous okrugs and some oblasts), to up to as many as 46 (for Bashkortostan) and 62 for Chechnya).

Table 4.1: *Dowley's index*
(Based on the type of federal arrangement favoured by a region)

Score	Meaning	Description
1	Unitarism (full centralisation)	The position according to which all important decisions, appointments of personnel, "allocations and extractions are made at the centre".
2	Strong federal centre	Guidelines for important decisions should be defined in Moscow, such as those on privatisation, banking, trade, and the type of local political institutions. The centre should have "final authority" in conflicts with the regions, but local governments should be elected.
3	Territorial confederation	Greater autonomy on local natural resources, foreign investment, privatisation, land reform, etc. The centre should control the defence function and the single currency system. Regions should have equal status (thus regions in this category criticised the Federal Treaty of 1992). The federal centre should not have last authority in disputes, contrary to stipulations in the 1993 constitution.
4	"Cantonalism" or ethnofederalism	Drawing from the example of Swiss cantons, the region is morally superior to the national state. These regions demand recognition as separate nations within the federation, and expect more autonomy than other provinces that are not nations.
5	No federal relations (Full independence)	This is a nationalist position (a state should correspond to the nation), not federalist at all. Full independence is the goal.

Source: Own elaboration based on Dowley (1998: 365-66).

The codes attributed to events of the same region are averaged, so that each region is attributed a mean score for the 1991-1995 period, ranging from 1 to 5. Across regions, the mean score constitutes a continuous, scale measurement.⁸⁸

The main advantage of Dowley's index is that it considers all 89 regions, while other studies of similar problems have focused on a much more limited number of cases.⁸⁹ In the ranking of regions according to Dowley's index (Table 4.2), only Chechnya and Tatarstan receive a mean score above 4. This reflects the fact that, on average, their leaders demanded more autonomy than the rest of the regions between 1991 and 1995.

The least autonomist stance (the most assertive support of centralism) is observed for Kursk Oblast, with a score of 1.6. This means that its leaders publicly advocated a federal arrangement which can be roughly classified as falling between a unitary state (which receive a score of 1, see Table 4.1) and a federation with a strong centre (a score of 2).

Table 4.2: *Ranking of regions on Dowley's index*

Rank	Region	Mean score	No of events recorded	Rank	Region	Mean score	No of events recorded
1	Chechen Republic	4.62	62	46	Voronezh Oblast	2.71	7
2	Tatarstan Republic	4.33	43	47	Novosibirsk Oblast	2.69	16
3	Bashkortostan Republic	4.00	46	48	Primorsky Kray	2.67	12
4	Mariy El Republic	3.86	7	49	Astrakhan Oblast	2.67	3
5	Tyva Republic	3.80	15	50	Ivanovo Oblast	2.67	3
6	Sakha Yakut Republic	3.68	41	51	Kurgan Oblast	2.67	3
7	Khakass Republic	3.64	11	52	Murmansk Oblast	2.67	3
8	Adygey Republic	3.62	8	53	Novgorod Oblast	2.67	6
9	Chuvash Republic	3.62	13	54	Orlovskaya Oblast	2.67	6
10	Karelian Republic	3.56	25	55	Pskov Oblast	2.67	3
11	Buryat Republic	3.50	15	56	Chita Oblast	2.67	12
12	Ingushetiya Republic	3.50	30	57	Kemerovo Oblast	2.64	14
13	Komi Republic	3.44	16	58	Krasnoyarsk Kray	2.63	24
14	Udmurt Republic	3.43	14	59	Volgograd Oblast	2.62	8
15	Altay Republic	3.33	6	60	Amur Oblast	2.60	5
16	Nenets Aut. Okrug	3.33	3	61	Leningrad Oblast	2.60	5
17	Khanty Mansiysk A. Okrug	3.33	6	62	Altay Kray	2.57	7
18	Chukotka Aut. Okrug	3.33	3	63	Arkhangelsk Oblast	2.57	7

⁸⁸ More details on the rules followed by Dowley for the codification of events, leaders' speeches and statements, are presented in her article (Dowley 1998: 365-66).

⁸⁹ Treisman (1997) only considered ethnic regions.

19	Kalmikiya Republic	3.29	17	64	Tomsk Oblast	2.57	7
20	Yamalo-Nenets Aut. Okrug	3.25	4	65	Samara Oblast	2.54	13
21	Mordovian Republic	3.20	15	66	Kaluga Oblast	2.50	2
22	Taymyrskiy Aut. Okrug	3.17	6	67	Kamchatka Oblast	2.50	2
23	Tyumen Oblast	3.13	8	68	Kirov Oblast	2.50	2
24	North Ossetian Republic	3.12	34	69	Penza Oblast	2.50	4
25	Kabardin-Balkar Republic	3.05	21	70	Perm Oblast	2.50	6
26	Sverdlovsk Oblast	3.04	23	71	Saratov Oblast	2.50	12
27	Karachay-Cherkess Rep.	3.00	11	72	Tambov Oblast	2.50	4
28	Aga-Buryat Aut. Okrug	3.00	3	73	Yaroslavl Oblast	2.50	4
29	Permyak Aut. Okrug	3.00	3	74	Moscow Oblast	2.43	7
30	Ust-Ordynskiy Buryat A.O.	3.00	3	75	Orenburg Oblast	2.43	7
31	Irkutsk Oblast	2.88	16	76	Tula Oblast	2.43	7
32	Vologoda Oblast	2.86	7	77	Sakhalin Kray	2.38	8
33	Daghestan Rep	2.84	19	78	Ulyanovsk Oblast	2.38	8
34	Khabarovsk Kray	2.83	6	79	Krasnodar Kray	2.36	11
35	St. Petersburg	2.82	22	80	Kostroma Oblast	2.33	3
36	Omsk Oblast	2.80	5	81	Smolensk Oblast	2.33	3
37	Jewish Autonomous Oblast	2.80	5	82	Stravropol Kray	2.25	12
38	Kaliningrad Oblast	2.79	14	83	Belgorod Oblast	2.25	4
39	Nizhny Novgorod Oblast	2.79	14	84	Rostov Oblast	2.20	10
40	Vladimir Oblast	2.75	4	85	Ryazan Oblast	2.00	1
41	Magadan Oblast	2.75	4	86	Tver Oblast	2.00	2
42	Chelyabinsk Oblast	2.75	12	87	Koryak Aut. Okrug	2.00	1
43	Evenk Autonomous Okrug	2.75	4	88	Lipetsk Oblast	1.75	4
44	Moscow City	2.72	25	89	Kursk Oblast	1.60	5
45	Bryansk Oblast	2.71	7		<i>Russian average</i>	<i>2.84</i>	<i>10.89</i>

Source: Table 1 in Dowley (1998: 370).

The ranking of Russian regions according to Dowley's index (Table 4.2) shows that all regions with a mean score of 4 or above are ethnic units (republics or autonomous okrugs), with the exceptions of Sverdlovsk and Tyumen Oblasts. However, not all ethnic units are above 3 and among those who are, mean scores vary significantly. North Ossetian, Kabardin-Balkar, Daghestan, Karachay-Cherkess and Altay republics have a mean score around or below 3, indicating support for a loose, but not ethnically defined federation. Dowley attributes this difference among republics to the fact that those with lower levels of autonomism, except Altay, are located in the North Caucasus, "a region torn apart by interethnic strife" (Dowley 1998: 369). She points to the fact that these regions are characterised by difficult ethnic equilibria within their borders, with minority ethnic groups demanding rights equal to those of the other nationalities, or forming separatist movements. For these reasons, the leaders of these republics may

prefer not to play the nationalist card in their relationship with Moscow (Dowley 1998: 369).

For a time-specific index

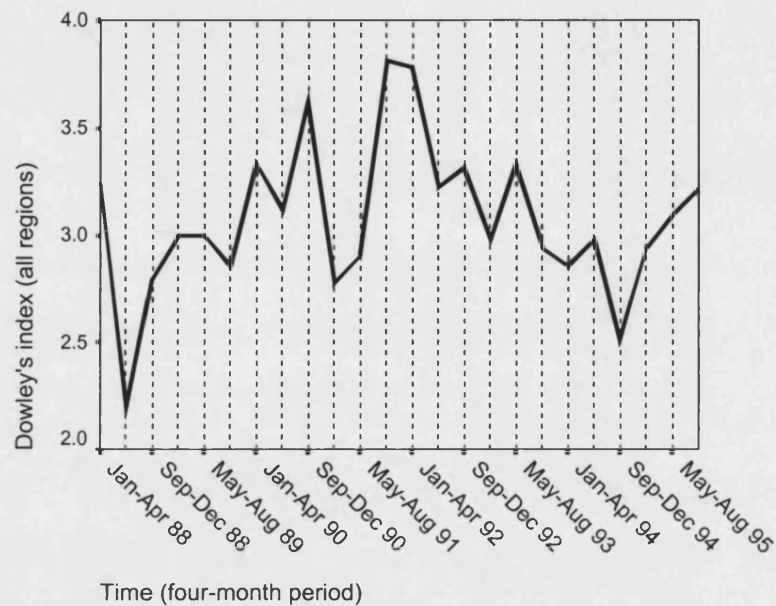
With Dowley's index, each region receives a score that summarises its level of assertiveness over the 1991-1995 period. While this particular time-averaging may arguably be suitable in order to study the impact of regionalist demands on the December 1995 elections, it is less convincing in a model of the 1999 elections, and it is not satisfactory in a model of the 1993 elections. For a study of the 1993 elections, the index should be decomposed to reflect only observations that occurred before December 1993. Indeed, it is clear that observations that occurred after that date cannot possibly help in explaining 1993 voting behaviour. Such a decomposition requires going back to the raw data originally used by Dowley to generate the 1991-95 average, and calculating partial averages reflecting only the observations that occurred until the election of December 1993. This has been done.⁹⁰

The raw data coverage extends back to 1988 (the upper limit, 1995, is the same as in the measure published in Dowley's 1998 article). For a measure of regionalist assertiveness before 1993, therefore, two time spans can be considered: the 1988-93 period, the maximum span for which observations are available, or the more limited, post-communist, 1992-93 period. The first measure corresponds to the notion that regional leaders' preferences over autonomism are likely to only approximate voters' sentiments in their long-term, underlying and stable component. This way, arguably, a more systematic trend should emerge, rather than short-term fluctuations in leaders' bargaining positions towards the centre. Moreover, within a wider time span, more observations can be used to estimate the average, which means that the average score is less likely to reflect chance fluctuations.

⁹⁰ This has been possible thanks to the kind permission I received from Kathleen Dowley to use her dataset of coded observations. The data set is an SPSS file in which over 1400 regional events, declarations or speeches were coded according to the level of political autonomism they indicated. The precise criteria for the coding are explained in Dowley's article (1998). The events were also coded according to the time at which, and the region in which, they occurred. The present author recoded the data to match his dataset, and aggregated the observations in several time periods to perform the analysis for different elections (chapters 6, 7 and 8), and to display trends in this chapter.

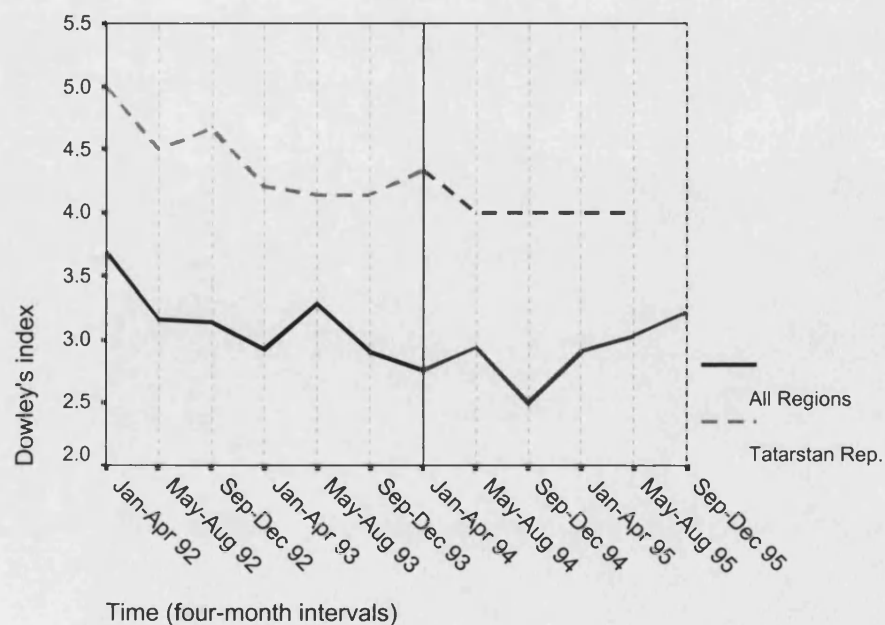
On the other hand, the 1992-93 measure has the advantage of being a potentially more precise measure of the pulse of the regionalist sentiments at pre-electoral time. Regional assertiveness scores in sub-periods are presented in Table A.4.1 in Appendix.

Figure 4.1: *Average assertiveness of regions across time*



Source: elaborated from Dowley's dataset.

Figure 4.2: *Regional assertiveness in the periods before and after 1993 elections. Tatarstan Republic and all regions compared*



Source: elaborated from Dowley's dataset.

The overall trend in centre-regional relations 1988-1995, as captured by Dowley's measurements, is shown in Figure 4.1. For the post-soviet period only, this trend is presented in Figure 4.2, where the level of assertiveness of a famously vocal region, Tatarstan, is compared to the general one. A break in the time line at the point of the 1993 elections shows the pattern in the two pre-electoral periods.

The 1999 elections, on the other hand, pose a different problem. Dowley only gathered observations until the end of 1995. Ideally, the same index would cover the whole period of the three elections. Absent such an index, this study follows two different approaches. In the first approach, the 1991-1995 average is used also in the 1999 election, under the assumption that what counts are stable underlying patterns of regionalist sentiments, rather than short-term fluctuations. The second approach reviews the main events related to centre-regional relations that occurred between the 1995 and the 1999 elections and "adjusts" Dowley's index to reflect the changes. The limitation of the first approach is that it assumes the fundamental stability of centre-regional relations between the 1991-95 and the 1996-99 periods. However, it has the advantage of not allowing the possibility that any subjective bias of this researcher could be introduced into the index. That, of course, is the disadvantage limiting the second approach; namely, "adjusting" Dowley's index to reflect post-1995 changes. Mindful of the limitations accompanying both approaches, they will be used in parallel in the empirical analysis of the 1999 elections.

The procedure used here to adjust Dowley's index to the subsequent period is the following. Two starting points are possible, depending on which baseline value gets "adjusted". It is possible to start from the 1991-1995 or the 1994-95 average of Dowley's observations. The first route leads to variable "Asser99a1", the second to "Asser99b1". In both cases, the post-1995 events motivating the adjustment of Dowley's representation of regionalist assertiveness are:

- 1) Instances of centre-regional confrontation occurring in 1998, as reported in Petrov (1999: 59). Examples of such confrontation are: direct attempts by the Kremlin to re-centralise control over Primorski Kray and Sakha Republic; Yeltsin's decree forcing the Republic of Udmurtia to comply with federal law; exemplary attacks on corruption and big oil companies in Kursk Oblast, Tatarstan and Bashkortostan Republics; tension with the Republic of Ingushetia,

due to the Chechen refugee crisis; and Yeltsin's conflict with the leaders of Samara and Sverdlovsk.

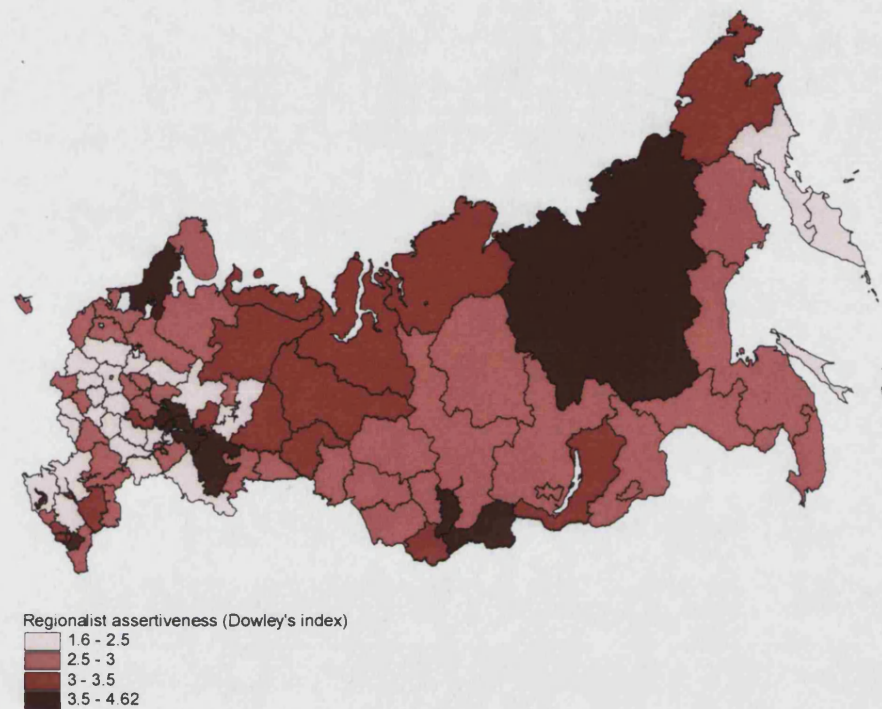
- 2) Regional measures of economic protectionism, in violation of federal law, as a reaction to the August 1998 financial default and economic crisis. Stark examples occurred in Kalmikiya Republic, Sakha Republic, North Ossetian Republic, Tatarstan Republic and Chuvash Republic (Kahn 2002: 166).
- 3) Legal non-compliance in regional constitutions and charters. The most dissonant cases concern the republics of Bashkortostan, Sakha, and Tatarstan (Drobizheva 1998: 36).

In "adjusting" Dowley's index to take into account these observations, a score of 3.5 is attributed to each republic that figures in one of the three categories above. A score of 4 is attributed if the republic appears twice, and 4.5 if it belongs to all three groups. For non-ethnic federal units, a score of three is attributed to reflect advocacy of a decentralised federal arrangement if they appear in at least one group. The resulting scores for the relevant regions are then averaged with Dowley's index (1991-95 or 1994-94) to produce the adjusted score. Finally, a marginal value of 0.5 is added to those regions that held a gubernatorial election after 1995. This applies to a very large number of oblasts and is often mentioned as one important reason for the greater assertiveness of these regions on the federal plane.

Indeed, in the pre-1996 period, the heads of oblast administrations lacked an independent popular mandate and were still appointed by Yeltsin (Petrov and Titkov 2000). The ranking of regions resulting from this adjustment process is presented in Table A.4.2 in Appendix. Again, that the exercise of "adjusting" Dowley's index for use in the 1999 models is bound to add another layer of subjective judgement on top of Dowley's strongly recommends using Dowley's original 1991-95 index. Heeding such recommendation, the analysis of the 1999 vote below follows both strategies in parallel. And yet, the limits of using the index for the analysis of 1999 are less damaging than they might appear to be. This is because when one takes into account the different political context of the 1999 vote (see chapter 3 and 8), in contrast to the 1993 and 1995 elections, regionalist assertiveness is not expected to be a key factor of the electoral

results. Map 4.1 contains a map of Russia that classifies the regions according Dowley's index.⁹¹

Map 4.1: *Cross-regional variation on Dowley's index*



The next sub-section compares Dowley's index of regionalist assertiveness to several widely accepted (partial) indicators of the problem, to determine if the index answers to conventional expectations as to the correlates of regionalist assertiveness. If the indicator conforms to these expectations, it should enhance confidence in its use.

Corroborating the index

Even with the acknowledged limits due to subjective judgement and time coverage, Dowley's index has the advantage of providing a continuous measurement of a complex

⁹¹ In the Map 4.1, regions are grouped into classes according to their score on Dowley's index. The criterion for the definition of class breaks is the default method in the GIS mapping software ArcView (version 3.2). This method aims to show "natural breaks", or breaks "inherent" in the data. As the "Help" function of ArcView explains, "this method identifies breakpoints between classes using a statistical formula (Jenks' optimisation). This method is rather complex, but basically the Jenks' method minimises the sum of the variance within each of the classes".

phenomenon across all 89 regions, and across several years. Rather than taking it at face value, however, some confirmation of its merits can be derived from a comparison of the index with 1) a different index built by a different author, Alexseev (1999), to measure a similar dimension; and 2) with other measurements of factors conventionally deemed to correlate with autonomy demands.

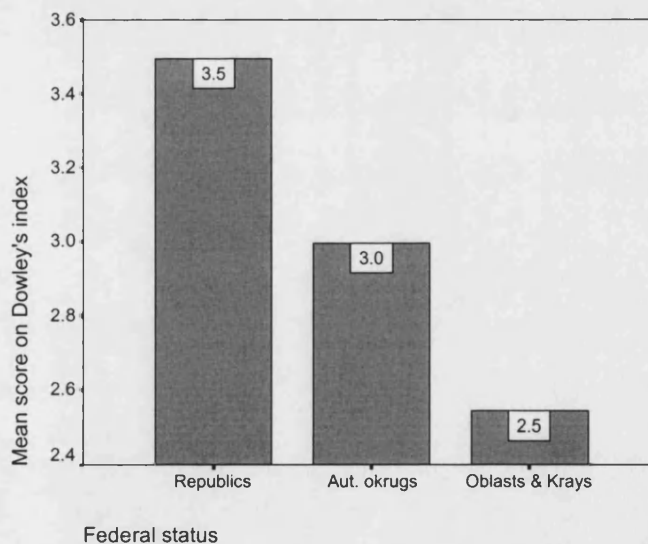
Alexseev (1999: 265) has produced a typology (i.e. not a continuous measure) of regions based on their integrationist vs. separatist stance. The latter concept is very similar to the autonomist stance measured by Dowley. If Dowley's is a faithful indicator, its distribution should be broadly consistent with Alexseev's typology. This is confirmed in Figure 4.3. The increasing levels of separatism on Alexseev's measure (horizontal axis) correspond to increasing levels of autonomism on Dowley's index (vertical axis).

Figure 4.3: *Is Dowley's index consistent with Alexseev's typology?*

The claim is that the impact of ethnicity is reinforced by the institutional recognition of special rights to ethnic groups. Under Soviet times, one such special right afforded to some ethnic groups was official recognition of their "titular status" in a given territorial unit. In that unit, members of the titular ethnic group would enjoy cultural and symbolic rights. According to the institutionalist view, these special rights fostered the development of a distinct identity in the minds of the members of the privileged group (Zaslavsky 1993; Gorenburg 2003).

The territorial units with the greatest privileges would develop a greater sense of distinct identity and thus potential for separatist mobilisation. Since Soviet times, in the hierarchy of ethnically designated territorial units within the Russian Federation, the most privileged units were the Republics (ASSRs), followed by the autonomous okrugs and the Jewish autonomous oblast. Oblasts, by contrast, represented purely administrative divisions, lacking ethnic designation. Figure 4.4 shows that Dowley's index is consistent with the institutional factor of ethnic mobilisation. Indeed, Republics score highest on the index, followed by autonomous okrugs and, finally, by oblasts and krays.⁹²

Figure 4.4: *Federal status and Dowley's index*

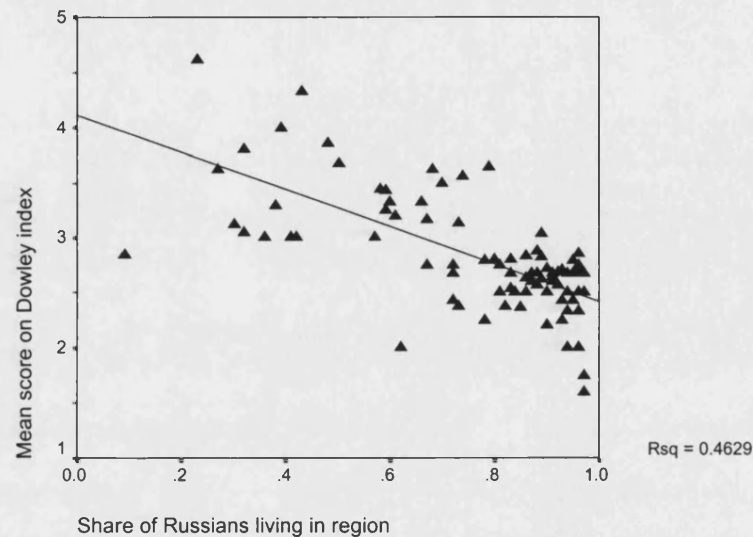


Source: elaborated from Table 1 in Dowley 1998: 370.

The distribution of Dowley's index also proves to be consistent with the widely held expectation that separatism is more likely to grow in territorial units endowed with independent economic potential. As Figure 4.5 indicates, among republics and autonomous okrugs, which on average are the most assertive types of units, Dowley's index decreases as the economic dependency on the federal centre increases. In this Figure, the categories of economic dependency from the centre are taken from Stavrakis, DeBardeleben and Black (1997: 227-229).⁹³

Of the structural conditions plausibly conducive to greater assertiveness, the last to be considered here is the ethnic distinctiveness of the region.⁹⁴ The simplest expectation is that regions with larger shares of ethnic, non-Russian, populations would have a greater potential for regionalist activation.

Figure 4.5: *Effect of economic dependency on assertiveness, by federal status*

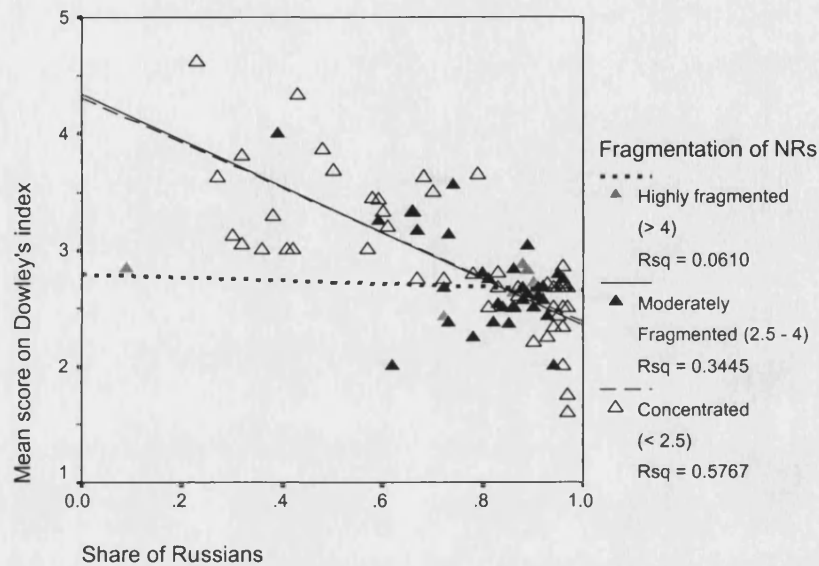
Figure 4.6: *Dowley's index and regional ethnic composition*

Source: elaborated from Table 1 in Dowley (1998: 370) and 1989 Census.

Dowley's index appears to conform to this hypothesis (see Figure 4.6). The level of regionalist assertiveness (vertical axis) decreases as the percentage of Russians in the region increases (horizontal axis). The Rsq of .46 indicates a strong association.

It is possible to specify further this simple tendency. In particular, stronger autonomy demands should be expected where the non-Russian population is more homogenous. By contrast, greater difficulty in playing the nationalist card in federal bargaining with the centre should be expected where the non-Russian population is fragmented into several different groups. It has been noted,⁹⁵ for example, that secession is unlikely in the North Caucasus republics that have two or more titular nationalities (such as Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachaevo-Cherkessia), because this would induce

Figure 4.7: *Interaction between share of Russians and fragmentation of non-Russian populations*



Source: own elaboration from Table 1 in Dowley (1998: 370) and 1989 Census.

The effect is strongest where non-Russians are concentrated in a small number of groups. The "effective number of groups" is calculated following Laakso and Taagepera's (1979) formula for the "effective number of parties". In the graph legend, regions with a smaller "effective number of groups" are labelled "concentrated" (they have an effective number of groups smaller than 2.5, as noted in the parentheses). The

Central appeasement

A key element of the main hypothesis is that the effect of regionalist assertiveness on electoral results should be investigated while controlling for the response that such assertiveness meets from the federal Centre. There is evidence to suggest that Moscow has selectively used political/legal and financial tools to appease the most vocal regions (see chapter 3).

Observers of the Russian (re-)federalisation process of the 1990s, through which the terms of the federal relations were negotiated and bargained upon, have noted several instances of asymmetric political appeasement. In this way, a sub-set of regions received privileged treatment from the Centre. In the periods leading up to the 1993 and the 1995 Duma elections, regions can be roughly grouped according to the level of appeasement they managed to extract from the Centre.

In the first period, from the collapse of the Soviet regime to the end of 1993, the most important forms of appeasement were arguably the special rights and privileges that a few regions received as inducement to sign the Federal Treaty of March 1992. These concessions were not enshrined in the Federal Treaty itself but represented side-deals. They were made in the republics of Bashkortostan, Kalmikiya, Karelia, Komi and Sakha (Kahn 2002: 126; Treisman 1999: 34). Another set of regions, while not receiving special treatment to the same extent, also managed to extract important concessions from the Centre. These include the Soviet-era Autonomous oblasts that were upgraded to republican status in 1991 (and became the republics of Adygeya, Altay, Karachaevo-Cherkessya, and Khakassya). The federal units where Yeltsin-appointed heads of administration were removed by the Russian president to appease local elites should also be added to this group (Matsuzato 2000); these are Krasnodar kray, Krasnoyarsk kray, Voronezh oblast, and Pskov oblast. All these units are considered "politically appeased" for the purposes of modelling the 1993 elections. A dichotomous variable is therefore produced for the 1993 models that marks these regions from the rest.

For the 1995 elections, primary examples of appeasement are represented by the first bilateral treaties signed by the Russian president with selected republics, starting with Tatarstan in February 1994. The first such treaties granted extensive rights and privileges (in the spheres of regional budgetary policies, taxation, control over natural

resources and cultural autonomy). Subsequent treaties signed with other regions varied in content, but generally and progressively carried less substantial benefits. Moreover, most regions did not receive any treaty until after the Duma elections and the start of the 1996 presidential campaign. In 1994 and 1995, only republics received bilateral treaties, not oblasts. The republics that received substantial privileges by means of a bilateral treaty before the 1995 elections are Bashkortostan, Kabardino-Balkaria, Sakha, North Ossetia, and Tatarstan (Kahn 2002: 158ff). These regions can be considered the recipients of clear political appeasement in the 1994-95 period.

To take into account the cumulative effect of appeasement that occurred before that period, the main instances of appeasement observed for the 1993 elections are also counted for the 1995 vote. As a result, for the 1995 models, appeased regions are those that either received substantial inducements to sign the Federal Treaty of 1992, or were granted important privileges and concessions in the bilateral treaties of 1994-95. This cumulative approach seems justified also in the light of the temporal proximity of the 1993 and the 1995 elections.

In the 1996-1999 period, leading up to the third Duma elections, centre-regional relations were characterised by waves of conflict and appeasement. Centre-regional conflict was heightened in 1997 when Chubais attempted to establish firmer central control over some recalcitrant regions (see chapter 8). Appeasement occurred in 1999 when Primakov forged a new tacit alliance with key regions. In general, the scope for central appeasement of vocal regions was limited in this period due to the 1998 financial crisis (see chapter 8). The units that can be considered relatively appeased are those that signed a bilateral treaty after the 1995 Duma elections,⁹⁶ although the contents of such treaties were less advantageous than those of earlier pacts. The extension of the bilateral treaty process to the non-autonomous (oblasts and krais) units was meant to cement an alliance between Yeltsin and the governors in view of the June 1996 presidential elections. Closer in time to the 1999 elections, the Kremlin confirmed its alliance with

⁹⁶ These regions are Komi Republic, Mariy El Republic, Chechen Republic, Chuvash Republic, Altay Kray, Krasnodar Kray, Krasnoyarsk Kray, Khabarovsk Kray, Amur Oblast, Astrakhan Oblast, Bryansk Oblast, Vologda Oblast, Voronezh Oblast, Ivanovo Oblast, Irkutsk Oblast, Kaliningrad Oblast, Kirov Oblast, Kostroma Oblast, Leningrad Oblast, Magadan Oblast, Moscow Oblast, Murmansk Oblast, Nizhny Novgorod Oblast, Omsk Oblast, Orenburg Oblast, Perm Oblast, Rostov Oblast, Samara Oblast, Saratov Oblast, Sakhalin Oblast, Sverdlovsk Oblast, Tver Oblast, Ulyanovsk Oblast, Chelyabinsk Oblast, Yaroslavl Oblast, St. Petersburg, Permyak Aut. Okrug, Taymyrskiy (Dolgano-N.) Aut. Okrug, Ust-Ordynskiy Buryat Aut. Okrug, and Evenk Aut. Okrug.

Tatarstan, when prime minister Primakov renewed the bilateral treaty of 1994 that gave the republic extensive privileges. Moreover, signs of bilateral accommodation can be seen in the fact that the Kremlin devolved shares of state companies to a selected number of regions (Khakass Republic, Krasnoyarsk Kray, Kemerovo Oblast and Novosibirsk Oblast). Regions are coded as "politically appeased" if they received any of the mentioned concessions from the Centre in the 1996-99 period.

In addition to the already mentioned tools of central appeasement, it is also useful to take into account central financial transfers to the regions. There is a body of literature that has found that financial flows from the Centre to selected regions were aimed at appeasing the strongest Yeltsin opponents in preparation for his re-election bid of June 1996 (Treisman 1999). Similarly, centre-regional financial relations may also have been used as an additional tool of appeasement of the most assertive regions in other periods (Lavrov 1998; Kuznetsova 2001). However, three obstacles stand in the way of using financial transfers as a sure gauge for appeasement. On the one hand, it is widely recognised that financial flows between Moscow and the regions are extremely difficult to monitor. They can take several forms (direct transfers, tax relief, subsidies to regional enterprises, etc.) and a large part goes undetected because it is covert or flows through informal channels. The available information allows specialists to gauge only broad and partial trends. On the other hand, the privileged financial treatment granted to key regions is often enshrined in what is here called "political appeasement", especially in the early bilateral treaties. This means that part of the possible effect of financial appeasement is already captured by the variables discussed above. Finally, federal transfers to poorer regions may also aim at alleviating need, rather than simply at appeasing regionalist demands. However, this is not troubling in the present context because both types of transfers can be expected to induce lower assertiveness, regardless of whether this is due to economic dependency on the centre or to financial appeasement.

In any case, the variable on the financial transfers will only have a tentative role in the model, as a control for any residual effect beyond the effect channelled through the other appeasement tools. The variable for federal transfers is measured so as to include budget loans, and it is calculated as percentage of regional expenditures. For 1993, the source of this data is Lev Freinkman, Daniel Treisman, and Stepan Titov's *Subnational*

Budgeting in Russia: preempting a potential crisis (1999).⁹⁷ Unfortunately, this volume does not cover 1999 and, for the elections of that year, data on federal transfers to regional budgets comes from Raj Desai, Lev Freinkman, and Itzhak Goldberg's *Fiscal Federalism and Regional Growth: Evidence from the Russian Federation in the 1990s* (2003).⁹⁸ This is the data of the average transfers received by the regions in 1996-1999.

This section has presented the operationalisation choices for the main hypothesis, regionalist assertiveness, and for the control variables of central political appeasement. The next section is devoted to the operational definition of the other hypotheses and variables in the models. These variables relate either to the "supply side" of the electoral market or to the fairness of the electoral process itself (in terms of Governor's involvement in the election and of his use of administrative resources to affect results).

4.2 The supply side of the electoral market

Similar to the market, electoral outcomes depend on both demand and supply forces. Voters demand policies, and candidates offer themselves as channels of representation (Dawns 1957). On the demand side, it is argued here that a fundamental distinction affecting the electoral chances of the independents runs between functional and territorial demands or issues. On the supply side, the 'market value' of candidates depends on 1) their personal assets (finances, local visibility, control of local media, etc.); and 2) the added value of their party label (in the case of party candidates).

The personal profile of candidates will affect the district returns for independents depending on whether such personal qualities are found predominantly among independent or party candidates in the given district. As for the impact of party labels, they can affect independents' success in a district if candidates of valued parties are nominated in the given SMD. Each of these supply-side factors is operationalised in the next sub-sections.

⁹⁷ More precisely, the data is contained in Annex Table 3, "Budget Arrears, transfers, and Deficit as Percentage of Expenditures" (pp. 88-90) and it is the authors' estimate based on the data from the Ministry of Finance and Roskomstat.

⁹⁸ The table that contains the data is titled "Budgetary transfers as percentage of regional governmental revenue, 1996-1999 average", pp. 15-16.

Notable candidates

The first type of supply-side factors to be considered is the personal assets of candidates. The literature on electoral studies suggests that some candidates stand greater (*a priori*) chances of success than others because they can finance richer campaigns, they are more visible or better connected than others, or because they can count on their record of constituency servicing as district incumbents. In short some candidates can rely on a "personal vote" based on personal resources (Herrera and Yawn 1999; Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina 1986; Ansolabehere, Snyder and Stewart 2000; Carey and Shugart 1995; for Russia, Golosov 2002; Hale 2005).

Of all of the types of personal assets that are politically relevant and readily measurable (political and economic elite status, and incumbency), those deriving from economic positions cannot be fully studied here. This is because the information that candidates submitted to the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) in the 1990s, though rather extensive, does not include any hint as to the political importance of the economic interests linked to the candidate. In other words, it is virtually impossible, without a detailed, case-by-case, study of thousands of candidates in hundreds of districts, to determine whether the company they declare to head is marginal or fundamental to the district economy (see chapter 3). This is unfortunate, given that it prevents the examination of the effect of economic notability. There is also no information on campaign spending for SMD candidates. As a partial remedy for this, expert assessments of the financial backing received by a candidate, gathered by Henry Hale, will be used for the 1999 elections only (more on this variable below).

As for the political elite status, federal and regional/local political officials are considered separately. High regional political officials are more visible and command more administrative resources than the average candidate. The coding of candidates as members of federal or regional political elites is taken from the Essex University Election Database, files on Russian elections in the SMDs.⁹⁹ The information on occupational status, naturally, is measured at the candidate level. For example, federal political positions range from high federal state officials, such as federal ministers (or

⁹⁹ The webpage of the Essex project is www.essex.ac.uk/elections/. The Essex database contains some discrepancies with the official data of the CEC, which had to be rectified. For example, the last-ranked candidate of SMD 68 of the Essex 1999 database does not appear in the official results published by the CEC and has been deleted from the analysis.

vice ministers), to judges of federal courts, army officials, members of federal state agencies, etc. Regional political elite members include, for example, members of regional executive or legislative branches (regional ministers or members of the office of executive heads), regional capital city mayor (and official of capital city governments), members of regional or local legislative assemblies, etc.

For the present purposes it is necessary to aggregate the information at the district level, which is the unit of analysis of this study (see chapter 5). The focus here is not on inter-candidate differences within districts, but on inter-district differences in the pools of independent vs. party candidates. The district aggregate measure of the nomination of the political elite in each district is achieved by counting how many of the district candidates falling within a given occupational category run as independents and how many run as party candidates. A dichotomous variable assigns a code of 1 to the districts where a majority of the regional political elite runs as independent (0 for all other SMDs). Another binary variable does the same for the federal elite occupations. This results in the two variables "RegPol" and "FedPol" of the analysis chapters (6 to 8). The effect of incumbency is also expressed by means of a dummy variable. Districts where one of the independents is the district incumbent are coded 1, all other districts are given a value of 0. The variable is labelled "Incumb".

For the 1999 elections only, data originally gathered by Henry Hale allows for the study of the impact of financial backing on the success of the independents in district races. The data is drawn from several sources close to the district races, and has been collated by Henry Hale and Robert Orttung, as described in Hale (2005), where it is for use to investigate the impact of financial-industrial groups as substitutes for parties. As Hale explains, the sources of his data on the backing received by candidates from "Financial-Industrial Groups" (FIGs) include "one major party's campaign headquarters' internal assessments as of November 11, 1999; written reports on the Duma elections submitted by the East-West Institute's network of observers; Russian-language radio reports by Radio Svoboda correspondents (broadcasts during fall 1999, transcripts at <http://www.svoboda.org/archive/elections99>), and the following sources: The Moscow Times, December 21, 1999, ISI Emerging Markets; Nezavisimaya Gazeta, October 19, 1999, ISI Emerging Markets; and anonymous regional analysts in personal communication with the author" (Hale 2005).

To perform the analysis presented in this thesis, this data has been linked to information on candidates' nomination (party vs. independent) and aggregated at the district level. The number of candidates that, according to Hale's coding, are sponsored by large economic interests has been calculated for each district.¹⁰⁰ A categorical variable, "FigCat", has been created and specified into two dummy variables. The first dummy variable, "FigInd", assigns a value of one to districts where a majority of FIG-backed candidates run as independent, and zero to all other SMDs. The second dummy variable, labelled "FigPar", marks the SMDs where this type of candidates tends to run under a party banner. Districts where either no backing at all was detected, or it was evenly shared by the two pools of candidates, represent the base category.

Party challengers

In terms of electoral value to the candidates, not all party labels are the same. Established labels have a clear image in voters' minds, which helps the latter make their voting choices. Voters know what they can broadly expect of a candidate from his party attachment, which thus provides an informational shortcut for ill-informed voters to make complex decisions. This "brand name effect" is observed in established democracies with stable and rooted party systems. It is much less plausible in the fluid and young Russian electoral context. It is nevertheless worth testing the impact of a challenge by major parties to the independents, and observing if this effect increases with time, as the notion of the emergence of a brand name effect would suggest.

In addition to major parties, regionalist parties are of special interest given the hypotheses being tested in this study. To the extent that a party can claim to have genuine local roots, it can neutralise the advantage that the independents are expected to enjoy over national parties in articulating and representing regionalist demands. As noted in the preceding chapter, true regionalist parties are very rare. In fact, in the course of the three Duma elections under analysis, only the 1995 "Transformation of the Fatherland" can be considered genuinely regionalist in the sense of defending the interests of one region only (i.e. Sverdlovsk or the broader Urals area). There are, however, parties that despite lacking a territorial basis of support advertise their supposed closeness to the interests of the regions generally. Examples include the 1993

¹⁰⁰ Usually, no more than one candidate per district belongs to such category.

and 1995 'Party of Russian Unity and Accord' (PRES), and the 1995 "Bloc of 89 regions", which can be called "pseudo-regionalist". The operationalisation here of the challenge posed by candidates of major, regionalist and pseudo-regionalist parties to the independents is very straightforward. Each party has its own dummy variable and each district is coded 1 if the given party nominated its candidate there, zero if not. It should be emphasised that these party dummies do not belong to one categorical variable, but are separate variables. Indeed, because the unit of analysis is the SMD (not the candidates), cases take a value of 1 on more than one party dummy simultaneously, as more than one party usually nominate candidates in an SMD.

The electoral process and Governor's involvement

To continue with the market analogy, the smooth operation of the mechanism of supply and demand assumes that market forces operate in a fair and competitive environment. Thus, when markets don't run smoothly, the market environment is a key aspect to look at when trying to locate the reasons for anomalies. Economists, for example, suspend the assumption of fair competition to study the effect of oligopolistic settings on prices. Similarly, the level of competitiveness of the electoral environment affects electoral results and should be taken into account.

As explained in chapter 3, the hypothesis is that regional "administrative resources" can be used by the governor to bend the electoral process to the advantage of a preferred candidate. The governorship¹⁰¹ is arguably the most influential political institution at the regional level. The degree of control exerted by regional governors over regional politics varies from region to region. Those who enjoy greater influence are often able to control the regional media, and to influence regional economic interests and law enforcement agencies (both police and courts). This state of affairs also varied over time. In the oblasts, governors' grip on regional politics has increased towards the 1999 Duma elections, after they passed from being appointed by Yeltsin to being popularly elected.

To measure the impact of "administrative resources" on the chance of independent candidates, two steps are necessary. On the one hand, it is necessary to determine which candidate (independent or party-nominated) received the governor's support in each

¹⁰¹ It should be remembered that, for the sake of simplicity, with the term "governor" I indicate all executive heads of the units of the Russian federation, despite the fact that in most republics these are formally called "presidents".

SMD (if any). On the other hand, in order for such support to be effective, the governor must be in control of the political process in his regions. Each of these two elements taken individually cannot convey the full picture of the impact of administrative resources. Indeed, the effect of governor's support for a given candidate can be expected to interact with his control over regional politics.

On the first dimension (i.e. which candidate received his governor's support in each SMD), this thesis again utilises data gathered by Hale (Hale 2005). Hale was one of the first students of the phenomenon of "administrative resources" (or "machine politics") in the regions. Most recently, he has argued that administrative tools in the hands of regional governors have constituted a functional substitute to political parties by providing candidates with the campaign benefits that normally accrue to party candidate in western, established, democracies (Hale 2005). However, Hale does not distinguish between independent and party candidates as recipients of governors' support and cannot assess whether the impact of administrative resources differs for party or independent candidates. Moreover, Hale's discussion of governors' support does not take into account that this factor should be expected to affect the elections to different degrees in different regions. As mentioned, this is because regional governors vary in their ability to control the political process in their respective regions.

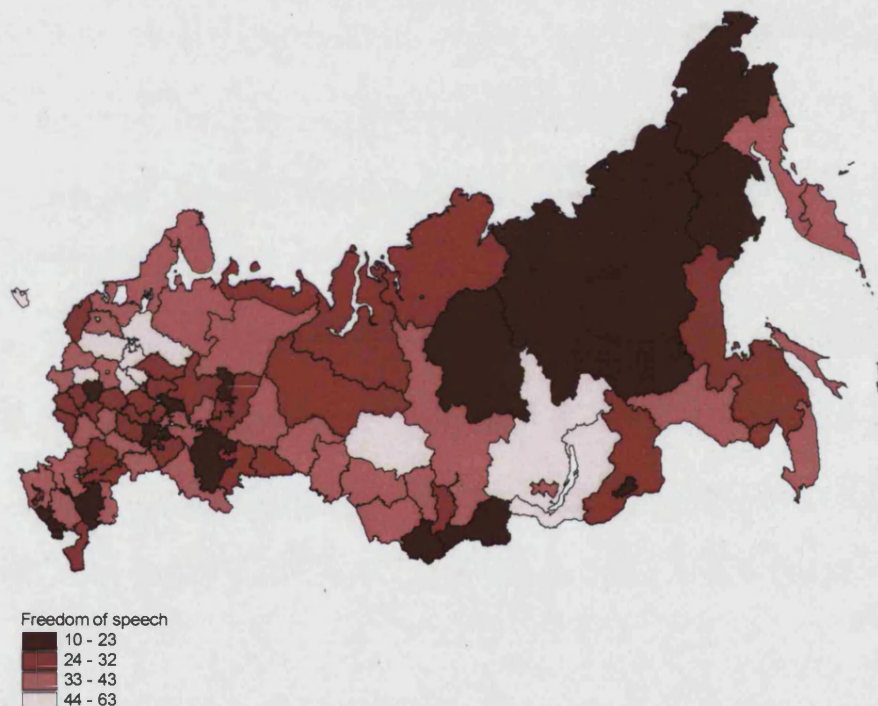
These questions are the key concerns of this thesis (see chapter 8). The data used by Hale in his study was kindly supplied to this author, and it forms the basis for a categorical variable, labelled here "GovSup". The sources of Hale's data overlap here to some extent with those he used to detect candidate backing from financial-industrial groups. They include "assessments by the East-West Institute, Radio Svoboda correspondents, and a major party's campaign headquarters' internal assessments as of November 11, 1999" (Hale: 2005). Of the two indicators used by Hale, it is the "liberal" version that is used here.¹⁰² On the basis of this data, a categorical variable is created and entered in the 1999 models. The variable, "GovCat", has three categories, and two

¹⁰² As Hale explains, "when assessments from different sources conflicted, judgement calls were made by Henry Hale based on the content of their reports. When there was insufficient information in the assessments to make a judgement, preference was given to East-West Institute assessments since their evaluative process was the most systematic". The "liberal" version of Hale's coding, used as a basis in the present analysis, elides a large number of missing observations. It codes as "governor supports no one" (instead of "missing") the cases when there is no indication in any of the sources cited that the governor supported any SMD candidate. Also "when there is some indication that a governor backs a candidate but

dummy variables. The first, "GovInd", codes as "1" the districts where the governor supported an independent; the second, "GovPar", marks districts where he supported a party candidate. The base category is the remaining scenario, in which no governor's support was observed.

However, as mentioned above, it is not sufficient to determine the governor's preference for one candidate or the other. It is also necessary to assess the degree of competitiveness vs. control exhibited by regional politics. Indeed, a preference for a given candidate may remain ineffectual if the governor does not have the means to translate it into actual electoral advantages.

Map 4.2: *Regional levels of freedom of speech*



There are several ways to understand political competitiveness and control,¹⁰³ but a key dimension related to the fairness of the electoral process is that concerning media control and regulation. An index of this dimension has been compiled within a project

it is not conclusive enough to count for" his stricter version of the indicator, the liberal version codes the candidate as supported by the governor (Hale 2005).

¹⁰³ Reisinger and Moraski (2003) have recently studied regional levels of democracy and competitiveness. Other authors who worked on the subject include McMann and Petrov (2000).

called "Public Examination"¹⁰⁴ produced by the Russian Union of Journalists and other associations. The index is called "freedom of speech" and is the result of a comprehensive investigation of several aspects of the way information is produced and disseminated in each region in 1999. The variable using this index in the following analysis is labelled "Freesp". Map 4.2 above shows cross regional variations along this variable, which is used to indicate the degree of control exerted by regional governors over the political process in their regions. In the map, darker areas correspond to higher control (i.e. lower freedom of speech).

Urbanisation and Campaign access to districts

Two additional variables are introduced in the models. The first one is the degree of urbanisation of the district (specified as the share of the district population living in urban centres; that is, towns of more than 100,000 inhabitants). The data come from a publication of the Moscow Carnegie Center (McFaul, Petrov and Ryabov 2000: 565-72), which has the merit of presenting some socio-demographic indicators, derived from the 1989 population census aggregated at the level of electoral district. As noted, the role of urbanisation on party development is a traditional hypothesis dating back to Stein Rokkan and his studies on the emergence of party systems during the transition to mass politics at the turn of the 19th century. It is posited that parties first develop in urbanised areas, and then attempt to penetrate the less urbanised provinces. The explanation for this pattern focused on the greater circulation of printed media and concentration of educated citizens in urban centres (Rokkan 1970). In the Russian case, as noted in chapter 3, urban centres are more accessible to party organisation than rural areas.

A second aspect of this accessibility problem points to the lack of transport infrastructures in remote areas to explain why parties initially neglect them in their mobilisation efforts. This is here captured by a separate variable, which measures the share of a region's population living in areas "difficult to reach". Data on this variable is taken from the Russian ministry of finance,¹⁰⁵ where it figures as one of the elements of a formula used by the ministry to calculate the financial transfers needed by each region. The variable, labelled "Remote", is a composite index of two other variables. The first

¹⁰⁴ "Public Examination: Evaluation of Freedom of Speech in Russia (1999-2000)". The index used here is found on pp.14-15. At www.freepress.ru/win/english.html (accessed June 2003).

variable ("Var. A" in Table 4.3) is the proportion of the regional population living in areas where deliveries of goods can only occur within limited periods of the year;¹⁰⁶ the second variable ("Var. B") is the proportion of the regional population living in mountainous areas.

Table 4.3: *Population living in areas difficult to reach (%)*, selected regions.

Region	Var. A	Var. B	"Remote"
Magadan Oblast	100%	0%	100%
Koryak Aut. Okrug	100%	0%	100%
Nenets Aut. Okrug	100%	0%	100%
Taimyr Aut. Okrug	100%	0%	100%
Chukotka Aut. Okrug	100%	0%	100%
Evenk Aut. Okrug	100%	0%	100%
Sakha (Yakutia), Republic of	84%	0%	84%
Karachevo-Cherkess, Republic of	0%	49%	49%
Altay, Republic of	46%	25%	46%
Yamalo-Nenets Aut. Okrug	45%	0%	45%
Khanty-Mansi Aut. Okrug	40%	0%	40%
Dagestan, Republic of	0%	38%	38%
Kabardin-Balkar, Republic of	0%	36%	36%
North Ossetia, Republic of	0%	31%	31%
Komi-Permyak Aut. Okrug	28%	0%	28%
Tomsk Oblast	23%	0%	23%
Buryatia, Republic of	7%	19%	19%
Tyva Republic	19%	2%	19%
Ingushetia, Republic of	0%	18%	18%
Krasnoyarsk Krai	16%	0%	16%
Kamchatka Oblast	16%	0%	16%
Komi, Republic of	14%	0%	14%
Amur Oblast	12%	0%	12%
Sakhalin Oblast	12%	0%	12%
Arkhangelsk Oblast	12%	0%	12%
Adygeya, Republic of	0%	10%	10%
Khabarovsk Krai	9%	0%	9%
Irkutsk Oblast	9%	0%	9%
Jewish Aut. Okrug	8%	0%	8%
Chita Oblast	7%	0%	7%
Karelia, Republic of	5%	0%	5%

¹⁰⁵ Data taken from www.minfin.ru (accessed August 2003).

¹⁰⁶ The formula used by the Ministry of Finance can be translated as "share of population in districts characterised by limited periods of deliveries" (the original version refers to the population "в районах с ограниченными сроками завоза продукции").

Tyumen Oblast	5%	0%	5%
Perm Oblast	2%	0%	2%
Primorsky Krai	2%	0%	2%
Murmansk Oblast	2%	0%	2%
<i>Russian Federation</i>	3%	1%	3%

Var. A: Percentage of regional population leaving in areas with limited periods of goods deliveries.

Var. B: Percentage of regional population living in mountainous areas.

"Remote": Percentage of regional population living in areas difficult to reach.

All other regions (not listed) score 0% on all three variables.

Source: Russian Ministry of Finance, www.minfin.ru (accessed August 2003).

The source of data used by the ministry of finance are the regions themselves in the first case, and bill of laws/decrees ("проект постановления") in the second case. The "Remote" variable is a composite index of the two variables, which simply takes the maximum between the two variables. In practice this means taking the values of the second variable for most regions, and the values of the first variable only for the republics of Adygeya, Dagestan, Ingushetiya, Kabardino Balkaria, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, North Ossetia, and Buryatiya (See Table 4.3).

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the operational definition of the independent variables called for by the theoretical framework of chapter 3. Some variables that are specific to one election only (e.g. party challengers who take different party labels in different elections) will be presented in detail in the context of the actual empirical analysis of the relevant election. Moreover, descriptive statistics will also be presented in the chapters containing the statistical analysis (chapter 6-8).

The difficulty of identifying a single satisfactory indicator for such complex social phenomena as "regionalist assertiveness" across all regions and several years has been noted. The case for using Dowley's index rests on the fact that any alternative measure the author would devise to describe synthetically the whole set of 89 regions along this dimension is bound to embody a degree of subjective judgement and would thus invite suspicions of systematic bias. Some descriptive/impressionistic corroboration of the chosen index was drawn from comparing it with other indicators of relevant dimensions. While not perfect, the data used in this research allows for a meaningful statistical

analysis with which to explore new aspects of Russian voting behaviour. Given the current early stage of the scholarly understanding of Russian electoral process in the SMDs, this kind of analysis seems useful.

Having established the context and content of the election analyses to follow, before moving on to the analyses themselves, it remains necessary to present the methodological strategy behind them. This is done in the next chapter, and it includes the operational definition of the dependent variable.

Designing the Empirical Analysis

“Once you know that hierarchies exist, you see them everywhere”

Kreft and De Leeuw (1998: 1)¹⁰⁷

This chapter completes the set-up necessary before the presentation of the empirical analysis of the votes. Up until this point, the phenomenon under investigation has been referred to as the “success of the independents”. In this chapter, the notion receives an operational definition so that it can be measured and thus function as the dependent variable of the statistical models. This task requires a prior definition of the unit of analysis: should individuals, districts or regions constitute the level of inquiry? Both steps – the definition of the unit of analysis and the operationalisation of the dependent variable – are presented in the first section of this chapter.

The second section further specifies the unit of the analysis; bringing out the particular characteristics of the investigation which so lend it to multilevel analysis. The section defines and justifies the strategy for case selection and also describes the hierarchical structure of the data; i.e. how the units of the analysis (the SMDs) are “nested” within higher-order units (regions). This ‘nesting’ is of central importance to the design of the analysis. Coupled with the fact that what are taken to be the key explanatory variables of the ‘success of the independents’ apply at the higher level (regions), the hierarchical data structure was of crucial importance in determining the choice of multilevel modelling as the quantitative technique used to test the hypotheses. The final section of this chapter provides a detailed defence of this choice within a reflection on the role of context in political science explanations.

5.1 The dependent variable: unit of analysis and measurement

The stated aim of this research is to explain cross-district differences in the electoral success of independent candidates, but how should "success of independent candidates" be conceptualised and measured?

Taken on its own, the formulation "success of independent candidates" suggests a highly simplified, indeed dichotomised, approach to electoral politics. All independents are grouped together in opposition to all party candidates. Obviously, in reality these two "camps" are internally highly heterogeneous along several dimensions. The reason for overlooking this heterogeneity here is to study the role of partisanship as such in the Russian elections. With this goal in mind, the key dividing line between candidates becomes their type of nomination – i.e. party vs. non-party (independent) nomination. However, as noted in chapter 3, this dichotomous approach does not preclude an assessment of which party/ies in particular posed the greatest challenge to independents in the SMDs. Nor does it preclude the consideration of candidates' strategic motivations for running either as independent or party nominees.

In fact, candidates running as "independents" are often party men who disown their party membership for campaign purposes. Conversely, some of the candidates nominated by parties, even those elected through party lists, are in fact independent politicians who lack party membership. Of the deputies elected to the first Duma through party lists, only 70% were in fact party members (White, Rose and McAllister 1997: 183). Even the most "disciplined" Russian party, the KPRF, had about 15 percent of non-members on its PR list in 1999 (Golosov and Shevchenko 2002: 147). Despite this gap between formal nomination and real membership, it seems reasonable to posit that nomination decisions are not made lightly or by chance. On the contrary, these decisions reflect the perception of the likely success associated with each option (independent vs. party nomination). For this reason, it is especially interesting to include within the category of "independents" those party men who decide to run as independents. Their case is even more revealing of the perceived strategic edge offered by the different types of nomination.

¹⁰⁷ Quoted in Jones and Gould (2003: 1c).

As for the operationalisation and measurement of the "success of independents", several options are conceivable. This section shows advantages and limitations of several plausible measurements of the dependent variable, and argues for the overall merits of the chosen one. The first step in the process of selecting a way to operationalise the dependent variable is to choose the unit of analysis. Should the "success of independents" be measured at the level of electoral districts, at the level of the units of the Russian Federation (regions), or at the level of individual candidates?

If candidates are the units of analysis, the dependent variable could be measured as candidates' vote shares. More precisely, to find factors of *cross-district* variability, only independent candidates should form the sample and their electoral returns should be related to the characteristics of the districts they run in, while controlling for the personal traits of individual candidates (incumbency, campaign resources, etc.). Alternatively, both independent and party candidates could be included in the sample in order to study the effect of independent nomination on electoral returns and the variability of this effect across districts. A problem with these two approaches is that electoral returns for an individual candidate (the dependent variable) are directly and inversely related to the score on the same variable for the other candidates running in the same district. This violates the assumption of regression analysis that measurements on the dependent variable should be independent from one another.¹⁰⁸

A simple way to avoid this problem is to measure electoral success at the level of electoral district. The choice of SMDs as units of analysis is also backed by the substantive argument that electoral competition occurs at this level – that is, votes are counted at, and results apply to, the level of district. Indeed, a candidate's vote share has little substantive meaning when abstracted from the district in which he runs.¹⁰⁹ Most importantly, the choice of the SMD as the unit of analysis corresponds to the research task of explaining spatial differences in independents' success. Indeed, "the different levels of analysis permit different questions to be addressed and lead to different understandings" (Erikson et al. 2002: 11).

¹⁰⁸ Golosov has addressed this problem by taking into account the success of the challengers faced by each candidates (Golosov 2000), but this does not seem to solve the issue.

¹⁰⁹ Moreover, several variables discussed below (explanatory or control variables) are aggregated at the level of district.

The limitation of taking districts as the unit is that all conclusions of the analysis will refer not to voters but to districts showing this or that aggregate characteristic of voters. The dependent variable is the district *aggregate* vote for independents, rather than individual voter's preferences. This implies a "shift of meaning" from individuals to SMDs (Hüttner 1981, in Snijder and Bosker 1999: 13) and is related to the problem of "ecological fallacy", which warns against inferring individual voters' behaviour from patterns observed at the aggregate level (Robinson 1950). However, conclusions generated at the aggregate level have a legitimate purpose in their own right, as they answer specific questions about aggregate phenomena. In other words, a strong case can be made (and has been since Durkheim) that social phenomena are not always strictly reducible to methodological individualism. As one recent study reminds us, "political behaviour is social; groups of people interacting with one another do things, which are different from what would have occurred from the summation of atomized individuals" (Erikson et al. 2002: 10).

If "independents' success" is a property of districts, how is it measured at this level? Determining the unit of analysis narrows down the range of plausible measurements of the dependent variable, but, even so, the range remains rather wide. To help visualise the options, Table 5.1 presents an example of district electoral returns. The pros and cons of the main possible measurements are then reviewed:

Table 5.1: *Example of district electoral results (SMD 32, 1999)*

Candidate	Nomination	Vote share (%)
A	Party	40.26
B	Indep	35.57
C	Indep	6.96
D	Party	3.62
E	Indep	2.60
F	Party	2.49
Against all		4.73%
Invalid votes		3.80 %

A) The district winner

An intuitive strategy would be to focus on the district winner. If he/she is an independent, then independents are "successful" in the SMD. If the winner is a party

candidate, independents are "unsuccessful", as in the example of Table 5.1. This measurement of the dependent variable equates "success" of the independents with their winning the district seat. This has the advantage of being a very intuitive and consequential notion of success. On the other hand, this measurement is not free from limitations, as it overlooks a great deal of information on the candidates who run in the SMD but do not happen to win.

In multicandidate districts like Russia's, the average number of candidates has been around 7, 12 and 10 in the three elections, with several SMDs having over 15 candidates. If attention is focused on the SMD winner only, this results in a significant loss of information. It could well be that a party candidate wins the seat with 30 percent of the vote, but that the remaining 70 percent goes to the independents. In such a case, it seems of some interest to understand why 70 percent of the voters preferred independent candidates, even though this vote did not translate into a victory for any of them.

B) Highest ranking

A measurement that takes into account some information beyond the district winner is the highest ranking obtained by any independent in the given SMD. In the example provided by Table 5.1, this would take the value of 2 (i.e. the best position achieved by independents is a second place). Thus, even though the district winner in Table 5.1 is not an independent, this measurement does reflect the fact that independents performed rather well. However, there are three problems with this measurement:

The first problem is that comparisons between districts are problematic. Two districts may both score 2 (i.e. a second place is the highest rank achieved by independents), but at the same time they may have a very different number of candidates – one district may have ten candidates running, the other only two. In this case a score of 2 would mean very different things in the two districts.

The second problem is that highest ranking does not reflect the level of support associated with a given ranking. A second place could be associated with any vote share between 0 and 49.9 percent.

The third problem, which is closely related to the second, is that this measurement discards a great deal of information on the other independent candidates running in the

SMD. One independent (the most successful) may achieve a second place, but the others may turn out to be 9th and 10th.

C) Average ranking

The third limitation of measurement B is partially avoided if one considers the *average*, instead of the highest, ranking reached by the independents. In the example of Table 5.1, this would be $(2+3+5=10, 10/3=)$ 3.3. As an average, this does take into account the ranking of all independents. However, it is subject to the first two limitations of measurement B. It is insensitive to the number of independent candidates running (for example a score of 3 can be obtained both where only four candidates run, and where as many as 8 do, thus overlooking a substantive difference); and there is no way to gauge the level of support (vote share) associated with a given score. Moreover, it only marginally improves the third problem of measurement B, as it is insensitive to the "spread" around the mean of the ranking of individual independents.

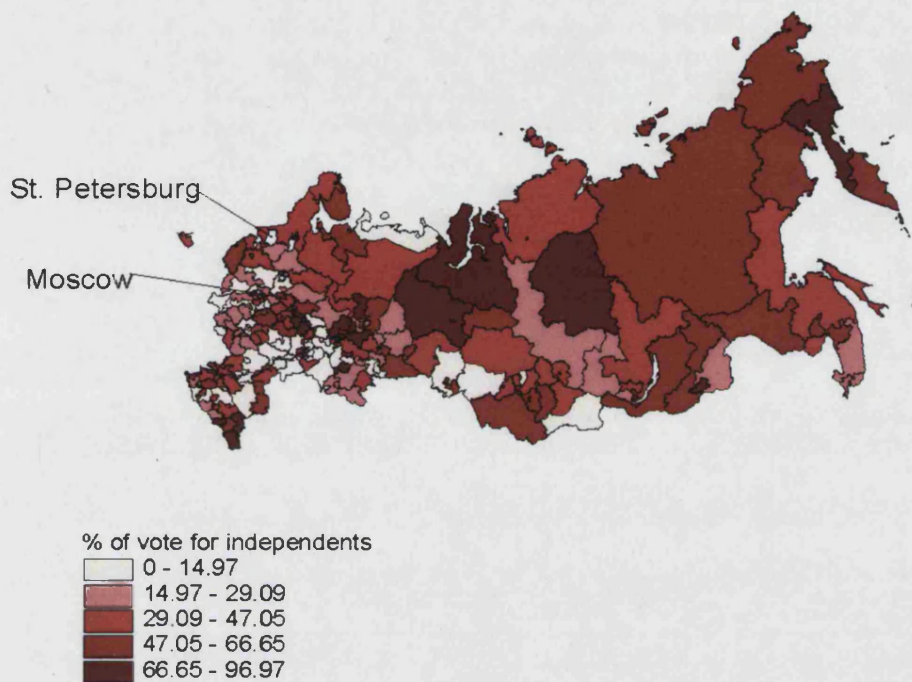
D) Total vote share

A measurement that takes into account the level of support of all the independents in the district is the total of their vote shares. In the example of Table 5.1, this variable takes the values of 45 percent (i.e. the sum of the vote shares received by independent candidates B, C and E). In comparison to other measurements, this has the advantage of using information related to all independents running in the SMD. It also offers a quick measure of whether independents or party candidates received a majority of the vote in the district. However, measurement D also has a limitation in its comparability across districts. For example, a large value of measurement D can be due to 1) a few strong candidates, or 2) a large number of electorally marginal independents. In other words, the measurement is insensitive to the *concentration* of the vote for the independents.

Indeed, equating the two scenarios may seem counterintuitive, as independents' success seems to be greater in situation 1) than in 2). However, this is not necessarily the case, as one can argue that what counts is the total share of the district voters who prefer independent to party candidates, regardless of how well such voters and candidates co-ordinate and concentrate their votes. This view seems best grounded for the present purposes. To see the advantages of this measurement compared to just

looking at the district winner, Map 5.1 (below) can be contrasted to Map 1.1 in the Introduction. The map below clearly conveys a greater deal of information and detail.

Map 5.1: *Measuring the success of independent candidates as total vote share, 1995*



As made clear by the above discussion, the selection of a measurement for the dependent variable requires some degree of subjective judgement over the notion of "electoral success". No measurement is free from a degree of subjectivism. Among plausible measurements, D seems the best suited to investigate cross-district differences in independents' support. It improves on key flaws of other measurements by taking into account a great deal of information on all independents in the district. Its limitation – insensitivity to the level of concentration of the vote for independents – is tolerable given the underlying notion of electoral success that is chosen in this study.

5.2 Case selection and data structure

Given the concept and measurement of the "success of independents" and the choice of districts as the unit of analysis described above, which cases should be selected for

analysis? That is, which districts (SMDs) should be considered? The question is relevant because, in a number of SMDs, independents did not run at all,¹¹⁰ while in others *only* independents ran.¹¹¹

One strategy would be to drop the cases where either only independents or no independents at all stood for election. This, however, is not acceptable because it would entail a great loss of valuable information. Indeed, the fact that the candidate supply of a district is so skewed in either direction (party or independent) is, on average, a symptom of the fact that the district is deeply unfavourable to either party or independent candidates, which is precisely the kind of phenomenon this study seeks to explain. The adopted strategy, therefore, is to include all SMDs for which official results are available.¹¹² By doing so, it should be acknowledged that the adopted understanding of the “success of the independents” is somewhat stretched to include the notion that total absence and total presence of independent candidates denote extreme low and extreme high “success”, respectively. This is consistent with the focus of the inquiry being on “what factors make districts favourable/unfavourable to the independents”. As seen in chapter 3, some of these factors operate directly, while others also have an effect on the entry decisions of party and independent candidates. Excluding cases with only/no independents would prevent that second element of the analysis.

The analysis takes into account the complex causal order posited by the explanatory framework (chapter 3). In particular, statistical tests reflect the fact that such region-level explanatory variables as regionalist assertiveness and geographic accessibility have both direct and mediated effects on the independents’ success, the latter flowing through the entry decisions of parties and the nomination decisions of notable candidates. It is not strictly necessary to use a formal two-stage model to observe the direct and mediated effects. By sequentially entering in the model the variables

¹¹⁰ There were 10, 5 and 3 districts with no independent candidate in 1993, 1995 and 1999, respectively.

¹¹¹ This occurred in 22, 2 and 5 SMDs in 1993, 1995 and 1999, respectively.

¹¹² In 1993, the election did not take place in the five districts of the Republic of Tatarstan, where the authorities boycotted the vote, and in the single district of Chechnya (N = 219). In 1995 elections were held in all 225 districts, while in 1999 the Chechen war meant that the election could not take place in the Chechen district (N = 224). In some districts the election was invalid, and was repeated several months later, because the option “against all” received a plurality of the votes. These districts are included in the analysis. To take the repeat election instead, would mean to abstract from the context of the election campaign, which would make these races less than comparable to the rest (the number of contestants is generally low and there are hardly any party candidates running in repeat elections).

belonging to different causal "stages", it is possible to observe direct and indirect effects. This will become clearer in the analysis chapters (6-8).

Data structure: SMDs in regions

It has been noted that the SMDs, the units of the analysis here, are nested within regions. The technical implications of this hierarchical data structure are discussed in section 5.3 below. Tables 5.2 and 5.3 in this section present the details of its configuration.

Table 5.2: *Data structure*

Level	Number of observations			Meaning
	1993	1995	1999	
1	219	225	224	Single-Member Districts (SMDs)
2	87 ^(*)	89	88 ^(*)	Regions

^(*) Elections did not take place in two regions in 1993, nor in one region in 1999.
Source: elaborated from CEC data.

In Table 5.2, the first column reports the hierarchical level of the data (level 1 for SMDs; level 2 for regions). The next three columns show the number of districts and regions used in the analysis for each election year (i.e. districts and regions in which elections in fact took place that year). In 1993, Chechnya refused to hold the vote, and Tatarstan officially boycotted it,¹¹³ bringing the total number of districts down from 225 to 219. Similarly, elections did not take place in Chechnya in 1999.

Table 5.3 reports how many districts are contained in how many regions, both under the initial arrangement of 1993 and after the redrawing of district boundaries occurred in 1995. The reallocation of districts affected only some regions and was decided by Federal Law (*zakon*) N.146-F3 of 17 August 1995 (republished 10 September 1999). The first column in the table represents the number of SMDs in a region; the two columns on the right report the number of regions in each districting arrangement that contain that number of SMDs noted on the same horizontal in the first column. The

¹¹³ In four out of the five SMDs located in Tatarstan, turnout was below 25%. In one SMD, only one candidate was registered. In both cases, the results were invalid. This region held SMD vote in March 1994, after the signing of a bilateral treaty with Yeltsin.

federal unit endowed with the highest number of plurality seats is the city of Moscow with 15 SMDs.

Table 5.3: *Number of SMDs in regions*

SMDs in a Region	Number of Regions	
	1993	1995 and 1999
1	35	38
2	29	25
3	4	5
4	10	10
5	3	3
6	3	2
7	2	3
8	1	1
10	1	-
11	-	1
15	1	1

Source: elaborated from CEC data.

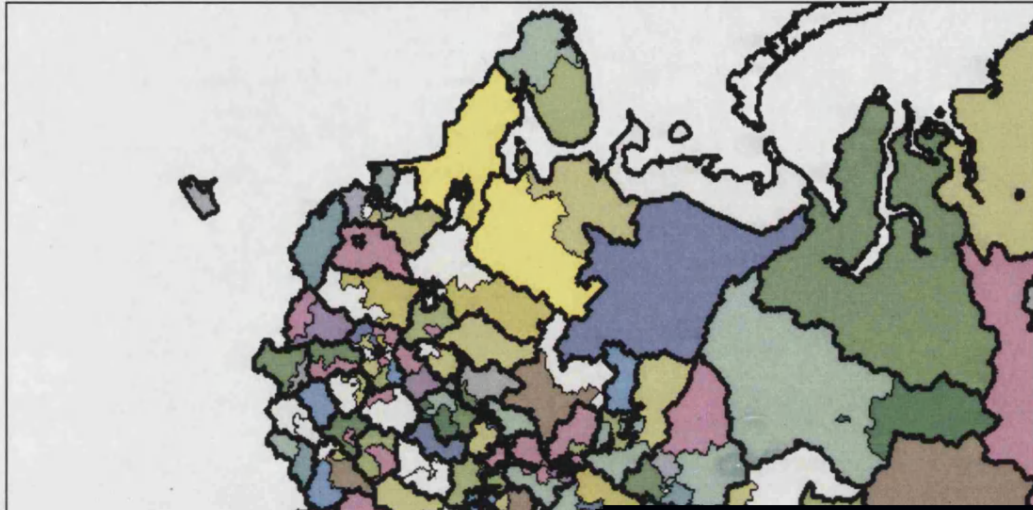
Map 5.2 shows the borders of the electoral districts (marked by a thin line) within the regions (thicker line). The nesting of SMDs within federal units is more pronounced in the European part of Russia, in the North Caucasus, and in the Urals area, than in Siberia and the Far East, where most regions only have one SMD. This difference is due to the different concentration levels of the population. More populous regions received a larger number of SMDs in the attempt to roughly equalise the number of voters in each electoral district. The authorities aimed at an average of roughly 400,000 voters per SMD. But deviation from this norm abound, partly explained by the principle that each region should have at least one SMD, even if the population is far below the ideal figure.

SMDs socio-demographic characteristics

Russian single-member districts vary hugely along a large number of social and geographic dimensions. A grasp of this variability can be obtained from Table 5.4 (below), which shows the range, central tendency and dispersion of a number of geographic and social indicators across the SMDs, elaborated from data presented in McFaul, Petrov and Ryabov (2000: 565-72). In terms of territorial size, SMDs range from 0.6 (a district in St. Petersburg) to 3100 Km² (SMD 20, the whole Sakha Republic),

with a mean of 83 Km² and a standard deviation of over 257. This variability is even wider than the one observed in the territorial size of Russian units of the Federation.

Map 5.2: *SMDs in Regions. European Russia, the Urals and North Caucasus*



In Russia, the percentage of district populations living in urban vs. rural areas also varies noticeably from SMD to SMD. In the least urbanised SMD, which coincides with the Ust-Ordynskiy Buryat Autonomous Okrug (SMD n.220), over 80 percent of the population live in rural areas (the most urbanised SMD are, of course, those coinciding with large cities - 100 percent urban).

Table 5.4: *Variability of sociological characteristics of SMDs*

	Territory (Km ²)	Population (1000s)	% Electorate	% Urban pop	% Rural pop	% Younger than 14*	% Older than 60*	% Higher education*	% Russians*
Mean	83.6	662.5	466.6	72.5	27.4	15.3	16.4	11.1	80.7
St.Dev.	256.2	182.1	125.4	20.8	20.8	2.6	5.0	6.0	19.2
Max	3103.2	1250.8	768.4	100.0	81.4	24.9	27.9	26.6	97.8
Min	0.6	24.8	12.4	18.6	0.0	11.1	1.4	4.1	2.4

*1989 Census.

Source: own elaboration of data in McFaul, Petrov and Ryabov (2000: 565-72).

Data on a number of individual social traits is also available at the aggregate level of SMDs. These include the age structure of the population, its levels of education and its ethnic composition, although this information dates back to the 1989 national census.¹¹⁴ According to this data, the "youngest" SMDs of the Federation are SMD n.10, in the Republic of Daghestan, with about one quarter of its population less than 14 years of age, and SMD n.223, in the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug, with the smallest share of residents older than 60, 1.4 percent. The "oldest" SMDs, by contrast, are located in Tula Oblast (176), with only 11 percent of its residents below 14 years of age, and in Ryazan Oblast (150), with almost 28 percent aged 60 or above. As for education, the proportion of highly educated inhabitants ranges from 26.6 percent in Moscow, to 4.1 percent in an SMD (n.12) in Ingushetiya Republic. Finally, the share of ethnic Russians ranges from 98 percent in an SMD (n.101) in Lipetsk Oblast, to 2.4 percent in one (n.10) in the Daghestan Republic.

¹¹⁴ Data from the 2002 census is not yet publicly available at the time of writing.

5.3 The study of context

This chapter has established that the investigation's basic unit of analysis is the electoral district; this is the level of aggregation at which the dependent variable is measured. It has also been noted that districts are grouped within regions, and thus produce a nested or "hierarchical" data structure. In the terminology of hierarchical data structures, districts therefore represent level-1 units, and regions level-2 units. It can further be said that regions constitute the context of districts.

In recent years, the field of electoral studies has become more and more aware of the importance impact of context (Marsh 2002). One of the first attempts to explain sub-national variations was Butler and Stokes's work on British elections (Butler and Stokes 1974, chapter 6), while the first important statistical treatment of such variation by means of multilevel modelling Jones, Johnston and Pattie (1992). The great majority of such works take individual voters' behaviour (observed through opinion surveys) as the unit of analysis, and different higher-level units as context (neighbourhoods, counties, regions, etc.). The fact that this study instead takes district aggregate results as level-1 units and regions as level-2 units doesn't fundamentally alter the logic of contextual analysis.

In practice, vote patterns can differ among regions (i.e. among contexts) simply because of a "compositional effect"; for example the labour vote can be expected to be higher in regions where working class voters are more numerous. In this case, controlling for a working class presence will seem to explain context away, because contextual differences are simply due to different "compositions" of regions in terms of working class residents. Clearly, these compositional effects are not properly contextual because they can be reduced to lower-level variables.

In a more rigorous sense, contextual effects can be of two types: 1) effects produced by the aggregation of lower-level characteristics, when the effect cannot be explained in terms of mere composition (examples of such contextual effects are neighbourhood effects and contagion effects – see below); and 2) factors genuinely applying only at the higher (contextual) level.

In the first case, the contextual factor is a summary measure of lower level characteristics and can be disaggregated back to its original individual level. A neighbourhood effect, for example, is posited when middle-class voters vote for Labour in predominantly working class districts. According to the neighbourhood effect hypothesis, this occurs because where a majority of district voters are workers, even non-workers will be exposed in their daily exchanges with neighbours to information flows in which the Labour Party is seen favourably. This leads to greater returns for Labour than one would expect based solely on the working class composition of the district. In sum, contextual effects of the first type derive from the spatial concentration of individual characteristics and the fact that individual "behaviour is contingent upon the environment created by the aggregation of individual traits" (Johnson, Phillips Shively and Stein 2002: 221).

The second type of contextual effect is directly measured at the context level, and not aggregated from lower level units. Indeed, this type is called a "global" effect because it cannot be disaggregated to lower level units. For example, the regionalist assertiveness and central political appeasement discussed in the explanatory framework of this thesis can be considered global contextual effects. They apply at the level of region, and are not aggregate measures of district characteristics.

It should be noted that, contrary to the political geographer (e.g. O'Loughlin 2003), the political scientist is generally sceptical of the thesis that "context matters" per se and that location in a given environment affects individual behaviour in its own right, as with the neighbourhood effect (King 1996). The political scientist aims at explaining context away. For example, if voters behave differently in different regions it must be because of some regional characteristic that is generalisable (e.g. the level of urbanisation); this characteristic may act directly on the dependent variable or be mediated by some other lower-level characteristic. Once the factor responsible for cross-context variation is found, context, in the geographical sense, is not a factor anymore and the contextual effect is simply compositional.

According to this view, it is useful to insert a variable for context, usually a series of dummy variables coding location in one-level OLS regression. This is done in order to avoid the missing variable bias (i.e. the error term correlated with the dependent variable) when it is not clear which factors lie behind cross-context variation. For

example, after all independent variables supported by the theory have been entered into a model, part of the variance of the dependent variable may still be significantly related to location. If there are no clues as to what makes different locations affect the dependent variable, it is necessary to insert location as a categorical variable. Context, in this sense, is a residual category for unspecified and unknown effects. It does not matter *per se*.

On the other hand, the geographer has a quite different mind-set. Here, context matters *per se*, not as the carrier of some yet-to-specify hidden variable. A typical example of the purely contextual effect investigated by the geographer is the "neighbourhood effect" mentioned above. These effects are generated by the spatial concentration of lower-level characteristics and go beyond the effect one would expect on the basis of composition.

In this thesis, SMD results are seen within the wider context of regional politics (centre-regional relations, in particular). The SMD is the unit and the region is the context. The effects that apply at the level of regions are global contextual effects in the sense defined above. Context does not matter *per se*, but only as a carrier of global effects (regionalist assertiveness and others). At the same time, this study shares the geographer's concern for the statistical implications of contextual effects, something that recently is finding its way into political and electoral studies as well (Marsh 2002). These technical implications for statistical analysis are discussed in the next section.

Quantitative technique: Multilevel modelling

Since the late 1980s the question of how best to treat nested data structures has found an increasingly popular answer in multilevel modelling. This technique was originally applied to geographical and educational studies, but then found application in virtually all scientific fields wherever the analyst deals with multilevel data. The simplest multilevel data structure involves two levels, as in the case of this thesis. The lower units of analysis (here SMDs) are called "level 1 units", and the higher level groups (here regions) are called "level 2 units".¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ Recent introductory to intermediate textbooks that explain the advantages of multilevel modelling over conventional techniques include Snijder and Bosker (1999), Steenbergen and Jones (2002), Stoker and Bowers (2002), Bryk and Raubenbush (1992). As mentioned, one of the first comprehensive applications to electoral data is Jones, Johnston and Pattie (1992).

The basic advantage of multilevel modelling over other techniques is that it solves the problem of "autocorrelation" that may arise when the data structure is nested. Autocorrelation, or "intra-class correlation", refers to the similarity of units belonging to the same group. This occurs with stratified or cluster sampling, when individuals sampled from the same higher-level unit are subject to the same group influence. But it can also be present whenever the data structure is nested and there are reasons to expect contextual effects.

Autocorrelation means that the error terms of the units belonging to the same groups are correlated. This violates the assumption that error terms are independent, which lies at the basis of conventional techniques such as the Analysis of variance (ANOVA) and OLS regression. If the latter techniques are employed in the presence of autocorrelation, the standard errors of the estimated coefficients will be underestimated, thus leading to the overestimation of the level of significance of the main effects.

The formula for the coefficient of autocorrelation (ρ) corresponds to the proportion of total variance occurring between level 2 units. The higher this value, the more similar the level 1 units within groups:

$$\rho = \frac{\text{Variance between level 2 units}}{\text{Total variance}}$$

The most widely used conventional method to take into account the multilevel nature of the data used to be entering a series of dummy variables, one for each context or level 2 unit (except the dummy for the base category, if the constant is in the model). This method is often called analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). It solves the autocorrelation problem but has two important limitations not shared by multilevel modelling. The first is that dummy variables *indicate* contexts, but do not allow an explanation of the differences between contexts (Snijders and Bosker 1999: 42; Steenbergen and Jones 2002: 221). This is because the dummy indicators for level-2 units already "absorb" all variability linked to that level. However, it is often of interest to test the effect of level-2 variables, which requires the presence of unexplained variability across level-2 units. Multilevel modelling allows the use of random coefficients for level-2 variables, whose effect can be estimated and tested. This is of crucial importance for this inquiry, as

level-2 factors (such as regionalist assertiveness) are at the centre of its explanatory framework.

The second limitation of ANCOVA (and advantage of multilevel modelling) emerges in cases such as the present one, where level-2 units only contain relatively few level-1 units, and the additional assumption of "exchangeability" among level-2 units can be made (Snijders and Bosker 1999: 43-44). Formally, this assumption requires that level-2 effects are independently and identically distributed. "Stated less formally: the unexplained group effects are governed by 'mechanisms' that are roughly similar from one group to the next, and operate independently between the groups" (Snijders and Bosker 1999: 43). If this is the case, level-2 effects are treated as belonging to one distribution, which "helps counteract the paucity of the data that is implied by a relatively small" size of level-2 units (Snijders and Bosker 1999: 43). With dummy variables, on the contrary, each context is independent from the other, rather than coming from one distribution; to use dummy variables here is like running n separate models, one for each context. Finally, if there is a high number of level 2 units, the dummy variable approach requires a correspondingly high number of variables, which is "not very efficient nor parsimonious" (Hox and Kreft 1994: 287).

Given the same assumption of "exchangeability" and normality for the distributions of random coefficients, multilevel modelling also efficiently deals with "imbalance" in the data which arises when level-2 groups have different sizes. Indeed, the estimation procedure of multilevel software, the RIGLS procedure in the present case,¹¹⁶ takes into account the fact that information is not equally present in all level 2 groups. It weights down the contribution to the estimation of coefficients made by small level 2 units when they show extreme values.

To sum-up, in the present case, multilevel modelling allows one to study the effect on level-1 variables (here, success of the independents) of independent variables that can be either other level-1 variables (e.g. incumbency) or level-2 variables (e.g. support of regional governor). It also allows for the estimation of interactions between level-1

¹¹⁶ The estimation procedure utilised in the following chapters of analysis is called "Restricted Iterative Generalised Least Squares" (RIGLS). This procedure, introduced by Goldstein, is somewhat slower but more precise than the alternative provided in MLwiN, "Iterative Generalised Least Squares" (IGLS) (Goldstein 1986).

and level-2 variables. All these advantages are had while taking into account the hierarchical structure of the data (Stoker and Bowers 2002: 241).

The general characteristics and equations for multilevel models are presented below. The first step is to consider the equation for a conventional, one-level regression. This corresponds to what is called micro model in the multilevel jargon. If the data structure is two-level hierarchical, with level-1 units nested within level-2 groups (e.g. SMDs nested in regions¹¹⁷), the micro model with two fixed predictors can be written as:

$$\hat{Y}_{ij} = \beta_0 x_0 + \beta_1 x_{1ij} + \beta_2 x_{2ij} + \varepsilon_{ij} \quad (1)$$

Where the indexes i and j represent level-1 units and level-2 groups, respectively. \hat{Y}_{ij} indicates the estimated value of the dependent variable for each unit. \hat{Y}_{ij} is a linear combination of the constant x_0 ; two independent variables $x_{1ij} + x_{2ij}$ (i and j indexed, i.e. measured at the level of units); and the residual "unexplained" variance around predicted values, ε_{ij} , also measured at unit level.

In this hypothetical model all variables can take different values for each observed unit, as indicated by their i and j indexes, but the effects (coefficients) of the variables are fixed. Indeed, the coefficients are not i and j indexed and represent the average effect across all units. This is the approach of conventional, one-level, OLS regression. In this model, the residual term ε_{ij} is considered "error", a nuisance, the amount of variability around predicted values \hat{Y}_{ij} that the model cannot "explain".

Multilevel modelling is still regression-based, but aims at explicitly modelling the residual variance ε_{ij} . Instead of considering it "error", it investigates whether this variability has structure that can be accounted for by allowing the coefficients for the constant and the predictors to vary across level-2 groups.

In its simplest form, a multilevel model only includes the constant (or "intercept") as predictor. This model is called the "Null model" because no predictors are entered. We can write it as:

$$\hat{Y}_{ij} = \beta_{0ij} \quad (2)$$

The j and i indexes indicate that the parameter is allowed to vary across groups and across units within groups. It therefore equals a fixed value β_0 (the "grand mean" or the

¹¹⁷ For brevity, in this section, level-1 units (SMDs) will be referred to simply as "units" and level-2 units (regions) as "groups".

mean Y value across all units, in all groups), plus a group-specific differential μ_{0j} , and a unit-specific differential e_{0ij} :

$$\beta_{0j} = \beta_0 + \mu_{0j} + e_{0ij} \quad (3)$$

When, in addition to the constant, the effect of one of the independent variables is also allowed to be random (i.e. to be estimated), the coefficient for this variable takes the j index (4):

$$\hat{Y}_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}x_{1ij} + \beta_2 x_{2ij} + \varepsilon_{ij} \quad (4)$$

In model (4) only the constant and β_{1j} are random at level-2. In addition to the macro model for the constant (3), another can be written in which the coefficient of x_1 is the dependent variable:

$$\beta_{1j} = \beta_1 + \mu_{1j} \quad (5)$$

Where the coefficient (slope) of the independent variable x_1 is the result of the fixed, average effect, plus a level-2 specific differential (μ_{1j}), the result is a *distribution* of coefficients (slopes). Both the constant β_{0j} and the slope β_{1j} are assumed to be normally distributed random variables with a mean equal to their fixed value (β_0 and β_1 , respectively), and with a standard deviation equal to the square root of the variance of their differentials (μ_{0j} and μ_{1j} , respectively).

Substituting (3) and (5) into (4) leads to:

$$\hat{Y}_{ij} = \beta_0 + \mu_{0j} + (\beta_1 + \mu_{1j})x_{1ij} + \beta_2 x_{2ij} + \varepsilon_{ij} \quad (6)$$

For clarity, on the right hand side of the equation, the fixed part of the model is usually written first and the random part second:

$$\hat{Y}_{ij} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_{1ij} + \beta_2 x_{2ij} + \mu_{0j} + \mu_{1j} x_{1ij} + \varepsilon_{ij} \quad (7)$$

The random part ($\mu_{0j} + \mu_{1j}x_{1ij} + \varepsilon_{ij}$) has two components, level-2 residuals (j indexed) and level-1 residuals (i and j indexed). This division of the random part into two levels is what makes the model a multilevel one. Because of the term $\mu_{1j}x_{1ij}$ (due to the random slope), level-2 residuals are not independent of x , as assumed in conventional one-level OLS; instead, the variability around predicted values of Y (variance) varies for different levels of x . This is known as *heteroskedasticity*. Level-2 variance can depend on x either linearly (8) or quadratically (9):

$$\text{Level-2 var } (Y_{ij} | x_{1ij}) = \text{var}(\mu_{0j}) + 2\text{cov}(\mu_{0j}, \mu_{1j}) x_{1ij} \quad (8)$$

$$\text{Level-2 var } (Y_{ij} | x_{1ij}) = \text{var}(\mu_{0j}) + 2\text{cov}(\mu_{0j}, \mu_{1j}) x_{1ij} + \text{var}(\mu_{1j}) x_{1ij}^2 \quad (9)$$

In this model, level-1 variance is simply $\text{var}(\varepsilon_{ij})$. However, complex variability (heterogeneity) can also be modelled at level-1 as a function (linear or quadratic) of x (heteroskedasticity at level-1), when x is allowed to be random at level 1. In that case, the random part at level 1 will be $(\varepsilon_{0ij} + \varepsilon_{1ij} x_{1ij})$, and its linear and quadratic variance functions will be (10) and (11), respectively.

$$\text{Level-1 var}(Y_{ij} | x_{1ij}) = \text{var}(\varepsilon_{0ij}) + 2\text{cov}(\varepsilon_{0ij}, \varepsilon_{1ij}) x_{1ij} \quad (10)$$

$$\text{Level-1 var}(Y_{ij} | x_{1ij}) = \text{var}(\varepsilon_{0ij}) + 2\text{cov}(\varepsilon_{0ij}, \varepsilon_{1ij}) x_{1ij} + \text{var}(\varepsilon_{1ij}) x_{1ij}^2 \quad (11)$$

In addition to modelling *heteroskedasticity*, or complex variability, at level 1 and 2, multilevel modelling allows the analyst to try and explain this variability. It has already been noted that the random, residual, part of a multilevel model has at least two parts, one for each level. By entering additional level-1 and level-2 variables, it is possible to reduce the residuals at level-1 and at level-2 respectively. However, given the causal framework to be tested here, the most interesting option is to try and explain why the coefficients of variables random at level-2 vary across groups. In other words, if there is significant variation in the effect of a variable across groups, a group-level variable could be responsible. This means that the coefficients for the constant and for the x will depend on this level-2 variable (W_{1j}):

$$\beta_{0j} = \beta_0 + \alpha_1 W_{1j} + \mu_{0j} \quad (12)$$

$$\beta_{1j} = \beta_1 + \alpha_2 W_{1j} + \mu_{1j} \quad (13)$$

Substituting (12) and (13) into (4), leads to:

$$\hat{Y}_{ij} = \beta_0 + \alpha_1 W_{1j} + \mu_{0j} + (\beta_1 + \alpha_2 W_{1j} + \mu_{1j}) x_{1ij} + \beta_2 x_{2ij} + \varepsilon_{ij} \quad (14)$$

and, re-arranging into fixed and random parts:

$$\hat{Y}_{ij} = \beta_0 + \alpha_1 W_{1j} + \beta_1 x_{1i} + \alpha_2 W_{1j} x_{1i} + \beta_2 x_{2ij} + \mu_{0j} + \mu_{1j} x_{1ij} + \varepsilon_{ij} \quad (15)$$

The random part is unchanged, compared to (7), while in the fixed part there is a term for the main effect of the group-level variable ($\alpha_1 W_{1j}$), and an interaction term ($\alpha_2 W_{1j} x_{1i}$). This is the specification of a multilevel model with a cross-level interaction.

Such interaction can be entered and tested in the model to explain a *significant* random slope of a level-1 variable. But it can also be entered when the level-1 variable does not have a significant random slope, if there are substantive expectations of the interaction (Snijders and Bosker 1999: 74-75).

From this review of the general features of multilevel modelling, three kinds of specifications emerge as typical. Firstly, the most simple specification of the "Null,

random intercept model"; secondly, the specification with "random intercept and random slope/s"; and thirdly, models with cross-level interactions. These types of models are estimated for each of the three elections in the next chapters. In the present study the analysis is run with a software specifically designed for multilevel modelling, MLwiN (version 1.10.0006). Among different types of software specifically designed for multilevel modelling, MLwiN is the "most extensive multilevel package" (Snijders and Bosker 1999: 243).¹¹⁸

Conclusion

This chapter completed the presentation of the preliminary information necessary to set up the statistical models discussed in the next chapters. This task has involved several steps. Firstly, it was necessary to explain the reasons behind the adopted operationalisation of the dependent variable: the "success of the independents". Four possible measurements of this dimension have been discussed and the case has been made for choosing the measure consisting of the joint vote share received collectively by the independents in a given SMD.

Secondly, the arguments for taking the electoral district as the unit of analysis and for an inclusive strategy of case selection have also been presented. All districts for which there are electoral returns are included in the analysis. Furthermore, ensuring an appreciation of the multilevel (or nested) nature of the data structure was crucial in order to make clear the connected statistical problems of autocorrelation, and the necessity for a relatively new (in electoral studies) technique of quantitative analysis - multilevel modelling.

This section has argued for the substantive and technical advantages of this technique over more conventional tools of quantitative analysis, such as one-level OLS regression. The formal characteristics of the multilevel equations have also been illustrated. They form the basis for the estimated models of independents' success discussed in the next three chapters. Moreover, procedures have been suggested to deal with the complex

¹¹⁸ MLwiN is written by members of the London Institute of Education. Further information can be found at the Institute's website (www.ioe.ac.uk).

causal order, and the related mediating effects, posited by the explanatory framework of chapter 3.

Next chapter analyses the first multiparty election of post-communist Russia under the prism of the explanatory framework described in chapters 3, with the operational definitions of chapter 4, and with the design outlined in this chapter. Due to problems in data availability for the 1993 vote, the empirical models will be tested in their full extent beginning with the analysis of the 1995 Duma elections.

6

The 1993 Duma Elections

"The logic of post-communist revolutions offers a parsimonious and convincing explanation for the defeat of Russia's Choice. However, this level of analysis leaves several questions . . . unanswered and cannot explain several important paradoxes of the Russian case. . . . Why, for instance, did Russia's Choice win 27.1 percent of the popular vote in Perm' oblast, but only 16.7 in Samara oblast, two regions with similar economic profiles and geographic location?"

Michael McFaul (1998: 132)

This thesis aims to contribute to solving the kind of "important paradox" that McFaul highlights in the epigraph. The essay from which it is taken is concerned with explaining the defeat of the pro-Kremlin party "Russia's Choice" in the PR tier of the 1993 Duma elections.¹¹⁹ By contrast, this thesis only deals with the SMD tier. However, the same kind of paradox is also generated by geographic variations in SMD results.

This chapter is the first of three that put to test the explanatory framework presented in chapter 3, with the data described in chapter 4 and the design outlined in chapter 5. The first section provides the necessary background information on the political context of the election. The estimated statistical models are subsequently presented. As detailed in the preceding chapters, the empirical analysis consists of predicting the joint vote share obtained by the independent candidates running in each of 219 SMDs. The statistical technique adopted is multilevel modelling, with the SMD as the unit of analysis, and explanatory variables applied at the level of both regions and SMDs. The

¹¹⁹ Cross-regional variations in support are not the primary focus of his essay, and McFaul does not provide a satisfactory answer to the "paradox" he poses.

main hypothesis is that the independents offered a better channel of representation for territorial cleavages than political parties. Therefore, other factors being equal, these candidates are expected to be more successful where territorial cleavages are prominent. During the 1990s, such territorial cleavages emerged in Russia in proportion to levels of regionalist assertiveness (regional autonomy demands). This variable should provide a significant contribution to the explanation of cross-regional variations in the success of independent candidates. Due to limited data availability, compared to the 1995 and 1999 models, the analysis of the 1993 vote for the independents is carried out through a simpler model specification, which allows the testing of only a subset of the hypotheses included in the explanatory framework.

6.1 Background

The 1993 Duma vote was the first competitive election after the collapse of the Soviet system, which means it was the first meaningful and competitive mass vote in Russian history.¹²⁰ However, the political context surrounding the vote was particularly difficult, as the election was called at the end of a bitter institutional struggle between the presidency and the parliament. The conflict, which had been escalating in the months preceding the vote, was rooted in the unclear separation of power between the two organs of federal government, and in the parliamentary opposition to the economic reforms of the government. After a protracted period of confrontation and stalemate, on September 21, Yeltsin disbanded the assembly by decree and called for new elections to be held on December 12. It took the storming of the parliament by armed forces to quash the resistance of several hundred deputies to Yeltsin's decree. Some opposition leaders had also called for popular action against the president.

The date for Duma elections was to have been the subject of presidential-parliamentary negotiations and had not yet been set before the institutional conflict came to a head in late September. The announcement that the Duma vote was to be held

¹²⁰ In November 1917, Russian citizens voted for the Constituent Assembly after the fall of the Tsarist regime. The Assembly, however, was soon disbanded by the Bolsheviks, in January 1918.

on December 12 gave parties only two and a half months to prepare. Six out of thirteen parties competing in the proportional tier were founded in this short period.

For the voters, the hurried campaign was confusing for additional reasons, such as the fact that candidates' party affiliation was not reported on the ballot paper.¹²¹ Moreover, the informational cost that any voter is required to bear in order to cast a meaningful vote was multiplied by the fact that, in addition to the vote for the Duma, voters in the 1993 elections were asked to cast their vote for the election of the higher chamber of the Parliament (the Federation Council), for the referendum on the new constitution, and, in some cases, for the election of local governmental bodies.

The contestants

Although political parties were legalised in 1990, with the exception of the 1991 presidential election, when Democratic Russia helped Yeltsin become president, prior to 1993 they lacked electoral incentives to organise and mobilise voters. By the time of the 1993 elections, parties were little more than parliamentary factions, deprived of meaningful organisations on the ground. Even the Communists (KPRF), who inherited the sizeable local organisations of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, were far less effective than they would become in the next two years.

The Communist party had in fact been banned by presidential decree in 1991, for its involvement in the reactionary August putsch. On 30 November 1992, the Constitutional Court, while confirming the ban against communist federal level organisations, denied that it could apply to local branches. This ruling increased the fragmentation of the leftist political spectrum, and spurred the emergence of the Agrarian Party (APR). When the communist party was reinstated in February 1993 as the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF), it took the shape of a loose association of diverse regional organisations (Golosov 1999: 1336). Following the crisis in the Autumn of 1993, Yeltsin outlawed the KPRF again on October 4, together with other organisations (especially right nationalist). The party was subsequently re-legalised at the end of October and joined the electoral campaign (Colton 1998: 8, 12). In 1993, in any case, the KPRF did not yet possess a solid organisation in many regions,

¹²¹ This analysis is not handicapped by the same lack of information since 96 percent of SMD party candidates also appeared in their party's PR list, almost always in the subsection of the region where they were standing (Colton 1998: 21).

where local branches were riven by internal conflicts. In Kursk oblast, for example, both independent communist or agrarian candidates and official communist candidates competed with each other in the same SMD in the Duma vote that year (Melvin 1998b: 507-8).

In the PR tier, thirteen parties managed to gather 100,000 signatures and appeared on the ballot paper. Signatures had to be collected in at least seven different units of the federation (i.e. no more than 15% in any single region).¹²² On the proportional half of the ballot, the ideological spectrum of the contestants ranged from the pro-reform, pro-Yeltsin, Russia's Choice sponsored by the Kremlin, to the nationalist opposition of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) led by Zhirinovsky, the communist opposition of the KPRF and of the Agrarian Party of Russia (APR). More moderate pro-reform parties included Yabloko and the Kremlin-supported "Party of Russian Unity and Accord" (PRES), while centrist positions were advocated by the Democratic Party of Russia (DPR), and by "Women of Russia". The remaining five parties on the ballot – i.e. the industrialists' group "Civic Union", the ecologist KEDR and other smaller formations – did not cross the 5% barrier of representation.

In the majoritarian tier of the election, 1520 candidates ran in 225 districts. However, the election was boycotted in 6 SMDs, bringing the total to 219 (with 1502 candidates).¹²³ Contrary to what would happen in the subsequent two Duma elections, all political parties and electoral blocs running in the PR tier also nominated candidates in the SMDs, and all parties running in the SMDs also ran in the PR tier. The total number of independent candidates in the districts was 820 (54%), while party candidates made up the remaining 700 (46%). The ranking of parties according to their nomination effort in the SMDs is reported in Table 6.1. It emerges that the best locally rooted parties were Yabloko, APR, and Civic Union, in addition to the parties of the Kremlin: Russia's Choice and PRES.

¹²² This requirement will become stricter in 1995, when the minimum number of regions where signatures should be collected will become 15 (i.e. no more than 7% of the signatures could come from any single unit).

¹²³ The election was not held in the one district of Chechnya and was boycotted in the 5 districts of Tatarstan.

Table 6.1: *Party nominations in the SMDs (totals)*¹²⁴

Party	No. of Cands.	No. of Winners	Success Rate
Russia's Choice	103	25	24.3%
Yabloko	85	6	7.1%
Civic Union	72	7	9.7%
Agrarian Party of Russia	69	16	23.2%
PRES	63	3	4.8%
LDPR	60	6	10.0%
RDDR	59	5	8.5%
Democratic Party of Russia	58	1	1.7%
KPRF	55	10	18.2%
Russia's Future - New names	33	1	3.0%
KEDR	22	0	0.0%
Dignity and Charity	15	3	20.0%
Women of Russia	6	2	33.3%
<i>Independents</i>	<i>820</i>	<i>134</i>	<i>16.3%</i>

PRES, Party of Russian Unity and Concord.
LDPR, Liberal Democratic Party of Russia.
RDDR, Russian movement for democratic reforms.
KPRF, Communist Party of the Russian Federation.
KEDR, Constructive ecological movement of Russia.
Source: elaborated from CEC data.

In contrast to patterns of party territorial penetration that will become established later on, it is remarkable to note that in 1993, the communists (KPRF) could nominate their candidates in only half as many SMDs as Russia's Choice, or in a quarter of the total. By contrast, the organisational strength of the agrarian APR was also already suggested by the fact that it presented the largest number of signatures. Its 500,000 signatures were well in excess of the 100,000 required; the average party only presented 170,000 signatures (Colton 1998: 17).

It is important to note that none of the parties registered for the 1993 elections can be defined as a regionalist party. On the contrary, inaugurating a well-established pattern, most parties in 1993 were based in Moscow and dominated by Moscow elites. With the partial exception of PRES, party programmes advocated greater centralisation in federal relations. Centralisation was proposed for different reasons, ranging from the right-wing

¹²⁴ In 1993, some parties formally supported two candidates in the same SMD. The parties APR, Russia's Choice, Civic Union, and RDDR did so in two SMDs each; while Yabloko, PRES, and DPR did so in one

nationalistic position of the LDPR that entailed a strong, unitary state, to the paternalistic view of the "liberals" that ethnic regions cannot by themselves live up to the standards of democracy. In 1993, the only party trying to appeal to the autonomy aspirations of the regions was PRES. This can help explain the relatively good performance of that party in highly assertive regions such as Bashkortostan in the PR section of the vote (Hale 1998: 613). PRES may reasonably have represented the lesser evil for regionalist voters compared to the centralising position of the other parties in the PR section. However, in the SMDs, where voters usually have the option not to vote for any party and instead vote for an independent, PRES did not fare very well. In Bashkortostan, only one of the six winners was a PRES candidate, the others were four independents and one agrarian. Generally, in the SMD tier PRES only achieved three victories out of 62 SMDs contested.

Federal relations in the 1991-1993 period

Following the main hypothesis posited by the explanatory framework of this work the state of centre-regional relations is an important element of the political context of the vote. The salience of this dimension was heightened in 1993 by the fact that on the same day of the Duma vote, a new draft constitution was to be approved in a national referendum. The "key sticking point" (Lapidus and Walker 1995: 98) during the process of drafting the constitution had been precisely that of centre-regional relations. Indeed, of the three periods leading-up to the three Duma elections analysed in this study, the 1991-1993 phase was characterised by the highest levels of fluidity in federal relations. This is not surprising in view of the fact that the collapse of the Soviet system in 1991 dramatically opened-up the necessity of defining the federal bargain anew.

In the last year of existence of the Soviet Union (1991), the government of what was then called the Russian Socialist Federative Republic (RSFSR) could not afford antagonising its internal units because it was struggling with the USSR government to gain sovereignty. This phase was marked by the conflict between Yeltsin and Gorbachev, which induced each side to outbid the other in an attempt to muster the support of the ethnic republics within Russia.

SMD each. This means that the number of SMDs contested for those parties is lower than the number of candidates supported.

Already in August 1990, during his visit to Tatarstan, Yeltsin pronounced his famous statement that autonomous units should "take as much sovereignty as they can swallow". His attitude began to change in view of the new Union Treaty promoted by Gorbachev and of the demands of assertive regions, such as Tatarstan, which demanded to sign the Treaty with equal status as the RSFSR. Tatarstan also started boycotting federal elections with the June 1991 Russian presidential election (Lapidus and Walker 1995: 84), continuing with the 1993 Duma elections.

Moreover, replicating the example of Union Republics, between July 1990 and July 1991, all autonomous formations within the Russian Federation declared their sovereignty, including the four autonomous oblasts which would be upgraded to "autonomous republics" in 1991. The pre-1993 period also saw explicit acts of regional defiance towards federal authorities, such as the withholding of federal taxes, or the issuing of separate surrogate currencies, in response to the shortages and chaos created by the inflation of spring and summer 1992.

One of the arenas where regional regionalist assertiveness emerged most clearly is the negotiations over the Federal Treaty (finally signed 12 March 1992), which was to settle centre-regional relations and divide spheres of authority. While Chechnya and Tatarstan refused to sign, thus expressing a radical anti-centralist position, some other regions managed to extract special concessions in addenda to the treaty or in agreements connected to it. Bashkortostan's signature to the treaty, for example, can only be explained with reference to the special rights it obtained from Moscow shortly before the signing. These included the "right of ownership of natural resources on its territory, freedom to engage directly in foreign economic transactions, and the right to an independent system of taxation. Earlier, the Bashkortostan parliament had voted to suspend the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation's new Constitutional Court on its territory" (*Moscow News*, No.16, p.5, in Lapidus and Walker 1995: fn.24). Other units that were to obtain large extensions of autonomy from secret addenda to the treaty include the Republics of Komi and Karelia. Autonomous okrugs were given equal status to the oblasts, ending their formal subordination to the regions in which they are located.

The Federal Treaty reflected a rather decentralised conception of federalism and recognised extensive rights for the republics. On the other hand, this spurred the resentment of ordinary regions, especially the net contributors to the federal budget,

which did not obtain special privileges with the treaty. Some oblasts formed inter-regional associations, the most important being the associations of regions in the Urals, in Siberia and in the Far East (Hughes 2002: 48). These inter-regional associations contained the potential to develop into an arena for collective mobilisation *vis-à-vis* the federal centre. Of eight such experiments, only the "Great Urals Association" did in fact have what could be seen as a phase of high anti-centralist activism. Even though co-ordination ultimately failed, the governor of Sverdlovsk oblast, Rossel, declared a Urals Republic. Other oblasts made self-declarations of their republican status independently from the association to which they belonged to.

As in 1990-1991, also in 1992-1993 the bargaining position of the federal centre towards the regions was weak, this time due to the aforementioned executive-legislative conflict. When the latter conflict ended with Yeltsin's victory and the disbanding of the federal parliament in October 1993, a degree of recentralisation was obtained. The disbanding of the parliament spurred the disbanding of regional soviets and the dismissal of the regional governors who had opposed the president, including Rossel (Petrov 1999: 59).

In the meantime, agreement on a new constitutional text was proving elusive due to disagreements between republics on one side, and oblasts and krais on the other. Tatarstan withdrew from the negotiations in disappointment over the reduction in autonomy that was emerging from the draft text. The finalisation of a draft was precipitated by the abrupt solution to the institutional conflict between the Russian presidency and the parliament. As mentioned, Yeltsin forcibly disbanded the parliament, called for new parliamentary elections and for a simultaneous referendum on the new constitution. Chechnya did not hold the vote, and Tatarstan boycotted it. Persuaded by side deals struck with Yeltsin, some other assertive regions, such as Sakha republic, did endorse the constitution; but only as a temporary solution and with qualifications.

This brief and sketchy account only serves as an indication of the political problems surrounding federal relations in the period leading-up to the 1993 Duma vote. In the statistical models below the quantitative indicator of regionalist assertiveness derives from Dowley's index, as described in chapter 4. The effect of regionalist assertiveness should be investigated while controlling for instances of central appeasement of regional demands. It has been noted that in the period leading-up to the 1993 Duma

elections, key examples of appeasement are constituted by the granting of important privileges to selected regions in order to induce them to sign the Federation Treaty of March 1992. These regions are the republics of Bashkortostan, Kalmikiya, Karelia, Komi and Sakha (Kahn 2002: 126; Treisman 1999: 34). Two other groups of regions received appeasing concessions from the centre: the Soviet-era Autonomous oblasts whose status was upgraded to that of "republic" in 1991 (the republics of Adygeya, Altay, Karachaevo-Cherkessya, and Khakassya); and the units whose Yeltsin-appointed heads of regional administration were removed by Yeltsin to appease local elites (Krasnodar Kray, Krasnoyarsk Kray, Voronezh Oblast, and Pskov Oblas) (Matsuzato 2000). These three sets of regions are considered "politically appeased" in the models.

6.2 Analysis

It is important to recall from chapter 5 that the success of the independents (dependent variable) is measured as the share of the district vote obtained jointly by all the non-partisans.¹²⁵ It follows that the unit of analysis is not the individual candidate, but the electoral district (SMD). Moreover, while the models to follow are regression-based, conventional single-level OLS regression is not a satisfactory quantitative tool in this case, due to the nested data structure (SMDs are grouped within regions). This suggests the need for a multilevel analysis, whose features have been discussed in chapter 5. This technique allows one to partition the variance of the election outcome into two portions, one at the level of regions and another at the level of SMDs. Variable coefficients (effects) are allowed to be random (i.e. to be estimated) to account for such residual variability. For this reason, the models in the tables below include a random part in addition to the conventional fixed part of single-level designs.

It should also be remembered here that regionalist assertiveness can be measured with two variables, drawing from Dowley's data, based on two time periods of different length preceding the vote. The variable labelled "Dow88-93" is an average of assertiveness scores recorded over the wider time lapse (1988 to 1993), while "Dow92-93" reflects evidence of assertiveness recorded only in the last two years before the vote

¹²⁵ The merits of this approach compared to alternative ones are discussed in chapter 5.

(1992 to 1993). See Table A.4.1 in the Appendix for the scores of individual regions on these variables. Both measures are used in alternative models.

As argued in chapter 3, to correctly evaluate the impact of regional levels of anti-centralist assertiveness on the success of the independents, the model should control for instances of central appeasement of regionalist demands. This is done through the variable "PolApp" (for "political appeasement") which is a dichotomous variable separating the regions which received political appeasement from the rest.¹²⁶ Additionally, a variable measuring the size of direct central financial transfers to the regions tentatively controls for the possibility that regions are either dependent on the centre or financially appeased by it. This test is tentative because the real extent of centre-regional financial flows results from a large number of channels that are not easily detected.

As posited in the explanatory framework, regional level factors can only have a "distant" impact on district results. More proximate influences need to be found in the strategic setting unfolding in each electoral district. One key aspect of this setting is the presence of party candidates who can challenge the independents. Given the state of Russian political parties, especially at this early stage, and given the conditions surrounding the abrupt call of the vote, parties cannot simply be assumed to pose a strong challenge to independents in the districts, where territorial presence is crucial to success. Rather, it is two types of parties that can be expected to have a negative impact on independents' success: 1) parties that are relatively more visible (nationally) and can thus provide name recognition for their candidates, and 2) parties with genuine local roots, or with at least a regionalist theme in their campaigning.

This causal relationship is complicated by the fact that parties choose where to nominate candidates strategically, i.e. on the basis of expected chances of victory. If levels of regionalist assertiveness affect the prospects of national parties, as argued in chapter 3, and if parties are aware of this dynamic, they will tend to avoid highly assertive regions. Thus, the party challenge variable is partly endogenous to the model, influenced by regionalist assertiveness. The latter variable, in turn, will have an indirect effect on the success of the independents, mediated by the strategic entry decisions of

¹²⁶ The criteria for the coding were presented in chapter 4 with the operational definition of variables.

political parties. This means that, in the estimated models, the coefficient of regionalist assertiveness should drop when the party variables are entered.

Furthermore, party campaigning is hampered by climatic and geographic conditions that make some voters more difficult to reach, thus improving the chances for the independents and negatively affecting the endogenous variables for party challenge. The physical accessibility of regions is rendered by the variable "Remote" for each region's share of population located in remote areas, as defined in chapter 4. Finally, a variable for urbanisation is considered to control for the traditional Rokkanian hypothesis that political parties thrive in urban environments, before attempting to penetrate the countryside. Due to 1993 data constraints, more variables and hypotheses will be discussed in connection to the 1995 and 1999 elections.

A summary description of the distribution of the explanatory variables is available in Table 6.2.¹²⁷ Six variables have continuous or scale measurements. In the models, these have been centred around their overall mean in order to allow for a meaningful interpretation of the estimated coefficient of the constant and of the interaction terms in the models.

The following section presents the estimated models and coefficients. The presentation of statistical results follows several steps, through which increasing complexity is introduced in the models by means of additional sets of variables. In this way, it is possible to note the effect of the new variables on the coefficients of those already included. Finally, random terms (beyond the constant) are considered in the last specifications. It turns out that only the effect of "presence of a Russia's Choice candidate" varies significantly across regions, therefore "RuChoice" is the only random variable at level 2 and level 1 in the last model (model 5, Table 6.5). The last model is the most complete possible with the available data. The multilevel equation of the complete model is anticipated here to motivate the estimations of the models. The equation includes all variables belonging to the explanatory framework discussed in chapter 3 and follows the format of the general multilevel equation presented in the previous chapter. The "micro model" is:

¹²⁷ The dependent variable, independents' success, has been described in the introduction to the thesis and in chapter 5.

$$\begin{aligned}\hat{Y}_{ij} = & \beta_{0j} (\text{CONS}) + \beta_1 (\text{DOW92-93})_j + \beta_2 (\text{POLAPP})_j + \beta_3 (\text{TRANSF})_j \\ & + \beta_4 (\text{REMOTE})_j + \beta_5 (\text{URBAN})_{ij} + \beta_6 (\text{PRES})_{ij} + \beta_7 (\text{LDPR})_{ij} + \beta_8 (\text{APR})_{ij} \\ & + \beta_9 (\text{RUCHOICE})_{ij} + \beta_{10} (\text{YABL})_{ij} + \beta_{11} (\text{DIGN\&CH})_{ij} + \beta_{12} (\text{DPR})_{ij} \\ & + \beta_{13} (\text{CIVICUN})_{ij} + \beta_{14} (\text{KPRF})_{ij} + \beta_{15} (\text{KEDR})_{ij} + \beta_{16} (\text{WOFRUSS})_{ij} \\ & + \beta_{17} (\text{RUSFUT})_{ij} + \beta_{18} (\text{RDDR})_{ij} + \varepsilon_{ij}\end{aligned}$$

Where the coefficients for CONS and RUCHOICE are random, thus requiring two "macro models":

$$\beta_{0j} = \beta_0 + \mu_{0j}$$

$$\beta_{9j} = \beta_9 + \mu_{9j} + e_{9ij}$$

Substituting the four macro models into the micro model, and rearranging with the fixed part preceding the random part, the equation takes the following form:

$$\begin{aligned}\hat{Y}_{ij} = & \beta_0 (\text{CONS}) + \beta_1 (\text{DOW92-93})_j + \beta_2 (\text{POLAPP})_j + \beta_3 (\text{TRANSF})_j \\ & + \beta_4 (\text{REMOTE})_j + \beta_5 (\text{URBAN})_{ij} + \beta_6 (\text{PRES})_{ij} + \beta_7 (\text{LDPR})_{ij} + \beta_8 (\text{APR})_{ij} \\ & + \beta_9 (\text{RUCHOICE})_{ij} + \beta_{10} (\text{YABL})_{ij} + \beta_{11} (\text{DIGN\&CH})_{ij} + \beta_{12} (\text{DPR})_{ij} \\ & + \beta_{13} (\text{CIVICUN})_{ij} + \beta_{14} (\text{KPRF})_{ij} + \beta_{15} (\text{KEDR})_{ij} + \beta_{16} (\text{WOFRUSS})_{ij} \\ & + \beta_{17} (\text{RUSFUT})_{ij} + \beta_{18} (\text{RDDR})_{ij} + \mu_{0j} (\text{CONS}) + \mu_{9j} (\text{RUCHOICE}) \\ & + e_{9i} (\text{RUCHOICE}) + e_{19ij} (\text{No RUCHOICE})_{ij}\end{aligned}$$

The term $e_{19ij} (\text{No RUCHOICE})_{ij}$ is due to the fact that the dummy for Russia's Choice is allowed to vary at level 1 and that "separate coding", instead of contrast coding, was used to specify the variable.

Table 6.2: *Variables used in the models of the 1993 election, descriptive statistics*

Hypothesis	Level	Variable Label	Type of Variable	Description	Categorical: Percent of cases (N)		Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.	Cases	Missing
Regionalist assertiveness	2	DOW88-93	Continuous	Average score on Dowley's index based on 1988-93 observations			2.9	0.6	1.6	4.4	225	0
	2	DOW92-93	Continuous	As above but based on 1992-93 observations			2.9	0.6	1.3	4.6	225	0
Appeasement	2	POLAPP	Categorical	Region received political appeasement	0 86.2% (194) 1 13.8% (31)						225	0
	2	TRANSF	Continuous	Financial transfers from Centre to region			18.7	20.5	0	94.1	224	1
Geographic accessibility of region	2	REMOTE	Continuous	Percent of regional population living in difficult areas			0.1	0.2	0	1.0	224	1
Party challenge	1	KPRF	Categorical	Candidate nominated by "KPRF" is running	0 75.6% (170) 1 24.4% (55)						225	0
	1	LDPR	Categorical	Candidate nominated by "LDPR" is running	0 73.3% (165) 1 26.7% (60)						225	0

Table continues on next page.

Table 6.2: *continued.*

Hypothesis	Level	Variable Label	Type of Variable	Description	Categorical: Percent of cases (N)		Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.	Cases	Missing
	1	YABL	Categorical	Candidate nominated by "Yabloko" is running	0	62.7% (141)					225	0
					1	37.3% (84)						
	1	WOFRUSS	Categorical	Candidate nominated by "Women of Russia" is running	0	97.3% (219)					225	0
					1	2.7% (6)						
	1	KEDR	Categorical	Candidate nominated by "KEDR" is running	0	90.2% (203)					225	0
					1	9.8% (22)						
	1	PRES	Categorical	Candidate nominated by "PRES" is running	0	72.4% (163)					225	0
					1	27.6% (62)						
	1	APR	Categorical	Candidate nominated by "APR" is running	0	70.2% (158)					225	0
					1	29.8% (67)						
	1	RUCCHOICE	Categorical	Candidate nominated by "Russia's Choice" is running	0	55.1% (126)					225	0
					1	44.9% (101)						
	1	DIGN&CH	Categorical	Candidate nominated by "Dignity and Charity" is running	0	86.4% (110)					225	0
					1	13.6% (15)						
	1	RUSFUT	Categorical	Candidate nominated by "Russia's Future" is running	0	82.8% (192)					225	0
					1	17.2% (33)						
	1	DPR	Categorical	Candidate nominated by "DPR" is running	0	66.1% (168)					225	0
					1	33.9% (57)						

Table continues on next page.

Table 6.2: *continued.*

Hypothesis	Level	Variable Label	Type of Variable	Description	Categorical: Percent of cases (N)		Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.	Cases	Missing
	1	CIVICUN	Categorical	Candidate nominated by "Civic Union" is running	0	54.8% (155)					225	0
					1	45.2% (70)						
	1	RDDR	Categorical	Candidate nominated by "RDDR" is running	0	66.1% (168)					225	0
					1	33.9% (57)						
Control	1	URBAN	Continuous	Percent of population living in urban centres			72.4	21.2	18.6	100.0	225	0

Note: in the models, all continuous variables have been mean-centred, in order to facilitate the interpretation of the constant.

The models

Tables 6.3-6.5 present the six estimated models (numbered 0 to 5) for the 1993 elections. In the tables, each column is devoted to one model, and the fixed part is followed by a random part, as explained in the section on the general multilevel model in chapter 5. The random part contains the variance in the success of independents occurring at level 2 (regions) and, below, the variance occurring at level 1 (SMDs). It should be remembered that when there is only one random term at a given level the variance at that level is simply the variance of the random term. On the other hand, when there is more than one random term, the variance is jointly defined by their variances and covariances.¹²⁸ In that case, it is not sufficient to look at the significance of each individual term to determine whether the variance at that level is significantly different from zero, but a joint test is necessary. Such a test is reported for the most important and complete models. Furthermore, the conventional t-test for significance of individual coefficients is only valid for fixed terms (those appearing only in the fixed part).¹²⁹ An "R" indicates that the term is random and that its significance cannot be assessed with the t-test. Rather, the question becomes the significance of the overall variance to which that variable contributes at a given level.

The simplest multilevel model presented in Table 6.3 is **Model 0**, the "Null Model". This includes only the constant as predictor, which represents the overall, all-Russian, mean success of the independents.¹³⁰ In addition, because the constant is allowed to be random at level 2 and level 1, it is possible to formally assess the variability of independents' success across regions and across SMDs within regions, thus adding to the impressionistic presentation of the spatial variability given in the introduction to the thesis.

¹²⁸ In the random part of models 5 and 6, the covariance terms are separated by "/" (e.g. CONS/RUCHOICE is the covariance between the constant and "RUCHOICE"). Single terms in the random part are individual variances.

¹²⁹ For these, the conventional marking is reported to the right of the standard error in each column (* for a t-value greater than 1.96 and statistical significance at the 0.05 level; ** for a t-value greater than 2.58 and significance at the 0.01 level; and, finally, *** for a t-value greater than 3.28 and significance at the 0.001 level).

¹³⁰ The coefficient of the constant in a multilevel "Null Model" represents a *weighted* average of the dependent variable, not the simple mean that single-level OLS regression would produce. The multilevel software MLwiN follows a complex estimation procedure (in this case called RIGLS, see chapter 5). To simplify matters, it can be said that the procedure takes into account the fact that some level 2 groups may only contain a few level 1 units, and assigns them less weight in the estimation.

Table 6.3: *Predicting independents' success. Estimated multilevel models (0-2)*

Hypothesis	Variable	Lev.	Model 0		Model 1		Model 2	
			Estim.	S.Err.	Estim.	S.Err.	Estim.	S.Err.
	Fixed part							
	CONS		51.245	2.083 R	51.608	2.140 R	51.797	2.176 R
Regionalist Assertiveness	DOW92-93	2			11.086	3.900 **		
	DOW88-93	2					11.973	4.434 **
Appeasement	POLAPP	2			-7.371	5.921	-7.554	6.003
	TRANSF	2			0.194	0.102	0.188	0.103
Accessibility	REMOTE	2			1.378	9.946	0.531	10.049
Control	URBAN	1			-0.110	0.086	-0.120	0.086
	Random part							
	Level 2							
	CONS		159.793	57.504 **	104.985	47.914 *	109.477	48.627 *
	Level 1							
	CONS		430.533	51.109 ***	402.306	49.750 ***	401.020	49.698 ***
-2*Log likelihood			2000.650		1813.087		1813.739	
N			219		201		201	

*p < 0.05 **p < 0.01 ***p < 0.001

Indeed, in Model 0 the portion of variability in independents' success that occurs between regions (i.e. the variance at level 2) is fully described just by the variance of the constant at level 2, which is the only element of the random part of the model. Its significance is directly interpretable as the significance of the cross-regional differences in independents' success. In particular, the fact that the portion of variance belonging at level 2 (159.8) is significantly different from zero indicates that the phenomenon under study varies across regions in a more systematic fashion than would occur by chance. This means that a multilevel model is necessary. At the same time, however, the variance occurring at level 1 (430.5), across SMDs *within* regions, is significant and larger than that at level 2. The coefficient of autocorrelation which indicates the

of Tatarstan and the 1 district of Chechnya). When the N drops below this point, it is due to missing values on the independent variables.

Models 1 and 2 introduce the set of variables linked to the main hypothesis, with alternative measurements for regionalist assertiveness. Both in Model 1 and Model 2 the variable expressing the main hypothesis, regionalist assertiveness, is statistically significant (at $p < 0.01$) while controlling for political appeasement ("PolApp"), for direct financial transfers from the centre ("Transf"), for the share of regional population living in remote areas ("Remote") and for the degree of district urbanisation ("Urban"). This means that, with 99 percent of confidence, the more assertive a region is in its autonomy demands, the greater the electoral chances for the independents. More precisely, a unit increase in assertiveness (Dow92-93) is predicted to produce an increase of 11 percentage points in the success of the independents. A unit increase corresponds, for example, to passing from a region advocating a decentralised federation (a score of 3 on Dowley's index) to one advocating an ethnofederal arrangement, with privileges for ethnic units (a score of 4 on the index). The other variables of models 1 and 2 are not significant and it is not possible to reject the null hypothesis that these variables have no effect on independents' success. The size of the unexplained variance at both levels has dropped, especially at level 2, due to the inclusion of the mentioned predictors. It can be further noted that the $-2 \times \text{Log likelihood}$ also decreased significantly. The difference between model 0 and model 1 is about 187, well above 11, the critical value of the log likelihood test statistic asymptotically distributed as Chi-sq, with 5 degrees of freedom, at the 0.05 level of significance.

The main hypothesis of this study is therefore confirmed for the 1993 election. However, the explanatory framework (see chapter 3) also allows for the effect of regionalist assertiveness to be mediated by intervening variables at the district level. As the remainder of this analysis shows (models 3-5), taking into account party entry strategies illuminates this mediating effect, adding to the sophistication of the causal paths. Rather than regionalist assertiveness directly impacting upon the returns for the independents, it affects the decisions of parties on whether or not to contest a given SMD, which, in turn, affects the chances of the independents.

This mediating effect is shown in **Models 3** and **4** (Table 6.4). A series of thirteen dummy variables is entered, one for each political party which nominated at least one candidate in the 225 SMDs.

Table 6.4: *Predicting independents' success. Estimated multilevel models (3-4)*

Hypothesis	Variable	Lev.	Model 3		Model 4	
			Estim.	S.Err.	Estim.	S.Err.
	Fixed part					
	CONS		73.069	2.968 R	73.097	2.954 R
Regionalist Assertiveness	DOW92-93	2	0.687	3.669		
	DOW88-93	2			2.450	4.123
Appeasement	POLAPP	2	-2.119	5.411	-2.834	5.427
	TRANSF	2	0.138	0.089	0.130	0.090
Party challenge	KPRF	1	-6.088	3.353	-5.943	3.354
	PRES	1	-5.088	2.847	-5.155	2.849
	LDPR	1	-9.457	3.234 **	-9.266	3.231 **
	APR	1	-12.352	3.121 ***	-12.247	3.106 ***
	KEDR	1	-7.279	4.752	-7.287	4.749
	RUCHOICE	1	-13.939	2.724 ***	-13.876	2.728 ***
	YABL	1	-6.044	2.966 *	-6.019	2.964 *
	DIGN&CH	1	-9.842	5.100	-9.905	5.101
	WOFRUSS	1	-10.151	8.616	-9.807	8.621
	RUSFUT	1	-2.615	3.856	-2.359	3.857
	DPR	1	-7.097	3.180 *	-7.246	3.188 *
	CIVICUN	1	-7.083	2.930 *	-6.987	2.931 *
	RDDR	1	1.235	3.205	1.281	3.206
Accessibility	REMOTE	2	-6.869	8.640	-7.448	8.665
Control	URBAN	1	0.029	0.074	0.025	0.074
	Random part					
	Level 2					
	CONS		119.383	39.287 **	116.971	38.756 **
	Level 1					
	CONS		243.203	30.688 ***	243.858	30.803 ***
-2*Log likelihood			1714.362		1714.000	
N			201		201	

*p < 0.05 **p < 0.01 ***p < 0.001

It is worth again noting that, contrary to conventional designs found in the literature for similar issues, the unit of analysis here is the SMD, not the candidate. Obviously, more than one party can and do nominate candidates in the same SMD. Therefore, the

party dummies entered here are *distinct* variables, *not* mutually exclusive states of a single categorical variable.

Two main points should be noted with regard to Models 3 and 4. The first interesting finding is that the coefficient for regionalist assertiveness sharply decreases, and indeed loses significance. This is consistent with the notion of parties mediating the effect of regionalist assertiveness, as outlined above and posited in chapter 3, and it should not lead one to conclude that regionalist assertiveness does not have a significant effect. The second point to note is that only six of the thirteen parties running in the SMDs have a significant impact on the chances of the independents. Indeed, as noted in chapter 2, most parties lacked the territorial presence or name recognition needed to perform well in the SMDs. Parties with significant effects are all "national" parties, in the sense that they lack regionalist themes or roots, with the partial exception of the agrarian party (APR), which is strongly organised in the territories dominated by collective farming. The "party of the regions", PRES, did not pose a significant threat to the independents, despite its potential challenge to independents' competitive advantage in representing regionalist sentiments. This suggests that the true nature of the PRES as a creature of the Kremlin came across to the voters animated by anti-centralist sentiments, despite the party's regionalist rhetoric.

On the other hand, it is interesting to note that the Democratic Party of Russia (DPR) did challenge the independents, as did the Civic Union. The latter party, especially, is usually overlooked in accounts of the 1993 Duma vote because it performed poorly in the PR tier of the election (with 1.9 percent). In the districts, however, it made more of a difference than parties that received high shares of the PR vote, such as the KPRF, PRES, Women of Russia, and KEDR. It is also of particular interest to note the weakness of the communist party (KPRF) in the 1993 district races, as the party's territorial organisations were still fragmented (see above).

As for the magnitude of the estimates, on average the presence of a candidate of "Russia's Choice" reduces the chances of the independents by about as much as 14 percentage points compared to a district not contested by the party. Similarly strong effects are estimated for the APR, and – in descending order – for the LDPR, the DPR and Civic Union, and Yabloko. In a hypothetical SMD where all parties with a

significant effect enter the contest, the predicted vote share gained by the independents is reduced to roughly 16 percent, where all other variables have average values.

Finally, a sharp decrease in the level 1 variance between models 1-2 and 3-4 (from over 400 to 243) is due to the partial structuring of the cross-district variability achieved with the party variables. Interestingly, at the same time, the level 2 variance increases despite the level two variables remaining the same. This means that part of the variance previously attributed to level 1 can be considered level 2 variance. This confounding of the variance between the two levels may occur due to the fact that several regions only have one SMD, so that the two levels overlap. The $-2 \times \text{Log}$ likelihood also decreases (from 1813 to 1714), which is a significant improvement over model 2, in terms of the log likelihood ratio test, for 13 degrees of freedom.

So far, the only coefficient allowed to vary across regions and SMDs has been the constant, reflecting the fact that the level of independents' success for average SMDs (the predictors are mean centred) vary significantly across regions. **Model 5** expands the complexity of the model by allowing one of the other coefficients to be random at both levels. This is done under the assumption that the complexity of social reality implies complex patterns of variability in relationships between variables. The coefficient with a cross-regional variability closest to statistical significance is the effect of "RuChoice" (for the party "Russia's Choice"). The level 2 variance term due to "RuChoice" is 175 (with a std. error of 103). This means that the effect of a challenge posed by Russia's Choice in the SMDs does not vary significantly from region to region.¹³¹

Even so, the mere fact that a more complex variability is explored (and level 1 heteroskedasticity allowed for) makes the model more precise; as evidenced by the decrease in $-2 \times \text{log}$ likelihood and by the fact that a previously insignificant effect, namely the challenge by the party "Dignity and Charity", becomes significant and important. Model 5 is the final model for 1993. The equation predicting independents' success in model 5 has been introduced above, before the presentation of the estimated models.

¹³¹ The effects of other parties turned out to be even less variable across regions.

Table 6.5: *Predicting independents' success. Estimated multilevel model 5*

Hypothesis	Variable	Lev.	Model 5	
			Estim.	S.Err.
	Fixed part			
	CONS		73.416	2.948 R
Regionalist assertiveness	DOW92-93	2	1.787	3.675
	DOW88-93	2		
Appeasement	POLAPP	2	-2.859	5.348
	TRANSF	2	0.125	0.087
Party challenge	KPRF	1	-5.839	3.092
	PRES	1	-5.748	2.712 *
	LDPR	1	-10.922	3.107 ***
	APR	1	-12.037	2.913 ***
	KEDR	1	-5.569	4.434
	RUCHOICE	1	-13.315	3.273 R
	YABL	1	-6.406	2.894 *
	DIGN&CH	1	-13.629	4.983 **
	WOFRUSS	1	-13.572	7.878
	RUSSEUT	1	-2.333	3.641
	DPR	1	-7.435	3.124 *
	CIVICUN	1	-6.277	2.791 *
	RDDR	1	1.468	3.002
Accessibility	REMOTE	2	-8.144	8.434
Control	URBAN	1	0.021	0.067
	Random part			
	Level 2			
	CONS		196.789	52.516
	RUCHOICE		175.599	103.133
	CONS/RUCHOICE		-120.247	62.755
	Level 1			
	RUCHOICE		286.844	58.598
	NoRUCHOICE		131.387	26.997
	NoRUCHOICE/RUCHOICE		n.a.	n.a.
-2*Log likelihood			1704.523	
N			201	

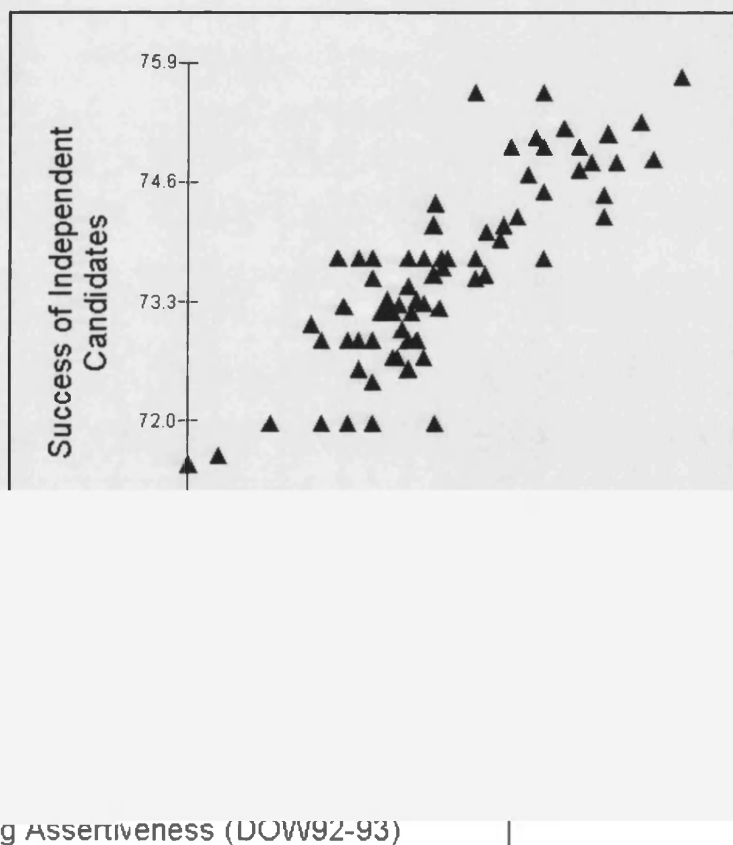
*p < 0.05 **p < 0.01 ***p < 0.001

N.a. = non-applicable, because separate coding was used for the categories of a dummy variable (all categories have a dummy variable). By definition the two categories are mutually exclusive and cannot covary.

Based on model 5, Figure 6.1 shows the bivariate relationship between regionalist assertiveness and the success of independent candidates, while controlling for the entire model. Triangular shapes represent regions. It is apparent that the two variables are related, which confirms the main hypothesis of this thesis for the 1993 Duma elections.

In other words, the graph confirms that, roughly, the greater the level of regionalist assertiveness, the greater the success for the independents, controlling for the rest of model 5. It has also been noted, based on models 1 to 5, that this relationship is in part mediated by the presence/absence of political parties that challenge the independents, a presence/absence which is in turn affected by regionalist assertiveness. It is worth looking at the latter causal path in greater detail. If the notion of a mediating effect is valid, the nomination decisions of at least some of the political parties in models 3 to 5 should, in turn, be predicted by levels of regionalist assertiveness.

Figure 6.1: *Main hypothesis: predicted bivariate relationship, from final model*

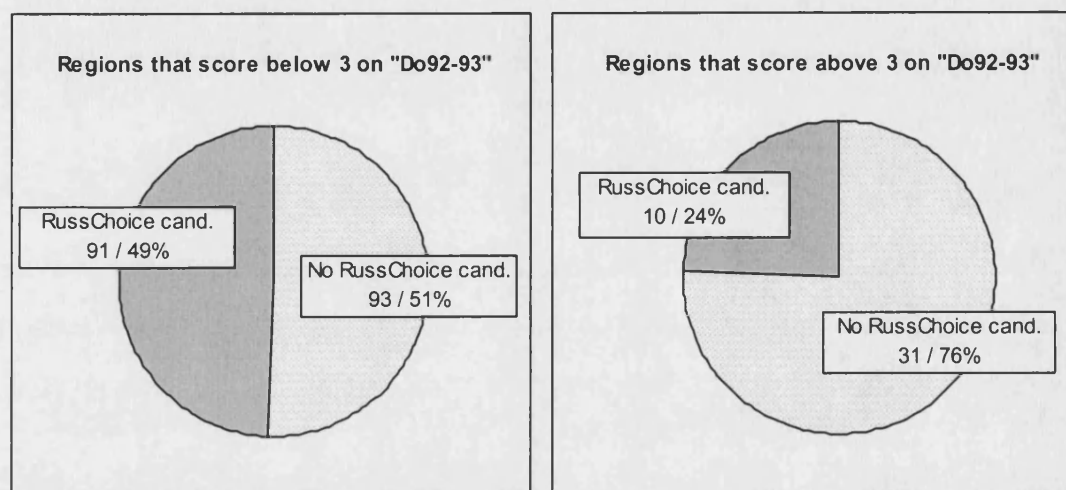


descriptive confirmation of this dynamic for the party Russia's Choice is shown by Figures 6.2-3. The first pie chart represents all SMDs in regions with medium to low levels of regionalist assertiveness (i.e. DOW92-93 lower than 3.0); the second represents only the SMDs of regions with high levels of autonomist demands (i.e. DOW92-93 above 3.0). If regionalist assertiveness has an impact on the entry decisions of Russia's Choice, the party should nominate its candidates more often in regions with low assertiveness, and only in a few of the districts located in highly assertive units. The data confirms this expectation. While Russia's Choice contested as many as half of the

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SMDs with low assertiveness, it only contested about one quarter of the SMDs in highly assertive areas.

Figures 6.2-3: *Nomination of Russia's Choice candidates in regions scoring below (left) and above (right) the median score of regionalist assertiveness.*
(In boxes: number and percent of districts contested by Russia's Choice)



Source: elaborated from Dowely's dataset and CEC data.

A more accurate test of the hypothesis that party entry strategies mediate the effect of regionalist assertiveness on independents' success can be obtained by testing whether party entry decisions are significantly predicted by this variable. To this end, a series of logistic multilevel models have been run each with a party dummy as dependent variable. The models for the four parties whose entry decisions are indeed significantly affected by regionalist assertiveness are reported in Table 6.6 below. Each column is devoted to a model for a party's entry decisions.

Table 6.6 shows that APR, LDPR and especially KPRF and Russia's Choice appear to have been significantly affected by considerations of the anti-centralist sentiments of regions in their strategic allocation of campaign resources and candidates across the Russian territory. The effects are all negative, suggesting strategic withdrawal from hostile regions. The coefficients in the models represent the effect on the logit of the

Appendix). The relationship between the probability that these parties contest a given SMD and regionalist assertiveness is evident and clearly negative, as expected.

The logistic models of party entry strategies and the related graphs support the interpretation given above of the drop in statistical significance of the coefficient for regionalist assertiveness when party challenges are considered in models 3-5 (Tables 6.4 and 6.5). The drop should not induce one to think that the variable is not a significant predictor of the success of the independents. Rather it should be read as confirmation that most of its effect is mediated. Because the effect of regionalist assertiveness on the probability of party nomination is negative, and, in turn the effect of party challenge on the success of the independents is also negative, the net indirect effect of the first variable on the last is positive, as expected.

A precise quantification of this mediating effect can be reached by two considerations. Firstly, the coefficient for regionalist assertiveness in model 1 (Table 6.3), which equals 11, represents the "total effect" of the variable (i.e. direct plus indirect). Secondly, the coefficient in the final model (model 5, Table 6.5), which equals 1.8, is the direct effect. As a result it can be concluded that the size of the indirect, party-mediated, effect is $(11 - 1.8 =) 9.2$. It should be noted that the "direct effect" might well in fact be mediated by variables not included in the models. In particular, in the analysis of the 1995 elections (next chapter), with greater data availability, it is possible to see that a second mediating effect can be produced by the strategic decisions of notable candidates at the district level.

Table 6.6: *Predicting party entry in SMD races. Logistic multilevel models*

Hypothesis	Variable		APR		Russia's Choice		KPRF		LDPR	
	Lev.		Estim.	S.Err.	Estim.	S.Err.	Estim.	S.Err.	Estim.	S.Err.
	Fixed part									
	CONS		-1.932	0.450 R	-0.554	0.181 R	-2.006	0.381 R	-1.682	0.312 R
Regionalist Assertiveness	DOW92-93	2	-1.736	0.781 *	-0.904	0.352 **	-1.727	0.583 **	-1.331	0.581 *
Appeasement	POLAPP	2	1.693	1.069	1.235	0.495 *	0.441	0.813	0.462	0.837
	TRANSF	2	0.006	0.020	-0.015	0.011	0.023	0.817	-0.001	0.017
Accessibility	REMOTE	2	-4.923	4.215	-0.484	1.122	-7.633	5.116	-1.126	1.909
Control	URBAN	1	-0.015	0.012	0.022	0.008 **	0.009	0.012	0.009	0.012
	Random part									
	Level 2									
	CONS		3.649	1.327 **	0.000	0.000	0.856	0.571	1.566	0.747 *
	Level 1									
	CONS		1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000

*p < 0.05 **p < 0.01

Figure 6.4: *The impact of regional assertiveness on KPRF entry decisions*
(Estimated by the "KPRF" logistic model in Table 6.6)

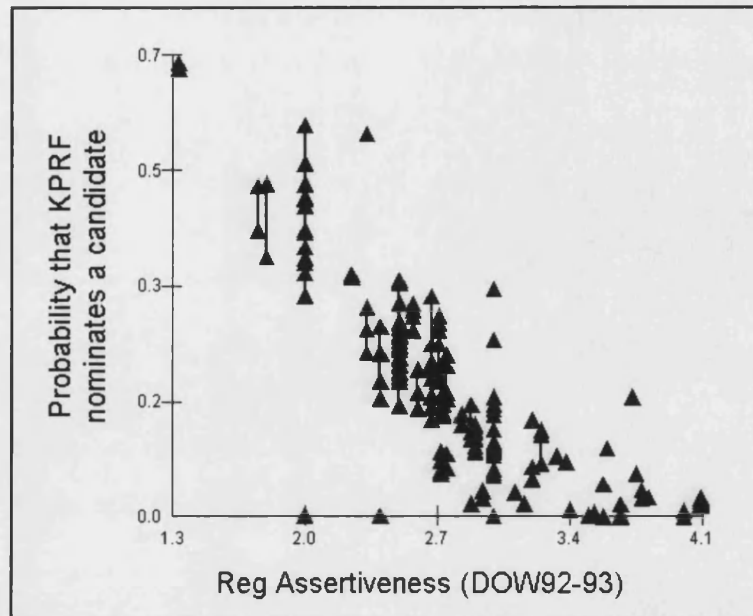
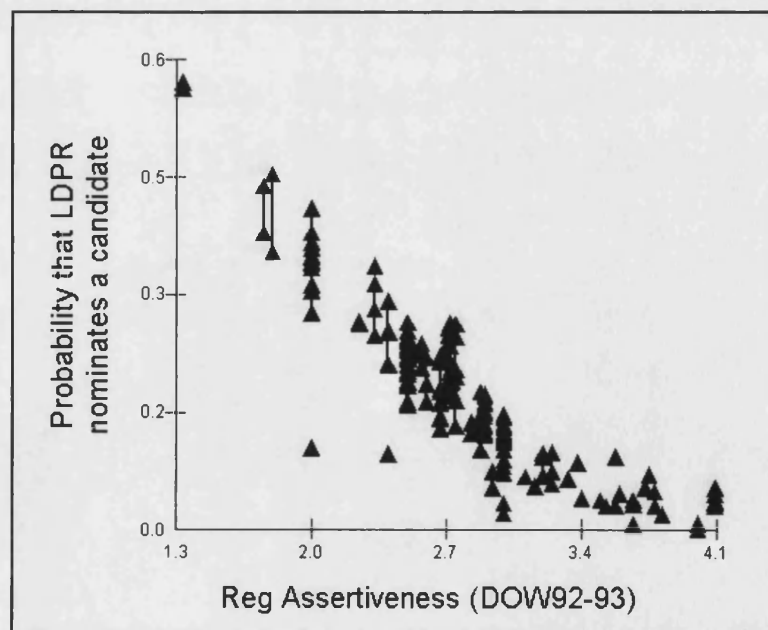


Figure 6.5: *The impact of regional assertiveness on LDPR entry decisions*
(Predicted from the "LDPR" logistic model in Table 6.6)



Conclusion

The empirical analysis of the 1993 elections indicates that the main hypothesis of this thesis is confirmed by the data. As posited in the explanatory framework, regionalist assertiveness has both direct and mediated positive effects on the success of the independents. In other words, autonomist sentiment affects first and foremost the strategic decisions of parties on where to nominate candidates. Where key parties do nominate candidates, they pose a significant challenge to the independents.

This pattern emerges despite the exceptional circumstances of the 1993 campaign. Such circumstances included the little time that most parties had to prepare for the vote, the omission of candidates' party affiliation from the ballot paper, and the inability of young parties to project a brand name image. In short, parties failed to constitute the informational shortcuts that would have made them particularly relevant for voters overwhelmed by several simultaneous elections.

In sum, the 1993 elections confirm the main expectations of the present explanatory framework. However, greater data availability for the 1995 and 1999 elections allows richer and better specified models. In the next chapter, a consideration of the personal resources of candidates is added to the analysis of the 1995 Duma elections.

The 1995 Duma Elections

“We, for example, have excellent relations with Moscow. We received a great deal of autonomy, we don’t have demands on the centre. I dispute the view that ‘relations based on bilateral treaties lead to a break-up’, I firmly disagree”.

M.G. Rakhimov,
President of the Republic of Bashkortostan,
in 17 March 1999 interview.¹³²

According to the Russian Constitution, the first post-communist Duma was to last two years, half the normal term. As a consequence, a new vote took place in December 1995, only two years after the first. The election was marked by high levels of volatility, both in terms of voters' preferences, and in terms of party supply. If party system institutionalisation was evidently still weak, individual parties had nonetheless grown in organisational strength. This applies primarily to the KPRF, which dramatically improved its penetration of, and electoral performance in, the SMDs.

In comparison to the previous chapter, the statistical models for 1995 are able to look at one additional factor –candidates' personal resources. This allows a study of party performance that controls for the role of campaign assets, such as personal resources, independent from the party label.

As for the main hypothesis, the models reinforce the findings of the previous chapter. Regionalist assertiveness is shown to have had a significant and positive impact on the chances of independent candidates. However, while the effect of regionalist assertiveness increased, the indirect effect – i.e. that mediated through party entry decisions – decreased. This suggests that parties were starting to compete in SMDs

previously written off as “hostile”. In this chapter, confirmation is provided for the fact that the strategic decisions of local notable candidates on whether to run as a party or as an independent candidate are (partly) affected by considerations of anti-centralist sentiments in the regions. This means that such decisions provide a second channel for the mediation of the impact of regionalist assertiveness on the chances of the independents.

7.1 Background

The contestants

One of the most startling aspects of the 1995 Duma election is the proliferation of parties and electoral blocs. Forty-three organisations crowded the proportional ballot. Fifteen of these were “associations” or “movements”, rather than parties or electoral blocs.

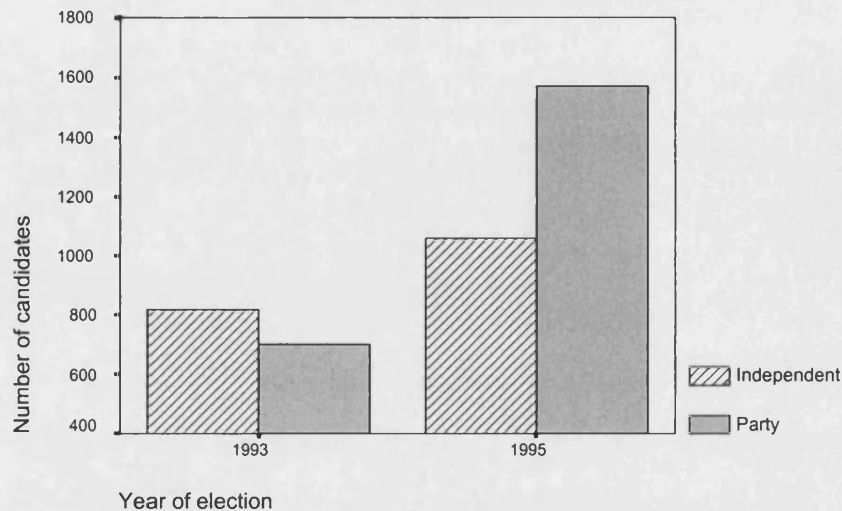
In the SMD tier, the total number of SMD candidates rose considerably between 1993 and 1995. However, while the number of independent candidates rose by 29 percent (from 819 to 1057), the ranks of party candidates grew several times faster, by 124 percent. Indeed, the number of party candidates more than doubled since the previous election, passing from 700 to 1571 (see Figure 7.1). Therefore, even though their absolute number grew between 1993 and 1995, the share of candidates running as independents dropped from 54 percent to 40 percent. In terms of electoral success, independents won 77 of 225 plurality races in 1995, which means that only 7 percent of all independent candidates won a seat (77/1057). By contrast, in 1993 independents had won in 134 SMDs, with a 16 percent rate of success relative to their total numbers (134/819).

The 43 organisations registered for the PR race nominated 1459 candidates in the SMDs; an additional 114 were nominated by twenty-one “electoral unions and blocs” (TsIK 1998: 145) which did not appear on the PR ballot paper and collectively obtained only about 2 percent of the district votes. A number of explanations have been advanced

¹³² Interviewed by V.L. Filippov (Filippov 2001: 96), own translation.

for the multiplication of electoral organisations running in 1995, which is responsible for the sharp rise in the number of party candidates noted above.

Figure 7.1: *Number of SMD candidates, 1993 and 1995*



Source: own elaboration of CEC data.

Institutionalist accounts stress that a change in the electoral rules made it easier to register an organisation for the election. Indeed, in addition to explicitly political organisations, social organisations – such as the "Union of Housing and Municipal Workers" – were allowed to put candidates forward by a ruling of the Supreme Court that corrected the previous interpretation of the electoral law by the Central Electoral

Orteng and Benn 1997: 60).

gn rules also granted state funds and free TV time to parties tier. As a result, small parties with no chance of crossing the 5% presentation threshold were set up just for the purpose of receiving es that could be used in the districts, where chances were higher. ave outweighed the increased difficulty of forming a regionalist more stringent requirements for party registration (the required to be collected increased from 100,000 to 200,000, while the was allowed to be collected in any one region dropped from 15 to there is evidence to suggest that signatures could be bought quite

Commission (CEC) (

Moreover, campaign registered in the PR t all-Russian PR repres free campaign resource This incentive may h party derived from r number of signatures maximum share that v 7 percent). After all, easily from voters as

Indeed, these campaign benefits seem to have created an incentive for small and personalistic formations to register party lists and may also plausibly explain why "parties" with a regionalist flavour appeared in 1995 (and not in 1993 or 1999¹³³) even though they had no chances of crossing the PR threshold. This would apply in particular to the only truly regionalist party of Russian elections to date, "Transformation of the Fatherland" (see chapter 4, and below), and to an electoral bloc called "89" after the 89 regions of Russia. As Belin and Orttung explain, "Bloc 89 had its roots in the Russia's Choice movement in 1993 but could also be considered an interest group party representing the eighty-nine regions of Russia" (Belin and Orttung 1997: 61). Moreover, even a number of independents themselves decided to form a party, the "Bloc of Independent Candidates". These three parties, however, were inconsequential for the PR electoral results (they received only 0.5, 0.06, and 0.12 percent of the PR votes, respectively). Another party trying to appeal to regionalist sentiments, PRES, was more established, having run already in the 1993 campaign (see chapter 6). Deprived of the Kremlin's support, however, PRES only gathered 0.36 percent of the proportional vote, even less than in the previous election, and failed to make an impact in the SMDs.

Other explanations for the proliferation of party candidates in 1995 have pointed out that a limit of 12 was introduced on the number of candidates that could appear on the federal part of a party's PR list. Additional candidates beyond the top 12 would have to be listed in regional sub-lists. This was meant to reduce the predominance of Moscow politicians in PR lists, and to spur greater inclusion of candidates from the provinces. One unintended consequence, it is suggested, was to lead prominent Moscow politicians, who could not find a place among the first 12 places on parties' federal lists, to form their own party, thus contributing to the increase in the number of electoral organisations contesting the 1995 election (Moser 2001: 502).

A third hypothesis points to the additional local visibility gained by parties' focused on the PR competition by running campaigns in the SMDs (Herron 2002). This hypothesis runs counter to the hypothesis driving this research; namely, that parties chose where to concentrate their resources on the basis of their expected chances of victory and these chances varied across the territory partly according to levels of regionalist assertiveness (as noted for the 1993 vote in chapter 6). In comparison to the

¹³³ The mentioned incentive was withdrawn in 1999, as will be explained in the next chapter.

difficult organisational situation of the 1993 campaign, this research does suggest that in 1995 parties were extending their reach further into the provinces, running even where their chances of winning SMD seats were small (see below). Thus, in 1995 more than in 1993, it is plausible that the strategic incentive of cross-tier contamination came to weight more heavily in parties' entry decisions.

However, even without relying on special explanations, in general, the very fact of the 1993 elections had put parties back in business, and the PR tier of the election had strengthened them (Petrov 1999: 59). Major national parties, while refraining from supporting regionalist demands, became aware of the need to improve their connection to the regions. The party of federal power, "Our Home is Russia" (NDR) included 60 "senior officials from the regions" in its political council (Belin and Orttung 1997: 34), while the third place on the communist KPRF party list was occupied by Aman Tuleev, the speaker of Kemerovo oblast legislative assembly.

Table 7.1: *Party nominations and victories in the SMDs*

Party, electoral bloc or association	No. of Cands.	No. of Winners	Success Rate
Liberal Democratic Party of Russia	188	1	0.5%
Communist Party of the Russian Federation	130	58	44.6%
Our Home is Russia (NDR)	104	10	9.6%
Congress of Russian Communities (KRO)	90	5	5.6%
Agrarian Party of Russia	87	20	23.0%
Democratic Choice of Russia (DVR) ¹³⁴	80	9	11.3%
Yabloko	69	14	20.3%
Forward, Russia!	67	3	4.5%
Communists, Workers of Russia - for the Soviet Union	64	1	1.6%
Bloc of Ivan Rybkin	64	3	4.7%
Power - To the People	41	9	22.0%
Trade Unions and Industrialists of Russia - Labour Union	40	1	2.5%
Pamfilova-Gurov-Lysenko	33	2	6.1%
Social Democrats	29	0	0.0%
Party of Workers' Self-Government (PST)	27	1	3.7%
Strong Power ("Derzhava")	25	0	0.0%
Bloc of Stanislav Govorukhin	25	1	4.0%
Party of Russian Unity and Concord (PRES)	23	1	4.3%
Women of Russia	20	3	15.0%
Russian Ecological Party "KEDR"	19	0	0.0%

¹³⁴ In three SMDs, DVR nominated two candidates.

My Fatherland	18	1	5.6%
Stable Russia	18	0	0.0%
Russian All-Peoples Movement	18	0	0.0%
Bloc of Independent Candidates	17	1	5.9%
Association of Russian Lawyers	15	0	0.0%
Party of Economic Freedom	15	1	6.7%
Party - People's Union	15	0	0.0%
Transformation of the Fatherland	15	1	6.7%
Education - Future of Russia	14	0	0.0%
Duma-96	14	0	0.0%
Political Party Christian-Democratic Union-Christians of Russia	13	0	0.0%
Federal-Democratic Movement	11	0	0.0%
For the Motherland!	11	0	0.0%
Union of Patriots	11	0	0.0%
All-Russian Socio-Political Movement of Transport workers	11	0	0.0%
Party of Beer's Lovers	11	0	0.0%
"Zemskii Sobor"	9	0	0.0%
Inter-National Union	9	0	0.0%
Party of Peace and Good (bloc includes several formations)	7	0	0.0%
Non-Party Political Voters' Movement "Common Cause"	7	1	14.3%
Faith, Labour, Conscience	6	0	0.0%
Union of Housing-Communal Workers	6	0	0.0%
All-Russian Muslim Movement "Nur" (light)	6	0	0.0%
"89" (89 regions of Russia)	6	1	16.7%
Russian Party	5	0	0.0%
Fronteer Generation	5	0	0.0%
We Serve Russia!	5	0	0.0%
Bloc of Tikhonov-Tupolev-Tikhonov	5	0	0.0%
Rebirth	5	0	0.0%
League of Independent Scholars of Russia	5	0	0.0%
Democratic Alternative	4	0	0.0%
Party in Support of Lowering Taxes	4	0	0.0%
Union of Communists	4	0	0.0%
Our Future	3	0	0.0%
Conservative Party	3	0	0.0%
Russian Party of Car Drivers	3	0	0.0%
Union of Russian Muslims	3	0	0.0%
Pre-electoral Bloc including leaders of the Party for the Protection of Pensioners and other parties	3	0	0.0%
National-Republican Party of Russia (NRPR)	2	0	0.0%
Workers' Collectives and Greens for SSR	1	0	0.0%
National Salvation Front	1	0	0.0%
Russian Union of Local Self-Government	1	0	0.0%
European Liberal Democratic Party	1	0	0.0%
<i>Independents</i>	<i>1057</i>	<i>77</i>	<i>7.3%</i>

SSR (*Soyuz Sovnadelzev Rossii*), Union of Collective Owners of Russia.

Source: own elaboration of CEC data.

Federal relations in the 1994-1995 period

It is worth presenting a brief overview of the main development in centre-regional relations during this period as this is background information of particular significance to the main hypothesis of this research. The starkest development in this context was certainly the armed invasion of Chechnya at the end of 1994. On the one hand, this set an example for other potentially recalcitrant regions, while on the other, it stimulated the need for Moscow "to form a belt of regions politically loyal to the federal center around Chechnya" (Lavrov 1998: 31). This aim was pursued, for example, by granting economic concessions to the Caucasus republics of Ingushetia, Dagestan, Karachaevo-Cherlessia (which were granted a free economic zone in 1994), Kabardino-Balkaria, and North Ossetia (Lavrov 1998: 31). This arguably defused the potential for regionalist assertiveness in these regions.

Apart from the eruption in Chechnya, the period following the 1993 Duma elections up to the December 1995 vote was marked by a progressive determination of federal relations. A crucial difference with the previous period was the fact that the new Constitution had been approved in the December 1993 referendum. When compared to the Federal Treaty of the previous year, the federal arrangement institutionalised by the constitution marked a step towards centralisation of centre-regional relations (Petrov 1999: 59). However, it still represented an uneasy compromise between the two prevalent and diverging views on the ideal form of federal arrangements -the one advocating a centralised state where all units would be equal to each other, and the one demanding that ethnically-designated units preserve their special status and privileges.

This divergence made it difficult to reach a compromise between the autonomous units (republics and autonomous okrugs) and ordinary regions and resulted in key passages of the constitution being left deliberately vague or worded in a mutually contradictory manner, i.e. those defining the distribution of authority between centre and different types of units. Nevertheless, by and large, the passage of this fundamental text did usher in a period of more moderate regionalist assertiveness compared to that between 1991 and 1993. Further movement toward a *detente* in centre-regional relation was marked by a string of bilateral treaties between Yeltsin and the executive powers of selected regions. Of particular note is the first such treaty. Signed in 1994 with Tatarstan, it formally reconciled this assertive region with the Russian state-building

process. This treaty granted important shares of autonomy and economic benefits to Tatarstan so that it "defused the conflict" with Moscow (Lapidus and Walker 1995: 107). Internally to the region, the bilateral treaty also "severely weakened the positions of radical nationalist forces in the republic, whose influence was based almost entirely on fear of an 'imperial enemy'" (Payin 1998: 18).

Seven treaties were signed before the December 1995 elections with the most vocal republics, a practice that reinforced the elements of asymmetry in Russian federalism by granting them special rights and privileges. Such bilateral treaties can be considered a systematic tool used by the centre to appease the most recalcitrant regions and preserve the integrity of the federation (Hughes 2002). However, demands for equality of treatment among regions were raised by regions which did not receive special privileges in the 1994-1995 bilateral agreements and treaties. Perm oblast and net contributors to the federal budget, such as Sverdlovsk oblast, Krasnoyarsk kray, and the city of St. Petersburg, are examples of resentful units (Lavrov 1998: 29). This resentment led to new special agreements in 1995-96 with several oblasts, i.e. after the Duma elections and in view of the presidential vote of June 1996 (Hughes 1996).

The general atmosphere of regionalist appeasement can also be inferred from the signing of the 1994 Agreement on Public Accord. Signed by all republics, the Accord included a passage stating that "the rights of the Federation's subjects can be realized only if the state integrity of Russia and its political, economic and legal unity is maintained" (Payin 1998: 18).

7.2 Analysis

The quantitative analysis of independents' success across SMDs and regions in the 1995 elections follows the same pattern as that used to analyse such success in the 1993 elections. This means that the models reported in Tables 7.3-7.7 have the same general characteristics as those described in chapter 5; they are multilevel, and require tables of coefficients to be divided into a fixed and a random part. The dependent variable is the success of independent candidates, measured as the joint vote share received by the independents in each SMD and the 225 SMDs constitute the units of analysis. As in the

previous chapter, continuous variables have been mean-centred to facilitate interpretation. For the details on the operational definitions of the independent variables, chapter 4 should be consulted.

Two measures of regionalist assertiveness, drawing from different time spans, are included in alternative models. The variable which averages observations over the longest period (1991-95) is "Dow". This is just the mean score on Dowley's index as published in her 1998 article. The other measurement, "Dow94-95" is more time-specific, based on the 1994-95 years only (regional scores on these two variables are listed in Table A.4.1 in Appendix).

Estimated models control for key concessions made by the central government to appease regionalist demands (through the variable "PolApp"), and for the effect of central financial transfers to the regions. In 1995, political appeasement is considered to have been achieved with the signing of bilateral treaties when these included substantial concessions to the federal units, which applies to five republics. Additionally, units that had received substantial concessions in the process of signing the Federal Treaty of 1992 are also considered still appeased in 1995. The two groups of regions mostly, but not completely, overlap (see chapter 4). While one could mention other instances of appeasement, the two accounted for here are considered to be the strongest in most of the literature (for example Kahn 2002).

In addition to regional level variables, the models also test for the effect of party challenges to the independents in the SMDs. Parties expected to perform well in the SMDs, thus challenging the independents, are first and foremost "major" national parties (being relatively more visible in the national campaign). This category includes the main party of power, "Our Home is Russia", headed by prime minister Victor Chernomyrdin. The "Bloc of Ivan Rybkin", named after its leader, the speaker of the first Duma, was another party of power sponsored by the Kremlin, although one that was meant to appeal to the electorate of centre-left. The party "Congress of Russian Communities" (KRO) is also included in this category here, despite being neglected in most of the academic literature due to its poor PR results. In the SMD tier, KRO made an impressive organisational effort; nominating candidates in as many as 90 SMDs (see Table 7.1).

Regionalist parties are the second type to be considered. "Transformation of the Fatherland" was the only genuinely regionalist party in 1995. The PRES, as a pseudo-regionalist party (see chapter 3), can also be added to the analysis. Moreover, an additional set of party variables is included to test the hypotheses that the 1995 proliferation of small parties formed around a single or a few leaders explains the decrease in the number and success of independents. This proliferation of personalistic formations, in turn, is attributed to the above-mentioned new incentives for party registration which appeared in 1995. This type of party is exemplified by the "Bloc of Tikhonov-Tupolev-Tikhonov", the "Bloc of Pamfilova-Gurov-Lysenko", etc. (see party variables in Table 7.2).

Moreover, the larger body of data available for the 1995 elections allows for the consideration of more complex strategic scenarios unfolding in the SMDs than those based solely on party supply (as in the models for the 1993 elections). Indeed, in addition to the party challenge, the analysis of the 1995 vote takes into account the effect of candidates' personal resources (or notability). As detailed in chapter 4, two dummy variables reflect whether the distribution of regional and federal political elite members across the party/independent pools is skewed in favour of the independents ("Regpol" and "Fedpol"). A third dummy variable, "Incumb", marks the districts where one of the independents is the district incumbent.

Both dimensions of the district candidate supply (party presence and the personal resources of both party and independent candidates) can be expected to have a complex role in the model. As explained in chapter 3, and noted in the previous chapter with reference to the party variables, these factors are at the same time causes of independents' success and consequences of regionalist assertiveness. In terms of candidates' notability, for example, the decision of notable candidates (i.e. regional or federal political elites and incumbents) to run as independent is strategic, i.e. affected by the fact that, in regionally assertive regions, the chances of parties success are lower (other factors being equal). Both the party and the notability variables, therefore, are expected to mediate the effect of regionalist assertiveness. This means that, in the sequence of estimated models, the coefficient for regionalist assertiveness should decrease twice, firstly when the party variables are entered, and then, even further, when the notability variables are considered.

The remaining variables follow the rationale of their counterparts in the preceding chapter. "Remote" measures the share of regional population affected by adverse climatic and geographic conditions that make it difficult for national parties to enter the contest and campaign. This variable, therefore, is positively related to the chances for the independents, but, similarly to regionalist assertiveness, it has an indirect effect; mediated through the party and notability variables. Indeed, the difficulty of party involvement in the campaigns taking place in remote regions negatively affects the likelihood that parties nominate candidates (party variables), and/or reduces the ability of parties to contribute to a candidate's campaigning in those regions, thus inducing local notables to run as independents (notability variables). Finally, reflecting widely shared expectations on party development detailed in chapter 3, the "Urban" variable controls for levels of urbanisation.

The final model of this chapter (Model 7), which tests the explanatory framework to the greatest extent possible given the available data, is described by the equation below. It requires a "micro" and two "macro" models. The micro model is:

$$\begin{aligned}\hat{Y}_{ij} = & \beta_{0j} (\text{CONS}) + \beta_1 (\text{DOW})_j + \beta_2 (\text{POLAPP})_j + \beta_3 (\text{TRANSF})_j + \beta_4 (\text{REMOTE})_j \\ & + \beta_5 (\text{URBAN})_{ij} + \beta_6 (\text{NDR})_{ij} + \beta_7 (\text{No KPRF})_{ij} + \beta_8 (\text{BLOKIND})_{ij} + \beta_9 (\text{APR})_{ij} \\ & + \beta_{10} (\text{KRO})_{ij} + \beta_{11} (\text{RYBKIN})_{ij} + \beta_{12} (\text{REGPOL})_{ij} + \beta_{13} (\text{FEDPOL})_{ij} \\ & + \beta_{14ij} (\text{INCUMB})_{ij} + \varepsilon_{ij}\end{aligned}$$

In this, two coefficients (for CONS and INCUMB) are random, thus requiring the macro models:

$$\begin{aligned}\beta_{0j} &= \beta_0 + \mu_{0j} \\ \beta_{14ij} &= \beta_{14} + \mu_{14j} + e_{14ij}\end{aligned}$$

Substituting the four macro models into the micro model and rearranging with the fixed part preceding the random part results in the final equation:

$$\begin{aligned}\hat{Y}_{ij} = & \beta_0 (\text{CONS}) + \beta_1 (\text{DOW})_j + \beta_2 (\text{POLAPP})_j + \beta_3 (\text{TRANSF})_j \\ & + \beta_4 (\text{REMOTE})_j + \beta_5 (\text{URBAN})_{ij} + \beta_6 (\text{NDR})_{ij} + \beta_7 (\text{No KPRF})_{ij} + \beta_8 (\text{BLOKIND})_{ij} \\ & + \beta_9 (\text{APR})_{ij} + \beta_{10} (\text{KRO})_{ij} + \beta_{11} (\text{RYBKIN})_{ij} + \beta_{12} (\text{REGPOL})_{ij} + \beta_{13} (\text{FEDPOL})_{ij} \\ & + \beta_{14} (\text{INCUMB})_{ij} + \mu_{0j} (\text{CONS}) + \mu_{14j} (\text{INCUMB}) + e_{14ij} (\text{INCUMB}) \\ & + e_{15ij} (\text{No INCUMB})_{ij}\end{aligned}$$

The term $e_{15ij} (\text{No INCUMB})_{ij}$ is due to the fact that the dummy for incumbency is allowed to vary at level one and that "separate coding", instead of contrast coding, was

used to specify the variable. A description of the explanatory variables can be found in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2: *Independent variables in models, descriptive statistics*

Hypothesis	Level	Variable Label	Type of Variable	Description	Categorical: Percent of cases (N)			Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.	Cases	Missing
Regionalist assertiveness	2	DOW	Continuous	Dowley's index (1991-1995 average)				2.8	0.5	1.6	4.6	225	0
	2	DOW94-95	Continuous	Dowley's index (1994-95 average)				2.53	0.59	1.67	4.72	225	0
Appeasement	2	POLAPP	Categorical	Region received substantial political inducements	0	92.4%	(208)						
					1	7.6%	(17)						
	2	TRANSF	Continuous	Financial transfers from Centre to region				15.1	16.0	0.0	81.3	224	1
Geographic accessibility of region	2	REMOTE	Continuous	Percent of regional population living in remote areas				0.1	0.2	0.0	1.0	224	1
Notability	1	INCUMB	Categorical	One of the indeps is the incumbent	0	74%	(167)					225	0
					1	26%	(58)						

Table continues on next page.

Table 7.2: *continued.*

Hypothesis	Level	Variable Label	Type of Variable	Description	Categorical: Percent of cases (N)			Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.	Cases	Missing
	1	REGPOL	Categorical	Reg pol elite tends to run as indep	0	73%	(164)					225	0
					1	27%	(61)						
	1	FEDPOL	Categorical	Fed pol elite tends to run as indep	0	82%	(185)					225	0
					1	18%	(40)						
Party challenge	1	No KPRF	Categorical	Candidate nominated by "KPRF" is not running	0	57.8%	(130)					225	0
					1	42.2%	(95)						
	1	No LDPR	Categorical	Candidate nominated by LDPR is not running	0	83.6%	(188)					225	0
					1	16.4%	(37)						
	1	YABLOKO	Categorical	Candidate nominated by Yabloko is running	0	69.3%	(156)					225	0
					1	30.7%	(69)						
	1	NDR	Categorical	Candidate nominated by NDR is running	0	53.8%	(121)					225	0
					1	46.2%	(104)						
	1	RYBKIN	Categorical	"Bloc of Ivan Rybkin"	0	71.6%	(161)					225	0
					1	28.4%	(64)						
	1	PRES	Categorical	Candidate nominated by PRES is running	0	89.8%	(202)					225	0
					1	10.2%	(23)						
	1	APR	Categorical	Candidate nominated by APR is running	0	61.3%	(138)					225	0
					1	38.7%	(87)						

Table continues on next page.

Table 7.2: *continued.*

Hypothesis	Level	Variable Label	Type of Variable	Description	Categorical: Percent of cases (N)			Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.	Cases	Missing
	1	TRANSFA	Categorical	Candidate nominated by "Transformation of the Fatherland" is running	0	93.3%	(210)					225	0
					1	6.7%	(15)						
	1	KRO	Categorical	Congress of Russian Communities (KRO)	0	60.0%	(135)					225	0
					1	40.0%	(90)						
	1	BLOKIND	Categorical	Candidate nominated by "Bloc of Independents" is running	0	92.4%	(208)					225	0
					1	7.6%	(17)						
	1	PAMFIL	Categorical	"Bloc of Pamfilova-Gurov-Lysenko"	0	85.3%	(192)					225	0
					1	14.7%	(33)						
	1	GOVOR	Categorical	"Bloc of Stanislav Govorukhin"	0	88.9%	(200)					225	0
					1	11.1%	(25)						
	1	COMMCA	Categorical	Non-Party Political Voters' Movement "Common Cause"	0	96.9%	(218)					225	0
					1	3.1%	(7)						
	1	TIKH	Categorical	"Bloc of Tikhonov-Tupolev-Tikhonov"	0	97.8%	(220)					225	0
					1	2.2%	(5)						
Control	1	URBAN	Continuous	Percent of population living in urban centres				72.4	21.2	18.6	100.0	225	0

The models

As in the 1993 models, the presentation of statistical results in the next section follows the strategy of gradually increasing the scope of the model in order to note the effect of new variables on the coefficients of those already included. In each step, entire sets of variables are entered to illustrate the working of a given hypothesis. Model expansion and specification is, therefore, driven by theoretical considerations, rather than by the mechanic observation of changes in model fit due to single additional variables. Moreover, the gradual expansion of the model aptly meets one key concern of the explanatory framework; namely to detect both the direct and indirect effects of regionalist assertiveness. This can be done by first entering the predictors of the main hypothesis, then adding the mediating effects and observing the resulting variation in the main variable's coefficient.¹³⁵ A final element of complexity, undertaken in the last models after having discussed the fixed effects, is the consideration of random effects at level 2. This is made possible by the multilevel design of the analysis. It is useful to start the discussion of the estimated models from the "Null model", which includes only the constant as a predictor (**Model 0** in Table 7.3).

In this specification, the coefficient for the constant corresponds to the average, all-Russia, share of the vote received by the independents across the districts, which is 36.4 percent.¹³⁶ However, this model also reveals that the level of success of the independents varies significantly around this overall, Grand Mean. More precisely, multilevel modelling partitions the variance into variability across regions, and across districts within regions. In the null model, the variance of the constant, random at both levels, is precisely the variance of the outcome. In this case, the variance occurring at both levels is significantly different from zero ($p < 0.001$). In comparison to the variance structure of the 1993 elections, a larger portion of the variability in the success of the independents occurs at the level of region, namely 40 percent, as indicated by the coefficient of autocorrelation,¹³⁷ $\rho = 190.8/(190.8+284.3) = 40$. Differences among regions can be expected to play a greater role in 1995 than in 1993. This estimate of the

¹³⁵ For a simple textbook example of "mediating effects", see Allison (1999: 60-2). For a more general treatment of causal order, see Davis (1985). The latter includes the treatment of direct and indirect effects (Davies 1985: 22-27).

¹³⁶ As mentioned in chapter 6, this is a *weighted* average, produced by the RIGLS estimation procedure of MLwiN.

¹³⁷ In 1993, $\rho = 27$.

partition of the variance is based on the full range of SMDs, as the vote was regularly held in all districts in 1995 ($N = 225$).

Table 7.3: *Predicting independents' success. Estimated multilevel models (0-2)*

Hypothesis	Variable	Lev.	Model 0		Model 1		Model 2	
			Estim.	S.Err.	Estim.	S.Err.	Estim.	S.Err.
	Fixed part							
	CONS		36.436	1.971 R	34.714	1.628	34.418	1.540
Regionalist assertiveness	DOW91-95	2			11.109	3.916 **		
	DOW94-95	2					10.425	3.329 **
Appeasement	POLAPP	2			-14.387	7.068 *	-13.730	6.570 *
	TRANSF	2			0.212	0.102 *	0.246	0.100 *
Accessibility	REMOTE	2			23.027	7.715 **	24.575	7.554 **
Control	URBAN	1			-0.010	0.071	-0.005	0.071
	Random part							
	Level 2							
	CONS		190.822	52.086 ***	52.844	29.313	37.554	26.425
	Level 1							
	CONS		284.276	33.749 ***	316.698	35.982 ***	325.564	36.545 ***
-2*Log likelihood			1987.195		1948.158		1946.813	
N			225		224		224	

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$ *** $p < 0.001$

The first two models with independent variables in addition to the constant (**Models 1 and 2**) are identical except for the measurement of regionalist assertiveness, which, as explained above can be based on two different time spans. Regardless of which of the two measures is considered, Models 1 and 2 find that regionalist assertiveness has a highly significant impact on the success of independent candidates ($p < 0.01$). For a unit increase in regionalist assertiveness (for example, passing from a region advocating a unitary state, to one demanding a centralised federation), the average increase in the vote for the independents is 10-11 percent, keeping the other variables constant. It should be remembered that this coefficient reflects both the direct and indirect effect of regionalist assertiveness, as part of the causal impact is expected to flow through SMD-level variables, such as party challenge (as shown for 1993), which are only introduced from Model 3 onwards. Indeed, as subsequent models introduce the SMD-level variables, the size and significance of the coefficient for regionalist assertiveness decreases.

A similar dynamic should be kept in mind when observing the coefficient for "Remote". In Models 1 and 2, the effect of this variable appears very important and significant ($p < 0.01$). A one percent increase in the share of the regional population living in areas difficult to reach (see chapter 4 for details on the operational definition), is predicted to have a boosting impact of over 23 percent on the collective vote share of the independents. As with regionalist assertiveness, this effect turns out to be largely indirect; i.e. mediated by SMD-level variables, as shown below.

As for the appeasement hypothesis, the estimated coefficient for "PolApp" is also significant and important in size. As expected, the sign of the coefficient is negative. The regions that had received political appeasement from the Kremlin, for example in the form of bilateral treaties granting important privileges and spheres of autonomy, see the independents receive a vote share 14 percentage points lower than other regions.

The "Transf" variable is also statistically significant. What it suggests, however, is surprising in the light of the present theoretical framework. It was expected that greater transfers from the centre to the regions should reflect either regional dependency on the federal budget, or financial appeasement of regionalist demands; in both cases reducing anti-centralist sentiments and, therefore, the chances of the independents. According to the hypothesis the sign of the coefficient should be negative, but this is disproved by the fact that the coefficient for "Transf" is positive, and significantly so.

However, for a number of reasons, this finding does not undermine the main hypothesis being tested here. The chief reason is that it could simply be that the data on this dimension is not suitable or sufficient to detect the real extent of centre-regional financial transfers. This problem was anticipated in chapter 4, where it was noted on that account that the outcome of the test for the financial appeasement hypothesis would be at best provisional. However, as the finding is of marginal importance to the explanatory framework as such, that a detailed analysis of centre-regional financial flaws lies beyond the scope of this thesis does not impair its main arguments.

The only variable to lack statistical significance in models 1 and 2 is the level of urbanisation, suggesting that the traditional pattern of party success in urban centres is not confirmed in the Russian case of 1995 (nor of 1993 for that matter).

Finally, there are two points of interest in relation to the distribution of the variance at the two levels. On the one hand, there is a sharp drop in the unexplained variance at

level 2 from model 0 to models 1-2, passing from 190 to 52. This is the expected effect of entering level-2 variables that explain most of the cross regional differences in the success of the independents. In fact, after taking into account the regional-level hypotheses of this study, the remaining variability across regions is not significant anymore. On the other hand, a less obvious difference between model 0 and models 1-2 is that the variance at level 1 increases somewhat (from 284 to 316). This indicates that more variability in the outcome occurs between SMDs than previously gauged by looking at the Null model. In other words differences previously attributed to the level of regions, now turn out to be due to differences among SMDs. To try and explain this level 1 variability, the following models enter level 1 variables.

Table 7.4: *Predicting independents' success. Estimated multilevel models (3-5)*

Hypothesis	Variable	Lev.	Model 3		Model 4		Model 5	
			Estim.	S.Err.	Estim.	S.Err.	Estim.	S.Err.
	Fixed part							
	CONS		46.401	2.779 R	45.974	2.758 R	45.355	2.482 R
Regionalist assertiveness	DOW	2	6.522	3.391			6.907	3.195 *
	DOW94-95	2			6.557	2.965 *		
Appeasement	POLAPP	2	-14.359	5.960 *	-14.142	5.527 *	-14.624	5.660 **
	TRANSF	2	0.269	0.089 **	0.287	0.089 **	0.262	0.085 **
Accessibility	REMOTE	2	11.240	6.828	12.239	6.759	12.378	6.665
Control	URBAN	1	0.008	0.071	0.007	0.071	-0.020	0.066
Party challenge	NDR	1	-9.380	2.345 ***	-8.857	2.351 ***	-9.067	2.269 ***
	No KPRF	1	7.315	2.391 **	7.380	2.376 **	7.314	2.317 **
	No LDPR	1	1.792	3.130	1.688	3.116		
	YABL	1	-2.185	2.546	-2.092	2.534		
	BLOKIND	1	-10.593	4.373 *	-10.876	4.361 *	-10.855	4.273 *
	TRANFA	1	-0.548	4.881	-0.868	4.856		
	APR	1	-12.251	2.574 ***	-12.482	2.549 ***	-12.468	2.479 ***
	PRES	1	-3.218	3.796	-3.591	3.778		
	KRO	1	-4.776	2.473	-4.486	2.476	-5.014	2.389 *
	PAMFIL	1	-1.676	3.415	-1.620	3.392		
	RYBKIN	1	-7.456	2.540 **	-7.496	2.532 **	-7.304	2.482 **
	GOVOR	1	-0.608	3.776	-0.977	3.765		
	COMMCA	1	2.089	6.698	1.134	6.738		
	TIKH	1	-3.152	7.894	-2.730	7.874		
	Random part							
	Level 2							
	CONS		2.991	14.568	0.000	0.000	0.376	13.430
	Level 1							
	CONS		274.855	29.515 ***	275.840	25.902 ***	270.474	28.840 ***
-2*Log likelihood			1876.102		1874.649		1878.435	
N			224		224		224	

*p < 0.05 **p < 0.01 ***p < 0.001

The first set of SMD-level predictors to be entered is related to the hypothesis that some parties in particular may pose effective challenges to the independents. **Models 3 and 4** present a first test for the challenge posed by party candidates by means of dummy variables measuring whether a candidate of the given party ran in the district or not. Note that, unlike all other parties, the KPRF and the LDPR nominated candidates in a majority of SMDs. In order to facilitate the interpretation of the coefficient for the constant, it is advisable to choose the most frequent state (presence or absence) as the base category of dummy variables. For those two parties the base category, coded 0, is "presence" of a party candidate. The value of 1 is assigned to the "absence" of a party candidate. For this reason the variables are labelled in negative form, "No KPRF" and "No LDPR", and their coefficients have positive signs.

As explained above, in 1995 the range of parties considered include "major" parties, a regionalist party ("Transformation of the Fatherland") and the minor, personalistic, formations that are sometimes credited in the literature with the drop in the success of the independents observed between 1993 and 1995. Of the 14 parties considered, only 5 posed a significant challenge to the independents (i.e. where they stood, the independents consistently suffered lower success rates). These five parties include such expected names as those of the parties of power (mainly NDR, but also the "Bloc of Ivan Rybkin"), the communists of the KPRF and the agrarian party (APR), all of which could count on a network of local organisations. It is the fifth party that is of particular interest; an utterly "minor" party with the oxymoronic name, "Bloc of independent candidates". A decrease of over 10 percent in independents' ratings is predicted in those 17 SMD contests in which 'bloc of independent candidates' ran. This points to the competition that the "bloc of the independents" represented for the "real" independents, even though it actually won only 1 SMD seat (Table 7.1), and demonstrates that the importance of similar small parties in subtracting votes from independents can be underestimated when analysts only look at the number of winners claimed by parties.

Similar considerations apply to the "Bloc of Ivan Rybkin", which is predicted to subtract an average of 7.5 percentage points from the total share of the independents (even though it only won three races) in the 64 SMDs it contested. Among smaller formations, the effect of KRO is almost significant. As for non-significant party effects,

findings include the irrelevance of the LDPR – despite its having run 188 district campaigns (more than any other party in 1995) – and the weakness of Yabloko and PRES, as well as of Rossel's regionalist experiment, "Transformation of the Fatherland". It was also found that the three other personalistic parties did not make a difference in terms of independents' chances (taken together, they only contested between 33 and 5 SMDs). The inclusion of level-1 variables in models 3 and 4 resulted in the expected drop in the level 1 variance from 316-25 to 274-75. Level 2 variance also decreased, suggesting that part of the variability across SMDs was previously emerging at the level of regions.

Model 5 simply shows the elimination of non-significant party variables, implemented to obtain a more parsimonious design.¹³⁸ The variable for the KRO party is retained because, of all non-significant party coefficients, it is the nearest to significance in models 3-4. Indeed, once the other parties are eliminated, the effect of KRO becomes statistically significant in model 5. Other non-significant variables are kept in the model for their theoretical interest within the explanatory framework ("Remote"), or as a control effect ("Urban"). The elimination of the non-significant eight party variables only increases the $-2 \times \log$ likelihood by 4 points.

An important result to note is that, contrary to the 1993 models, the coefficient for regionalist assertiveness is still significant after entering the mediating effect of party nominations (in models 4-5, it is only marginally lower than the significance level in model 3). However, the coefficients for "Dow" or "Dow94-95" are smaller than in the models without party variables, confirming that part of the effect is indeed mediated through party decisions on where to nominate candidates, as discussed in the previous chapter for the 1993 models. Moreover, additional mediating effects can be represented by the next set of SMD-level variables; those on the personal characteristics of the candidates forming the two pools (independent/party candidates). This hypothesis is tested in the models of Table 7.5.

The variables on candidate notability are entered in **Model 6**. The candidates' characteristics being tested relate to their occupational status (regional and federal political elite positions) and to district incumbency. Two dichotomous variables,

¹³⁸ It should be remembered from chapters 4 and 6 that the party variables are not dummies of a single variable, but separate variables.

"Regpold" and "Fedpold", mark out from all other districts those in which a majority of either regional or federal political elites run as independents. Finally, along the "Incumb" dummy variable, SMDs where the district incumbent runs as an independent are coded 1, all others are coded 0.

All coefficients for these three variables are statistically significant. Where regional political elites tend to run disproportionately as independents, this fact increases the success of the non-partisans by 7.5 percentage points, compared to other SMDs and controlling for other variables. Where most candidates occupying federal political positions run as independents, this is predicted to boost their chances by 12.5 percentage points. As for incumbency, where the district incumbent decides to run as an independent, the percentage of votes obtained by the independents is predicted to rise by 7 points.

The introduction of these level 1 variables brings the value of $-2 \cdot \log$ likelihood down to 1832 (from 1878 of Model 5), a statistically significant improvement of model fit. Also, the total unexplained variance registered at level 1 drops from 270 to 223, as expected, when important level 1 factors are entered. Another consequence of these three variables is that two of the party variables lose importance. Namely, the parties KRO and "Bloc of Ivan Rybkin" cannot be said to significantly affect independents' returns once the personal characteristics of candidates in the independent/party pools are controlled for. This may suggest that the impact of these formations was in fact due to the personal qualities of their candidates, rather than to the party label per se. This is consistent with the nature of such parties; created from above and centred on a few key political elites, rather than autonomous institutions. Conversely, it is worth noting that not only such major parties as NDR, KPRF and the APR, but also a formation conventionally deemed marginal, the "Bloc of the independents", still emerges as a significant challenge to the independents after controlling for candidates' elite status and incumbency.

Finally, it is of interest that the coefficient for regionalist assertiveness in Model 6 further decreases in comparison to the model with the party variables (from 7 to 4.6). This confirms the expectation that part of the effect of that variable on the success of the independents is mediated by the notability variables. In other words, both federal political elites and the district incumbent tend to run as independents in proportion to

the anti-centralist sentiments of the region. In turn, when they do run as independents, they bring valuable personal characteristics to the pool of independent candidates, thus increasing their electoral returns.

Table 7.5: *Predicting independents' success. Estimated multilevel models (6-7)*

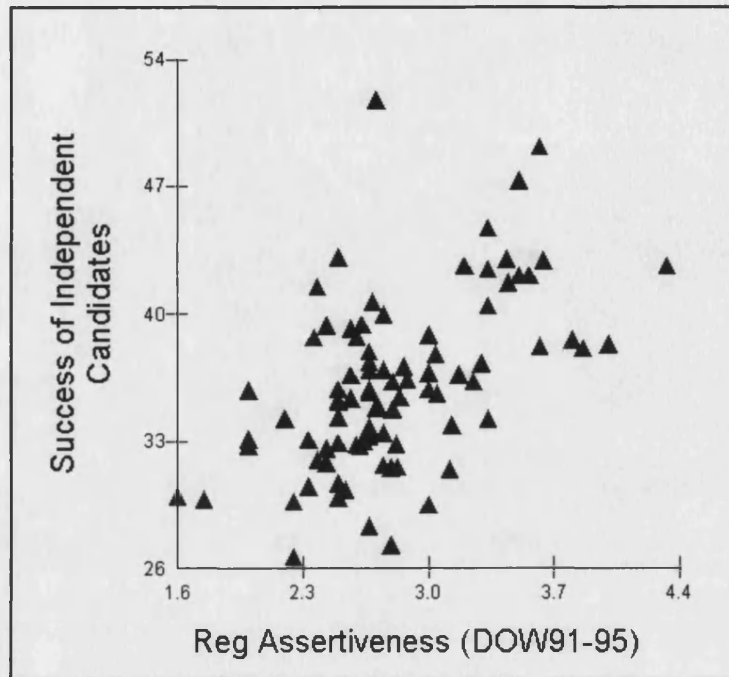
Hypothesis	Variable	Lev.	Model 6		Model 7	
			Estim.	S.Err.	Estim.	S.Err.
	Fixed part					
	CONS		35.721	2.686 R	35.858	2.364 R
Regionalist assertiveness	DOW	2	4.636	2.954	5.973	2.852 *
	DOW94-95	2				
Appeasement	POLAPP	2	-7.825	5.260	-7.101	4.760
	TRANSFERS	2	0.228	0.077 **	0.250	0.069 ***
Accessibility	REMOTE	2	3.618	6.340	0.633	6.044
Control	URBAN	1	-0.009	0.060	0.005	0.048
Party challenge	NDR	1	-7.607	2.135 ***	-7.534	1.784 ***
	No KPRF	1	6.807	2.113 **	6.270	1.848 ***
	No LDPR	1				
	YABL	1				
	BLOKIND	1	-8.522	3.929 *	-9.064	3.814 *
	TRANFA	1				
	APR	1	-11.298	2.268 ***	-11.201	2.108 ***
	PRES	1				
	KRO	1	-3.134	2.203	-3.936	2.007 *
	PAMFIL	1				
	RYBKIN	1	-3.220	2.326	-3.280	2.267
	GOVOR	1				
	COMMCA	1				
	TIKH	1				
Candidate notability	REGPOL	1	7.498	2.521 **	9.072	2.377 ***
	FEDPOL	1	12.534	3.402 ***	13.551	2.909 ***
	INCUMB	1	7.095	2.880 *	6.495	2.886 R
	Random part					
	Level 2					
	CONS		0.456	11.126	32.618	18.110
	INCUMB				189.738	81.087
	CONS/INCUMB				-94.653	36.271
	Level 1					
	CONS		222.948	23.785 ***		
	INCUMB				134.586	36.974
	No INCUMB				219.175	27.779
	No INCUMB/INCUMB				n.a.	n.a.
-2*Log likelihood			1832.294		1819.919	
N			224		224	

*p < 0.05 **p < 0.01 ***p < 0.001

N.a. = non-applicable, because separate coding was used for the categories of the dummy variable. By definition the two categories are mutually exclusive and cannot covary.

The specification of the fixed part of the final model, **Model 7**, is the same as the previous model (6), the only difference in the final model is the inclusion of a random component to the effect of "Incumb" at both levels. It is important to check whether any of the level 1 variables have random effects across regions, if the complex variability of the real world is to be effectively approximated. In other words, complex variability should be assumed, and constant effects should be proved. This approach is controversial and its full (philosophical) implications cannot be addressed here. However, it should be noted that of all level 1 factors, only the coefficient for incumbency varies significantly across regions and across SMDs (based on joint chi-sq tests for the two random parts). Allowing the model to reflect this complex variability, thus relaxing the conventional assumption of homoskedasticity at level 1, results in a more precise model, as evidenced by the lower value of $-2 \cdot \log$ likelihood.

In this final model the significance of other variables is slightly altered, as regionalist assertiveness and the KRO party variable regain significance (at $p < 0.05$). In sum, once the indirect effects of regionalist assertiveness are controlled for, the coefficient of "Dow" in model 7 represents the direct portion of its effect in the posited casual framework. Namely, the direct effect of regionalist assertiveness on independents' success is such that, regardless of party strategy decisions and of the personal characteristics of the candidate pools, a unit increase in "Dow" produces an increase of 6 points in the joint vote share of the independents, controlling for political appeasement financial transfers, district geographic accessibility and levels of urbanisation. If this value is subtracted from the coefficient for regionalist assertiveness in model 1, the size of the *indirect* effect of regionalist assertiveness can be computed to be $(11 - 6 =) 5$. In other words, for a unit increase in "Dow", the independents are predicted to collectively gain 5 extra percentage points *through the induced strategic decisions of parties and notable candidates*.

Figure 7.2: *Main hypothesis, predicted bivariate relationship, from final model*

Based on the specification of Model 7, where the success of independent candidates is predicted by regionalist assertiveness only, Figure 7.2 graphically renders the relationship posited by the main hypothesis of this research. The graph confirms the positive relationship between the two variables expected on the basis of the explanatory framework.

As was the case for the 1993 analysis, the fact that part of the effect of regionalist assertiveness is mediated by SMD-level variables can be tested with the help of logistic models. These predict the probability that parties nominate candidates in a given SMD (Table 7.6), or the probability that elite candidates decide to run predominantly as independents (Table 7.7). The variables in these models are the level 2 variables whose effect is understood to be mediated in the explanatory framework (i.e. primarily regionalist assertiveness, but also, potentially, remote location and urbanisation).

The two models in Table 7.6 show that, of the parties that are considered for the 1995 elections, APR and KRO seemed to have based their entry decisions to a significant extent on considerations of the regionalist sentiments of the regions. The agrarian party APR also appears to have been influenced – understandably – by the level of urbanisation of the SMDs, and by the geographic accessibility of populations. Variables indicating these factors have significant coefficients, and their signs follow

expectations. To interpret the coefficients, the effect on the logit is transformed into effect on probabilities in Figure 7.3, which shows the decreasing probability that the party KRO will enter an SMD race as levels of regionalist assertiveness increase.

Table 7.6: *Predicting party entry decision. Logistic multilevel models*

Hypothesis	Variable		APR		KRO	
		Lev.	Estim.	S.Err.	Estim.	S.Err.
	Fixed part					
	CONS		-0.594	0.169 R	-0.514	0.172 R
Regionalist assertiveness	DOW91-95	2	-0.901	0.433 *	-1.339	0.484 **
Appeasement	POLAPP	2	0.132	0.822	-0.018	0.961
	TRANSF	2	0.002	0.012	0.001	0.013
Accessibility	REMOTE	2	-3.200	1.443 *	-0.745	1.070
Control	URBAN	1	-0.039	0.009 ***	0.023	0.009 *
	Random part					
	Level 2					
	CONS		0.000	0.000	0.110	0.228
	Level 1					
	BCONS		1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000

*p < 0.05 **p < 0.01 ***p < 0.001

Like the variables on the parties, the variables on candidates' personal resources are expected to show the mediated effect of regionalist assertiveness and remote location. If this is true, the entry decisions of at least some notable candidates should be predicted by the mediated variables (regionalist assertiveness and remote location). The models in Table 7.7 confirm this expectation by predicting the probability that regional and federal political elites run predominantly as independents. It is found that this probability for federal political elites is significantly and positively affected by regionalist sentiments, as expected. Interestingly, the probability that these candidates run as independents is negatively affected by the political appeasement that a region may have received. In other words, the probability that notable candidates run as independents is smaller in politically appeased regions than in the rest of the country, regionalist assertiveness and the other variables being equal.

Figure 7.3: *The impact of regional assertiveness on KRO entry decisions*
(Predicted from the "KRO" logistic model in Table 7.6)

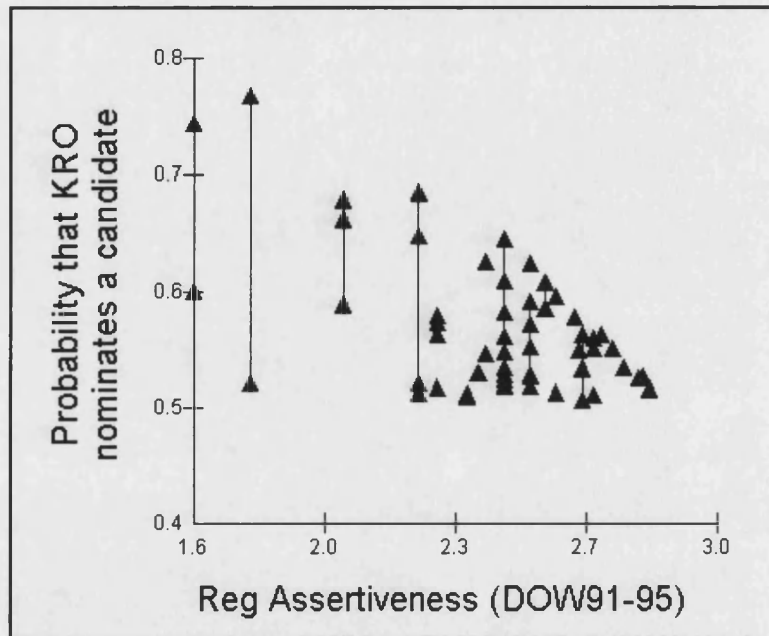


Table 7.7: *Predicting the nomination decisions of notable candidates.*
Logistic multilevel models

Hypothesis	Variable		FEDPOL		REGPOL	
		Lev.	Estim.	S.Err.	Estim.	S.Err.
	Fixed part					
	CONS		-1.530	0.204 R	-0.969	0.161 R
Regionalist assertiveness	DOW91-95	2	1.284	0.511 *	-0.321	0.463
Appeasement	POLAPP	2	-2.019	1.018 *	-1.259	1.016
	TRANSF	2	0.017	0.013	-0.012	0.012
Accessibility	REMOTE	2	0.886	0.876	4.303	1.268 ***
Control	URBAN	1	-0.002	0.010	-0.008	0.009
	Random part					
	Level 2					
	CONS		0.160	0.409	0.000	0.000
	Level 1					
	BCONS		1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000

*p < 0.05 ***p < 0.001

For regional political elites, a very significant effect is produced by the geographic remoteness of regions. The greater the share of voters living in areas difficult to reach, the greater the probability that regional political elites run as independents. This can be attributed to the fact that parties tend to avoid stretching their campaign resources to reach geographically inhospitable areas. Indeed, this has been found to be the case for the APR party in the logistic model mentioned above (Table 7.6).

Conclusion

The independents represented a smaller proportion of both candidates and winners in the 1995 Duma elections, compared to 1993. The literature has advanced several hypothesis, mainly institutional, that can plausibly account for this general change. In the context of the explanatory framework of this thesis, it can be added that regionalist assertiveness was generally lower in the 1994-1995 period than in 1993 (see Figure 4.2, chapter 4), which arguably reduced the need for non-party representation. However, the question remains as to why the independents proliferated relatively more in some areas than in others. This is the question addressed by this thesis and cross-regional differences in levels of anti-centralist sentiments are found in this chapter to constitute a significant part of the answer.

Moreover, in comparison to the 1993 district campaigns, major political parties started competing in a wider range of districts, thanks to improved organisational preparation, including areas previously deemed off limits due to regionalist assertiveness. The communist KPRF became a major challenger to the independents in the district races. This change is also evident in the fact that SMD entry decisions were negatively affected by levels of regionalist assertiveness only for two parties (APR and KRO). In 1993 this was found for four major parties.

Nevertheless, strategic entry decisions by parties and notable candidates in the SMDs still mediated the effect of regionalist assertiveness. However, while in 1993 almost all the effect was mediated by party decisions, in 1995 regionalist assertiveness retained a statistically significant *direct* effect on the outcome, in addition to important indirect influences. The only true regionalist party, "Transformation of the Fatherland", based in

only one region, could not make a significant impact on the causal mechanism of regionalist assertiveness and did not effectively challenge the independents. Even in its native Sverdlovsk oblast, the party's performance did not convince voters (as noted in chapter 4). All this was to change in preparation for the third Duma vote, in 1999. The next chapter presents a different political context in which the independents are challenged by an interregional political party created by powerful regional governors themselves as a vehicle to take a firmer hold of national politics and to advance the presidential ambitions of its leader.

The 1999 Duma Elections

*"No matter what party we create,
it always turns out to be the CPSU".*

Viktor Chernomyrdin¹³⁹

Due to a quite different political context, the 1999 Duma elections showed a markedly different pattern of proliferation for independent candidates than the 1993 and 1995 elections. A distinguishing trait of the 1999 vote is the much more direct and generalised involvement of regional governors. The reason for this is ultimately linked to two factors. The first derives from the fact that, unlike at the time of the 1995 elections, by December 1999 all regional leaders had been popularly elected at least once. Having a popular mandate – as opposed to having been appointed by Yeltsin – gave governors a new degree of independence from the centre (Petrov 2001). The second factor is the weakness of the federal centre resulting from the August 1998 financial and political crisis. The crisis brought to an end the attempted recentralisation of 1997 and significantly reduced the financial means that the centre had available to keep dependent regions under control and to appease restive units.

For the present purposes, the most important product of this state of affairs is that, for the first time, several regions' heads joined together to form a national political party. This description strictly applies only to the "Fatherland-All Russia" (OVR) party, as Unity was promoted by the Kremlin. In addition to the considerations just mentioned, a trigger for this unprecedented regional activism was the sharp increase in the stakes associated with the Duma vote. One authoritative observer of Russian politics, Richard

¹³⁹ In Remington (2003: 232).

Sakwa, has recently characterised the 1999 elections as the attempt by the Regions to "storm the Kremlin".

Unlike in 1995 (when a presidential election was also in sight), Yeltsin could not stand for re-election (for legal and health reasons) and the most assertive regions joined behind a new presidential hopeful, Primakov. In the light of this, it is clear that the elections were no longer (only) an occasion for bargaining with the centre and extracting privileges as appeasement, but they were seen as an instrument to take over the centre directly. It is difficult to overestimate the impact of this change on the operation of the core hypothesis of this thesis. Because the regions forming and leading OVR included some of the units which manifested the greatest potential for conflict with the centre, for the first time the channelling of regional assertiveness could be carried out by a party rather than providing a competitive advantage to independents. And regional administrative resources were the key instrument used by regional leaders to achieve this shift.

8.1 Background

The contestants

In 1993 and 1995 parties registered for the PR portion of the vote were also the main (although not the only) suppliers of party candidates in the districts. The 1999 campaign followed this pattern and the decline in the number of party lists from 43 in 1995 to 26 in 1999 was translated into a decline of party candidates in the SMDs (see Figure 8.1). While the number of independent candidates rose slightly from that in the previous vote (from 1057 to 1143), the number of party candidates decreased by over 30 percent, passing from 1571 to 1083.

This is despite the fact that new parties were formed. Of these new forces, however, the pro-Kremlin party "Unity" was too recent to organise a large pool of nominations in the districts. Despite the sizeable campaign resources mobilised by the Kremlin in its support (especially media resources), Unity only entered 31 SMD races (see Table 8.1). Nevertheless, the statistical analysis below shows that where it did run it had a significant negative impact on the chances of the independents.

Table 8.1: *Party nominations and victories in the SMDs*

Party, electoral bloc or association	No. of Cands.	No. of Winners	Success Rate
Communist Party of the Russian Federation	129	47	36%
Electoral Alliance "Yabloko"	114	7	6%
All-Russian Sociopolitical Movement "Spiritual Heritage"	107	1	1%
Fatherland - All Russia (OVR)	91	31	34%
Bloc of Zhirinovskiy/Russian Liberal Democratic Party	90	0	0%
Electoral union "Our Home is Russia"	90	7	8%
Bloc of General A. Nikolaev, of Academic S. Fedorov	68	1	1%
Union of Right Forces (SPS)	66	5	8%
Russian Socialist Party	63	1	2%
Congress of Russian Communities			
And Yuri Boldyrev's Movement	45	1	2%
Interregional Movement "Unity" ("Medved")	31	10	32%
Pensioners' Party	28	1	4%
Russian All People's Union	28	2	7%
Electoral bloc "Communists, Workers of Russia – for the Soviet Union"	20	0	0%
All-Russian Political Movement "In Support of the Army"	20	2	10%
Peace, Labour, May	18	0	0%
Russian Ecological Party "Kedr"	15	0	0%
All-Russian Sociopolitical Movement "For Civil Dignity"	13	0	0%
Women of Russia	12	1	8%
Movement of Patriotic Forces - The Case for Russia	10	0	0%
Stalinist Bloc for the USSR	7	0	0%
Socialist Party of Russia	6	0	0%
Social-Democrats	5	0	0%
Russian Party	3	0	0%
Russian Patriotic Popular Movement	2	0	0%
Party of Peace and Unity	1	0	0%
Russian Conservative Party of Entrepreneurs	1	0	0%
<i>Independents</i>	<i>1143</i>	<i>107</i>	<i>9%</i>

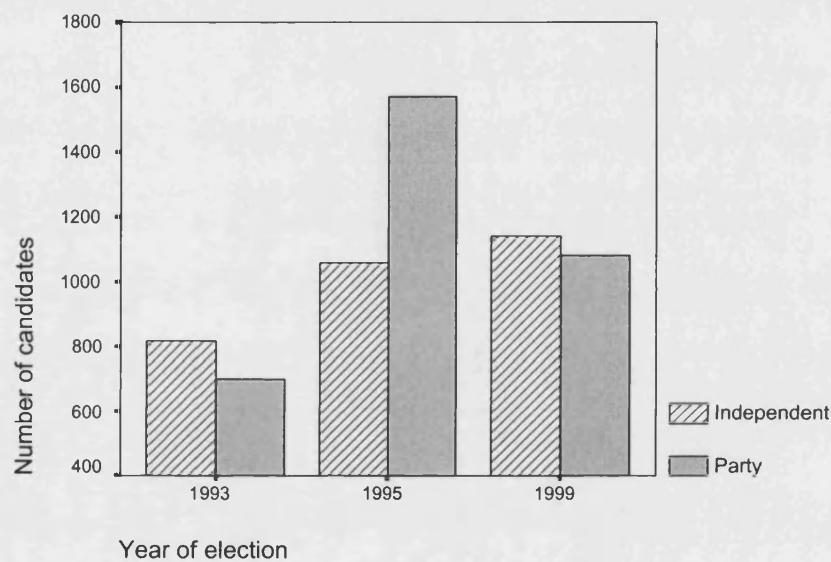
Note: No party nominated more than one candidate per district, contrary to what happened in 1993 and 1995.

Source: own elaboration of CEC data.

Confronted with the decline in the number of parties on the PR ballot compared to 1995, analysts have turned to institutional factors in search for explanations. Colton and McFaul found that a 1997 change in the law on party registration extended the minimum time that had to elapse between registration with the Ministry of Justice and

the vote (from 6 months to one year). Moreover, parties that registered by submitting a financial deposit would lose it if they received less than 3 percent of the PR vote. If the party received less than 2 percent, it would have to pay the state for the free TV and radio exposure received during the campaign (Colton and McFaul 2003: 23). Thus, the incentives that had unintentionally stimulated party proliferation in 1995 were largely withdrawn in 1999.

Figure 8.1: *Number of SMD candidates, 1993, 1995 and 1999*



Source: own elaboration of CEC data.

As a result, the share of SMD candidates running as independents rose from 40 to 51 percent since 1995. In both 1995 and 1999 the relative distribution of candidates in the two pools (independent vs. party) had been a good predictor of the relative *success* of the two pools. During the 1990s, when the independents won a smaller share of seats (as in 1995) they had also made up a smaller share of the candidates, and vice versa. In this sense, the rate of success of the independents (number of seats won / number of candidates) did not change much from 1995 to 1999 (always ranging between 7 and 10 percent).¹⁴⁰ It can be derived from this that the nomination stage (when candidates decide whether to run as party or as independent candidates) is decisive for the overall level of success. This confirms the importance of rules providing incentives for party vs.

independent nomination (such as those in place for the 1995 elections, which favoured party proliferation, see chapter 7) for explaining temporal patterns.

These considerations, however, only explain differences in the *aggregate* level of success between elections. The interesting question remains unanswered as to why levels of success vary substantially below the aggregate, sub-nationally, at any given election. Indeed, this is the research question of the thesis. So far, for the 1993 and 1995 elections, evidence has been presented showing that levels of success for the independents are higher in those regions where they provided a channel of expression for salient regionalist sentiments.

In the case of the 1999 vote, this explanatory mechanism could no longer apply. To understand why, the empirical tests must be preceded by a brief review of the main developments in centre-regional relations leading up to the Duma elections.

Federal relations in the 1996-1999 period

The most significant element in the centre-regional relations of this period with respect to its impact on the Duma vote is the formation of a motley alliance of regions, with traditionally different aims and interest, behind the "Fatherland-All Russia" (OVR) party in 1999. The party united the powerful and popular mayor of Moscow, Luzhkov (head of the "Fatherland" movement), with the leaders of such regionally assertive republics as Tatarstan and Bashkortostan (grouped in the loose movement "All Russia"), as well as St. Petersburg's "governor" Yakovlev. Tatarstan's president, Shaimiev, had been the main promoter of the "All Russia" movement. This formation represented "the most vigorous attempt to get the governors to act in concert" in order to "promote decentralization within a stable federation, and at a minimum to foreclose any rollback on the concessions the governors had wrested from Moscow in the 1990s" (Colton and McFaul 2003: 83). By the time the Duma election approached, the union between "Fatherland" and "All Russia" had enlisted many other regional governors and speakers of regional assemblies.

The OVR party cannot be strictly considered a regionalist party, since its opposition to the federal centre is not based in one unit only or on the support of only one ethnic group. However, the "All Russia" component did mark the first electoral coalition of

¹⁴⁰ Nor has it changed much since, according to the latest – 2003 – poll.

governors generated from below; that is, from the regions, rather than by the Kremlin, such as was done previously with NDR's ties to key governors. The main aim of the alliance of governors was certainly to influence the shape of federal arrangements; and, in particular, for traditionally assertive regions to defend their autonomy. Why was such an alliance formed for the 1999 elections and not before?

The answer lies in the changes in federal relations in the 1996-99 period. Firstly, regions became more assertive as a result of holding their first gubernatorial elections, mostly in 1996 (Petrov 1999: 59). With a popular mandate, regional governors gained an independent basis of power, as opposed to being appointed by Yeltsin as before. Secondly, the centre's strategy of appeasing regions with bilateral treaties (48 were signed) had to be terminated due to the August 1998 financial crisis. The central weakness resulting from the financial crisis also put an end to the recentralisation that had been attempted by prime ministers Chubais and Kirienko⁷ from 1997. The centralising measures had included the appointment of presidential representatives to the republics, and a confrontation with the regions of Primorskii kray and the republics of Sakha and Udmurtia over compliance with federal law. Under Kirienko (April-May 1998), they also included exemplary attacks against corruption in Kursk oblast and against big oil companies in Tatarstan and Bashkortostan (Petrov 1999: 59).

With the August 1998 financial crisis, the centre lost the means to fund appeasement. In particular, the crisis meant that the practice of central loans to the regions, which had been a prime channel for politically motivated financial flows undetected by the budget law, virtually stopped in 1999 (Kuznetsova 2001: 75). Similarly, Luzhkov's Moscow lost the transfers it used to receive for its functions as "federal capital". In addition to undermining the vertical links between centre and regions, the 1998 crisis also had some positive effects for cross-regional, horizontal economic co-operation. The devaluation of the rouble made imports prohibitively expensive, thus stimulating domestic industries and trade (Alexseev 1999: 269). An integrated Russian market became more evident, which is in sharp contrast to the situation of the early 1990s, when regions behaved like islands (Smyrnyagin 1998: 3-4).

The weakness of the centre, and of the presidency in particular, was signalled by the unprecedented successful imposition by the Duma of Primakov as the new prime minister after the August crisis, thus overruling Yeltsin's preference for Chernomyrdin.

A new power configuration emerged with a prime minister, Primakov, who did not owe his post to the president. This allowed a de-coupling of regions' relations with the president from those with the government. Indeed, while Yeltsin was growing unpopular, and his health was unstable, Primakov allied himself with some important regions by bringing them into the federal government. He also forged an alliance with Tatarstan's Shaimiev, sanctioned by the renewal of the bilateral treaty with that region, as well as devolved shares of state companies to regional control (Petrov and Titkov 2001: 40). When Primakov was ousted by Yeltsin in May 1999, he became the leader of the "Fatherland-All Russia" (OVR) alliance. Another example of an assertive regional leader forming an electoral bloc is Samara's Titov, who formed "Golos Russiya" and created an alliance with the party SPS (Petrov and Titkov 2001: 45). However, many governors who had initially joined the initiative left the project when it became clear that OVR was the horse to bet on.

8.2 Analysis

The analysis of the 1999 elections follows the same pattern as that in the previous two chapters. A series of multilevel models is presented that expand the specification and complexity of the analysis by sequentially entering additional sets of variables grouped on the basis of the hypothesis they are meant to test. This strategy has the advantage of showing the effect of entering new variables on those already included and is especially useful when multiple causal stages are posited, such as when some independent variables have not only direct effects, but also indirect effects; i.e. mediated by other independent variables.

The range of variables examined is larger here than for the 1993 and 1995 elections (see Table 8.2). As the literature has stressed, the 1999 vote saw an extensive use of "administrative resources" by regional governors willing to play a greater role in federal politics and to influence the result of Duma elections (see chapter 3). The impact of this factor on the success of independent candidates is studied in this chapter through two interacting variables. The first is "GovCat" (standing for "Governor Categorical"), which derives from Hale's data and detects whether governors' support in a given SMD

was received by an independent or a party candidate (if any). The second variable is "Freesp", which measures regional levels of freedom in the circulation of information and therefore indicates the extent to which regional politics is "controlled" by the governor.¹⁴¹ Hale's data also allow for consideration of another new variable in the 1999 models: "FigCat". This is a categorical predictor that aims to detect the effect of the backing by Financial-Industrial Groups (FIGs) on independent candidates' chances. These three variables did not appear in either the 1993 nor the 1995 models.

The remaining variables are already familiar to the reader of chapters 6 and 7. Partial exceptions are constituted by the individual parties expected to challenge the independents, and by the two measures of regionalist assertiveness that aim at adjusting Dowley's index for the centre-regional relations that occurred after 1995. As for the party variables, the fluidity of the supply side of Russia's party system (discussed in chapters 1 and 2) means that important parties were new to the 1999 elections (OVR, Unity, SPS, and Spiritual Heritage). The other listed parties had already contested one or both of the previous elections (Yabloko, KPRF, LDPR, and NDR).

As also noted in chapter 7, two of the dummy variables for party challenges, "No KPRF" and "No Yabloko", are coded in negative terms; i.e. the value of 1 is assigned to districts where no candidate of that party was running. This is the opposite of the coding rule followed for other parties, and it is due to the fact that these two parties nominated candidates in a majority of districts. In order for the constant in the models to represent the value of Y for the average district, it is useful to set the base category of dummies to be the most common state of the variable. This coding explains the positive sign of the effect of these two variables in the models below, as opposed to the negative ones recorded for the other party challenges.

As for the measurement of regionalist assertiveness, the variables "Asser99a" and "Asser99b" represent an attempt to correct Dowley's index and take into account key developments in centre-regional relations that occurred after 1995 (see chapter 4 for details). These are used as alternative measures to the original Dowley's index (which is based on 1991-95 only). The equation for the final model (Model 12, discussed below) is as follows.

¹⁴¹ See chapters 3 and 4 for details on the variables and their operational definition.

The "micro model" is:

$$\begin{aligned}\hat{Y}_{ij} = & \beta_{0j} (\text{CONS}) + \beta_1 (\text{DOW})_j + \beta_2 (\text{POLAPP})_j + \beta_3 (\text{TRANSF})_j + \beta_5 (\text{REMOTE})_j \\ & + \beta_5 (\text{URBAN})_{ij} + \beta_6 (\text{UNITY})_{ij} + \beta_7 (\text{No KPRF})_{ij} + \beta_8 (\text{OVR})_{ij} + \beta_9 (\text{NDR})_{ij} \\ & + \beta_{10} (\text{REGPOL})_{ij} + \beta_{11} (\text{FEDPOL})_{ij} + \beta_{12} (\text{INCUMB})_{ij} + \beta_{13} (\text{FIGPAR})_{ij} \\ & + \beta_{14} (\text{FIGIND})_{ij} + \beta_{15ij} (\text{GOVPAR})_{ij} + \beta_{16ij} (\text{GOVIND})_{ij} + \beta_{17} (\text{FREESP})_j \\ & + \beta_{18} (\text{FREESP*GOVIND})_{ij} + \beta_{19} (\text{FREESP*GOVPAR})_{ij} + \varepsilon_{ij}\end{aligned}$$

Where three coefficients (for CONS, GOVIND and GOVPAR) are random, thus requiring three "macro models":

$$\beta_{0j} = \beta_0 + \mu_{0j}$$

$$\beta_{15ij} = \beta_{15} + \mu_{15j} + e_{15ij}$$

$$\beta_{16ij} = \beta_{16} + \mu_{16j} + e_{16ij}$$

Substituting the three macro models into the micro model, and rearranging with the fixed part preceding the random part:

$$\begin{aligned}\hat{Y}_{ij} = & \beta_0 (\text{CONS}) + \beta_1 (\text{DOW})_j + \beta_2 (\text{POLAPP})_j + \beta_3 (\text{TRANSF})_j + \beta_5 (\text{REMOTE})_j \\ & + \beta_5 (\text{URBAN})_{ij} + \beta_6 (\text{UNITY})_{ij} + \beta_7 (\text{No KPRF})_{ij} + \beta_8 (\text{OVR})_{ij} + \beta_9 (\text{NDR})_{ij} \\ & + \beta_{10} (\text{REGPOL})_{ij} + \beta_{11} (\text{FEDPOL})_{ij} + \beta_{12} (\text{INCUMB})_{ij} + \beta_{13} (\text{FIGPAR})_{ij} \\ & + \beta_{14} (\text{FIGIND})_{ij} + \beta_{15} (\text{GOVPAR})_{ij} + \beta_{16} (\text{GOVIND})_{ij} + \beta_{17} (\text{FREESP})_j \\ & + \beta_{18} (\text{FREESP*GOVIND})_{ij} + \beta_{19} (\text{FREESP*GOVPAR})_{ij} + \mu_{0j} (\text{CONS}) \\ & + \mu_{15j} (\text{GOVPAR})_{ij} + \mu_{16j} (\text{GOVIND})_{ij} + e_{15i} (\text{GOVPAR})_{ij} + e_{16i} (\text{GOVIND})_{ij} \\ & + e_{20ij} (\text{No GOVSUPP})_{ij}\end{aligned}$$

A schematic description of the variables used in the models of this chapter is provided in Table 8.2.

Table 8.2: *Independent variables in models, descriptive statistics*

Hypothesis	Level	Variable Label	Type of Variable	Description	Categorical: Percent of cases (N)			Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.	Cases	Missing
Regionalist Assertiveness	2	DOW	Continuous	Dowley's index (1991-95 average)				2.8	0.5	1.6	4.3	224	1
	2	ASSER99A	Continuous	Dowley's index corrected 1				3.1	0.5	1.8	4.6	224	1
	2	ASSER99B	Continuous	Dowley's index corrected 2				2.8	0.6	1.7	4.7	224	1
Appeasement	2	POLAPP	Categorical	Regions who received political inducements	0 1	39.7% 60.3%	(89) (135)					224	1
	2	TRANSF	Continuous	Financial transfer from Centre to region (1996-99 average)				18.1	13.2	0.7	69.8	224	1
Geographic accessibility of region	2	REMOTE	Continuous	Percent of regional population living in difficult areas				0.1	0.2	0.0	1.0	224	1
Administrative resources	2	FREESP	Continuous	Index of Freedom of Speech				36.2	11.5	0.0	63.1	224	1
	1	GovCat	Categorical	No clear support	0	14.7%	(33)					224	1
		GOVIND		Gov supp indep	1	39.3%	(88)						
		GOVPAR		Gov supp party	2	46.0%	(103)						

Table continues on next page.

Table 8.2: *continued.*

Hypothesis	Level	Variable Label	Type of Variable	Description	Categorical: Percent of cases (N)			Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.	Cases	Missing
Financial resources	1	FIGCat	Categorical	No clear support	0	77%	(171)					224	1
		FIGIND		FIGs support indep. candidate	1	15%	(34)						
		FIGPAR		FIGs support party candidate	2	8%	(19)						
Notability	1	INCUMB	Categorical	One of the independents is the incumbent	0	76%	(171)					224	1
					1	24%	(53)						
	1	REGPOL	Categorical	Regional political elite tends to run as indep	0	71%	(158)					224	1
					1	29%	(66)						
	1	FEDPOL	Categorical	Federal political elite tends to run as indep	0	88%	(198)					224	1
					1	12%	(26)						
Party challenge	1	No KPRF	Categorical	Candidate nominated by "KPRF" is not running	0	42.7%	(96)					224	1
					1	57.3%	(129)						
	1	LDPR	Categorical	Candidate nominated by LDPR is running	0	60.0%	(135)					224	1
					1	40.0%	(90)						
	1	No Yabloko	Categorical	Candidate nominated by Yabloko is not running	0	49.3%	(111)					224	1
					1	50.7%	(114)						
	1	Unity	Categorical	Candidate nominated by Unity is running	0	86.2%	(194)					224	1
					1	13.8%	(31)						

Table continues on next page.

Table 8.2: *continued.*

Hypothesis	Level	Variable Label	Type of Variable	Description	Categorical: Percent of cases (N)			Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.	Cases	Missing
	1	OVR	Categorical	Candidate nominated by OVR is running	0	59.6%	(134)					224	1
					1	40.4%	(91)						
	1	SPS	Categorical	Candidate nominated by SPS is running	0	70.7%	(159)					224	1
					1	29.3%	(66)						
	1	SPIRHER	Categorical	Candidate nominated by "Spiritual Heritage" is running	0	52.4%	(118)						
					1	47.6%	(107)						
Control	1	URBAN	Continuous	Percent of SMD population living in urban centres				72.4	21.2	18.6	100.0	225	0

The models

The first finding on the 1999 elections is that the level of success of independent candidates varies *significantly* from region to region, as shown by the fact that the level 2 variance of the constant in **Model 0** is significantly different from zero ($p < 0.01$). A multilevel approach is warranted (Table 8.3).

Table 8.3: *Predicting independents' success.*
Estimated multilevel "Null model"

Hypothesis	Variable		Model 0	
		Lev.	Estim.	S.Err.
	Fixed part			
	CONS		46.091	2.076 R
Regionalist assertiveness	DOW	2		
	ASSER99A	2		
	ASSER99B	2		
Appeasement	POLAPP	2		
	TRANSF	2		
Accessibility	REMOTE	2		
Control	URBAN	1		
	Random part			
	Level 2			
	CONS		169.603	57.296 **
	Level 1			
	CONS		408.727	47.872 ***
-2*Log likelihood			2038.496	
N			224	

p < 0.01 *p < 0.001

Similarly to the 1993 situation, however, the proportion of variability occurring at the level of regions is rather small, with a coefficient of autocorrelation (ρ) of (169.6 / 408.7 =) 0.29. The "Null model" also reveals that the average success of the independents across the SMDs, weighted according to the RIGLS estimation procedure,¹⁴² is 44.5 percent of the vote. The number of cases for the Null model is 224 because the vote did not take place in the separatist Chechen Republic, where a new Russian military campaign had recently started.

¹⁴² See chapter 5.

Table 8.4: *Predicting independents' success. Estimated multilevel models (1-3)*

Hypothesis	Variable	Lev.	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
			Estim.	S.Err.	Estim.	S.Err.	Estim.	S.Err.
	Fixed part							
	CONS		44.515	3.109 R	44.388	3.114 R	44.478	3.114 R
Regionalist assertiveness	DOW	2	-1.590	4.138				
	ASSER99A	2			-1.499	4.052		
	ASSER99B	2					0.181	3.593
Appeasement	POLAPP	2	0.619	4.109	0.611	4.111	0.693	4.122
	TRANSF	2	0.041	0.152	0.041	0.152	0.037	0.152
Accessibility	REMOTE	2	25.445	9.399 **	25.454	9.415 **	24.784	9.321 **
Control	URBAN	1	-0.039	0.081	-0.039	0.081	-0.038	0.081
	Random part							
	Level 2							
	CONS		139.845	52.350 **	139.982	52.374 **	141.860	52.734 **
	Level 1							
	CONS		415.634	48.373 ***	415.585	48.369 ***	414.900	48.297 ***
-2*Log likelihood			2029.432		2029.445		2029.602	
N			224		224		224	

p < 0.01 *p < 0.001

Models 1-3 introduce the variables of the main hypotheses. Clearly, neither regionalist assertiveness in any of its three measurement options, nor the variables for political and financial appeasement are significant. The same applies to the district level of urbanisation. The only significant factor is the geographic accessibility of regions, which confirms the expectation that impervious physical conditions hamper the ability of political parties to challenge independents and thus provides a favourable environment to the latter. This effect is expected to be mostly indirect, mediated by the level 1 variables that measure the decisions of notable candidates to join either of the two pools (party/independent), as well as those that measure the decisions of parties on where to nominate their candidates. These variables are entered beginning with Model 4, which means that the coefficient of "Remote" in models 1-3 is to be interpreted as the

independents. This is an average value that should be read while bearing in mind that most regions have values of zero on this variable.¹⁴³

Table 8.5: *Predicting independents' success. Estimated multilevel models (4-6)*

Hypothesis	Variable	Lev.	Model 4		Model 5		Model 6	
			Estim.	S.Err.	Estim.	S.Err.	Estim.	S.Err.
	Fixed part							
	CONS		48.571	3.441 R	48.091	3.469 R	47.960	3.450 R
Regionalist assertiveness	DOW	2	-4.766	2.864				
	ASSER99A	2			-1.301	3.085		
	ASSER99B	2					-0.731	2.714
Appeasement	POLAPP	2	-0.132	2.837	0.145	2.874	0.157	2.866
	TRANSF	2	0.060	0.107	0.053	0.108	0.054	0.108
Party challenge	UNITY	1	-8.292	3.562 *	-7.991	3.583 *	-7.940	3.582 *
	OVR	1	-15.320	2.619 ***	-15.475	2.637 ***	-15.557	2.632 ***
	No KPRF	1	18.706	2.491 ***	18.662	2.507 ***	18.688	2.507 ***
	LDPR	1	-5.786	2.511 *	-5.662	2.524 *	-5.625	2.526 *
	No YABL	1	4.519	2.480	4.400	2.495	4.392	2.500
	SPS	1	-8.669	2.777 **	-8.307	2.808 **	-8.219	2.794 **
	NDR	1	-3.680	2.539	-3.411	2.549	-3.367	2.548
	SPIRHER	1	-2.090	2.537	-1.708	2.574	-1.602	2.552
Accessibility	REMOTE	2	12.786	7.124	11.868	7.302	11.447	7.179
Control	URBAN	1	-0.009	0.065	-0.011	0.065	-0.012	0.065
	Random part							
	Level 2							
	CONS		28.196	22.408	31.448	23.252	30.538	23.068
	Level 1							
	CONS		290.429	32.448 ***	291.861	32.710 ***	292.678	32.770 ***
-2*Log likelihood			1910.359		1913.168		1913.256	
N			224		224		224	

*p < 0.05 **p < 0.01 ***p < 0.001

The first level 1 variables to be entered are those under the label of "party challenge", starting from Model 4. In the first, simple, models to include party variables (**Models 4-6**), it emerges that, of the parties that nominated their candidates in the SMDs, only Unity, OVR, KPRF, SPS and LDPR offered significant challenges to the independents. By contrast, Yabloko, "Spiritual Heritage" and NDR do not pose a significant challenge

¹⁴³ Regions that have a non-zero share of population located in difficult areas are listed in chapter 4 (Table 4.3).

to the independents despite having nominated candidates in 114, 107, and 90 SMDs respectively. The size (and the statistical significance) of the challenge effect is especially large for the OVR and the KPRF.

As expected, the inclusion of party variables causes a decrease in the coefficient of "Remote", whose effect is mediated by the party variables, and in the value of the $-2 \times \log$ likelihood. Moreover, a sharp drop in the variance is observed not only at level 1, where it is expected, but also at level 2, suggesting that part of the variability previously attributed to differences across the regions, is in fact derived from level 1 variations. The only difference among Models 4 to 6 is the use of alternative measurements of regionalist assertiveness (as described in chapter 4). The findings are robust to these changes. Because the $-2 \log$ likelihood level is lower when "Dow" is used for regionalist assertiveness, this variable is preferred to the alternative measures of that dimension in the next models.

Model 7 expands the analysis to consider the effect of the distribution of notable candidates in the two pools. Of interest is that, contrary to the 1995 case, the decision of federal political elite members to run as independents did not significantly improve the chances of the non-partisans. It is, instead, regional political occupational status and district incumbency that can alter the results. Of particular note is that where the incumbent is an independent, the vote share of the non-partisans increases by almost 13 percentage points.

Two additional variables measured at level 1 are entered in **Models 8 and 9**. These variables, which were not considered in the 1995 models, derive from the categorical variable "FigCat" elaborated on the basis of data gathered by Hale for use in his 2005 forthcoming article (see chapter 4). The variable, as built for this thesis, reflects whether the financial backing by what Hale calls "Financial-Industrial Groups" (FIGs) detected in a given district was predominantly aimed at independent or party candidates. It is entered in the form of two dummies, "FIGPar" and "FIGInd", which reflect, respectively, whether the FIGs were supporting (predominantly) independents, or party candidates. In both cases, the base category of the variable to which the effect is compared is constituted by those SMDs in which no clear support was detected by Hale's sources.

Table 8.6: *Predicting independents' success.*
Estimated multilevel model 7

Hypothesis	Variable		Model 7	
		Lev.	Estim.	S.Err.
	Fixed part			
	CONS		42.628	3.561 R
Regionalist assertiveness	DOW	2	-3.550	2.691
	ASSER99A	2		
	ASSER99B	2		
Appeasement	POLAPP	2	0.810	2.664
	TRANSF	2	0.072	0.100
Party challenge	UNITY	1	-7.759	3.379 *
	OVR	1	-14.910	2.497 ***
	No KPRF	1	14.820	2.484 ***
	LDPR	1	-3.931	2.414
	No YABL	1	3.243	2.379
	SPS	1	-6.195	2.684 *
	NDR	1	-3.197	2.435
	SPIRHER	1	-1.187	2.429
Candidate notability	REGPOL	1	5.379	2.663 *
	FEDPOL	1	3.802	3.634
	INCUMB	1	12.854	2.873 ***
Accessibility	REMOTE	2	12.182	6.854
Control	URBAN	1	-0.062	0.062
	Random part			
	Level 2			
	CONS		20.556	19.186
	Level 1			
	CONS		264.604	29.399 ***
-2*Log likelihood			1883.255	
N			224	

*p < 0.05 ***p < 0.001

FigCat tests one important aspect of campaign finance, the backing that candidates may receive from financial-industrial groups. It appears from Model 8 that financial backing for the independents markedly improved their chances (however, this effect disappears when governor's support is considered in Model 9). It is possible to observe in Model 8 that the LDPR challenge is no longer significant once the financial support

is considered. This suggests that the impact of the LDPR candidates was mainly based on their financial backing.

The support that independent and party candidates may receive from the regional governor is measured by the categorical variable "GovCat", which is also based on Hale's data. This variable introduces the effect of "administrative resources" into the equation. It is specified by two dummy variables, "GovPar" and "GovInd", coded in a way similar to "FigCat". Namely, "GovPar" takes a value of 1 for SMDs where the governor supports a party candidate; and "GovInd" takes a value of 1 where the governor supports an independent candidate. When both dummies take the value of 0, no governor support was detected in the SMD. The significance of the "GovPar" term confirms the expectation that a governor's support for a party candidate is a strong negative factor affecting the chances of independent candidates in 1999.

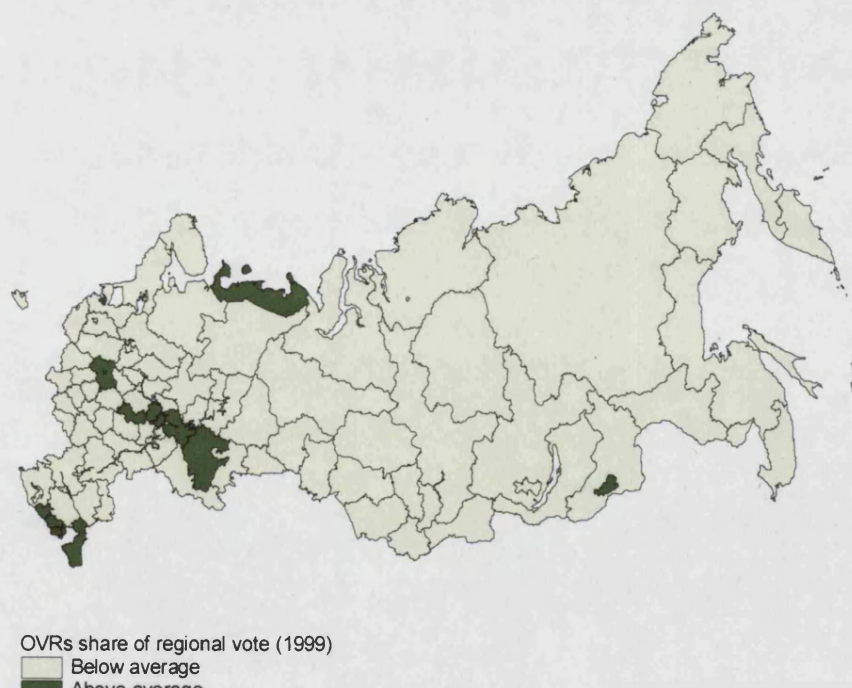
Table 8.7: *Predicting independents' success. Estimated multilevel models (8-10)*

Hypothesis	Variable	Lev.	Model 8		Model 9		Model 10	
			Estim.	S.Err.	Estim.	S.Err.	Estim.	S.Err.
	Fixed part							
	CONS		41.249	3.484 R	46.780	4.148 R	49.036	3.900 R
Regionalist assertiveness	DOW	2	-2.316	2.754	-4.203	2.637	-3.148	2.540
	ASSER99A	2						
	ASSER99B	2						
Appeasement	POLAPP	2	1.251	2.701	2.382	2.548	3.228	2.543
	TRANSF	2	0.056	0.101	0.060	0.094	0.060	0.094
Party challenge	UNITY	1	-9.416	3.347 **	-8.124	3.043 **	-8.255	2.908 **
	OVR	1	-13.421	2.470 ***	-7.484	2.361 **	-6.793	2.021 ***
	No KPRF	1	14.451	2.424 ***	10.161	2.251 ***	10.210	2.063 ***
	LDPR	1	-2.947	2.367	-0.710	2.167	-1.400	2.034
	No YABL	1	2.655	2.354	2.977	2.116	3.452	1.940
	SPS	1	-5.513	2.619 *	-1.772	2.401	-2.763	2.271
	NDR	1	-3.656	2.377	-4.080	2.144	-4.487	1.950 *
	SPIRHER	1	-1.324	2.371	-2.237	2.166	-3.244	1.860
Candidate notability	REGPOL	1	6.221	2.612 *	6.335	2.351 **	5.172	2.235 *
	FEDPOL	1	3.756	3.540	3.829	3.187	1.181	3.032
	INCUMB	1	12.199	2.799 ***	12.258	2.507 ***	11.586	2.394 ***
Financial support	FIGCAT							
	FIGIND	1	10.148	3.320 **	5.238	3.067	4.456	2.717
	FIGPAR	1	-4.923	3.618	-2.080	3.317	-4.092	3.107
Admin. resources	GOVCAT							
	GOVPAR	1			-17.709	3.423 ***	-18.951	2.226 R
	GOVIND	1			-0.708	3.292	-2.303	2.674 R
	FREESP	2			-0.199	0.138	-0.196	0.137
Accessibility	REMOTE	2	8.666	6.913	2.949	6.418	2.410	6.028
Control	URBAN	1	-0.070	0.062	-0.040	0.058	-0.070	0.053
	Random part							
	Level 2							
	CONS		30.373	20.326	34.790	18.284	92.131	41.685
	GOVPAR						-48.031	16.585
	GOVIND						51.852	51.852
	CONS/GOVPAR						29.009	18.377
	CONS/GOVIND						-44.413	37.955
	GOVPAR/GOVIND						-78.253	16.842
	Level 1							
	CONS		243.493	27.435 ***	189.250	21.579 ***		
	GOVPAR						199.161	30.762
	GOVIND						111.540	25.292
	No GOVSUPP						136.715	39.480
	GOVPAR/GOVIND						n.a.	n.a.
	GOVPAR/NoGOVSUPP						n.a.	n.a.
	GOVIND/NoGOVSUPP						n.a.	n.a.
-2*Log likelihood			1870.210		1819.163		1800.292	
N			224		224		224	

*p < 0.05 **p < 0.01 ***p < 0.001

Districts where the regional governor supports a party candidate see the joint share of the independents drop by about 18 percentage points, compared to districts where no candidate had the backing of the governor. Of particular note is the lack of significance of the reverse effect; i.e. governor's support for an independent. Where the governor backed an independent, this did not translate into a significant advantage, when compared to SMDs where the governor did not appear to back any candidate. While about half of all governor-supported candidates were independents (Figure 8.2), the most powerful governors seem to have backed party candidates. This is true of the OVR party which was sponsored by some of the strongest regional "bosses", including Luzhkov of the City of Moscow and Shaimiev of Tatarstan. Map 8.1 shows the regions where OVR's share of the PR vote was above its all-Russian average. These regions are the City of Moscow, Moscow oblast, the Republics of Bashkortostan, Tatarstan, Mordovia, Chuvashya, Ingushetia, Dagestan, Karachaevo Cherkessia, Kabardino Balkaria, and North Ossetia, and the autonomous okrugs of Aga Buriat and Nenets. Many of these units' leaders had joined, or become affiliated with, OVR.

Map 8.1: *Regional concentration of the OVR vote, PR tier, 1999 Duma elections*



It is worth noting that entering the "GovCat" variable also eliminates the significance of the party challenge of SPS, while reducing the effect of OVR and KPRF. This finding points to the collinearity of these variables with "GovCat", which confirms that the impact of these parties was partially due to the support received from regional governors and their administrative resources. A description of the distribution of governors' support across candidates and districts is presented in Figure 8.2 above.

Model 10 allows for complex variability to be modelled. The effect of governors' support is allowed to vary across regions and across SMDs. In other words, the rigid assumption that the variance is constant along the values of the predictors is relaxed for the "GovCat" variable. Indeed, based on model 10, the assumption of homoskedasticity at level one must be rejected, as the variance terms are (both individually and jointly) significantly different from zero. Level 2 variance is also significant (joint chi-sq test). As for the heterogeneity of the effect of "GovCat" at level two, it is expected that the effect of governors' support is not constant across regions, but that it increases the more tightly they control the regional political process. This cross-level interaction is explored in the last two models. It can be noted that the more complex specification produces a more precise model, with a lower $-2 \cdot \log$ likelihood.

Finally, **Models 11** and **12** add the interaction between governors' support (the two dummies of "GovCat") and freedom of speech, based on the expectation that support by the governor should count more in regions with lower levels of freedom in the information sphere. Indeed, one key avenue for governors to control regional politics is through their control of the regional media. This is confirmed by the fact that the interaction term for governors' support of a party candidate is significant. This means that that districts where a party candidate is supported by the governor are less favourable to independents, but also that this negative effect increases the greater the control exercised over the circulation of information is in a region (i.e. the worse a region scores on "Freesp"). In **Model 12** the non-significant party variables are eliminated.

The interaction effect between "GovSupp" and "Freesp" is graphically depicted in Figure 8.3 below. The three regression lines are obtained with the MLwiN "predictions" tool, by predicting Y by means of "Freesp", "GovCat" and "Freesp*GovCat" only, but based on the specification of the whole Model 12. In this way, a simple relationship is

singled out from a multiple regression model, while controlling for all other variables in that model. The regression lines are then plotted against the scatter of observations.

The lower line (turquoise, with a positive slope) represents the relationship between freedom of speech and independents' success for districts where the governor supports a party. Of the other two lines, the dark blue one, with a smaller slope, represents the relationship for districts with no clear governor support. The difference between these two lines (the turquoise and the dark blue) is shown to be significant in Model 12. Conversely, the difference between the third line (green, with a steep negative slope), which represents districts where the governor supports an independent, and the line for "no clear support" (dark blue), is not significant.

Figure 8.3: *The cross-level interaction between Governors' support and freedom of speech*

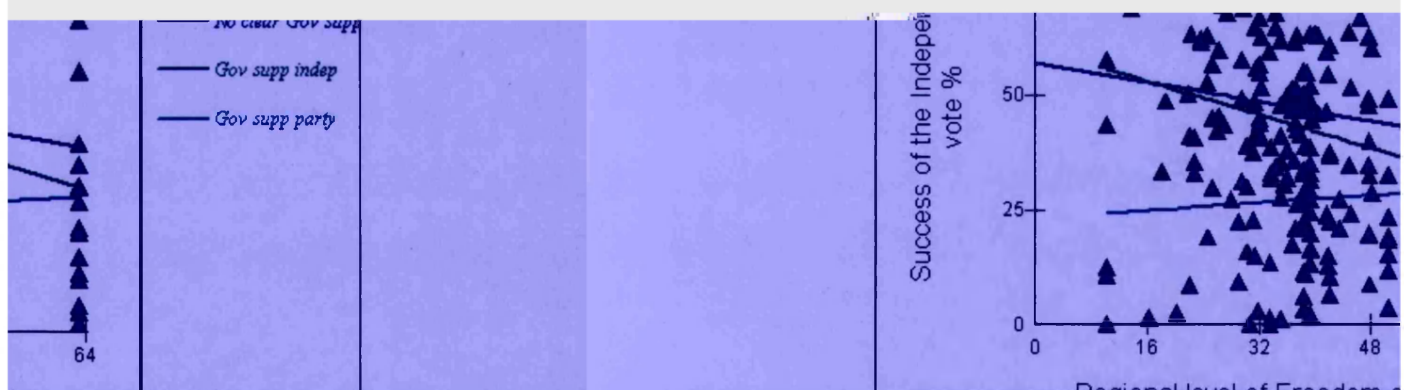


Table 8.8: *Predicting independents' success. Estimated multilevel models (11-12)*

Hypothesis	Variable	Lev.	Model 11		Model 12	
			Estim.	S.Err.	Estim.	S.Err.
	Fixed part					
	CONS		49.606	3.983 R	47.495	3.287 R
Regionalist assertiveness	DOW	2	-3.159	2.495	-2.703	2.476
	ASSER99A	2				
	ASSER99B	2				
Appeasement	POLAPP	2	3.568	2.532	3.823	2.457
	TRANSF	2	0.060	0.093	0.064	0.093
Party challenge	UNITY	1	-7.484	2.938 *	-6.553	2.959 *
	OVR	1	-7.217	2.294 **	-7.193	2.223 **
	No KPRF	1	9.651	2.100 ***	8.951	2.125 ***
	LDPR	1	-0.957	2.044		
	No YABL	1	2.861	2.006		
	SPS	1	-2.422	2.262		
	NDR	1	-4.137	2.050 *	-4.259	2.020 *
	SPIRHER	1	-3.320	1.941		
Candidate notability	REGPOL	1	5.562	2.238 *	6.694	2.233 **
	FEDPOL	1	2.061	3.055		
	INCUMB	1	11.811	2.393 ***	12.899	2.353 ***
Financial support	FIGCAT					

1	-20.587	2.438 R	-20.625	2.337 R			GOVPAR
1	-4.091	2.735 R	-3.666	2.595 R			GOVIND
2	-0.123	0.213	-0.268	0.227			FREESP
ND	1x2	-0.290	0.235	-0.186	0.242	Cross-level	FREESPxGOV

In other words, governor support makes a great deal of difference in regions where the public sphere is tightly controlled (as reflected in the freedom of speech index). This is shown by the wide gap between the two lines on the left side of the graph. However, governor support makes less of a difference as freedom of speech increases, to the point that it makes virtually no difference in regions with pluralistic information domains, as illustrated by the narrow gap between the two lines on the right side of the graph. This provides solid confirmation that governors' preferences, on their own, only reflect part of the story on administrative resources and that considerations of the cross-level interaction provide a more realistic perspective.

Conclusion

This chapter reaches sharply different conclusions than the previous two. It has been shown that in 1999 regionalist assertiveness was no longer correlated with independents' success anymore; it also no longer affected the outcome in a mediated way – i.e. through political parties' nomination decisions – as it did in 1993 and 1995. However, parties do appear to mediate the effect of physical accessibility of districts. Indeed, the coefficient for "Remote" decreases once party variables are entered.

The irrelevance of regionalist assertiveness in determining independents' success can be explained with reference to the change in the political environment; in particular, to the fact that the leaders of restive regions managed to form a viable political alliance culminating in the formation of the OVR party. This removed a key precondition for the validity of the hypothesis – the absence of meaningful "parties of the regions". In this sense, the findings of the 1999 model are consistent with the explanatory framework presented in the thesis.

It should be noted that the overall level of success of the independents (high in 1993, lower in 1995 and high again in 1999) is not necessarily relevant to the operation of the core hypothesis. The latter hypothesis aims at explaining why the independents are more successful in some district than in others, not the overall, average levels. To explain diachronic changes, the literature has already pointed to the effect of changing institutional rules. The validity of these explanations, which apply at the national level,

may be debated in specific terms, but they all face the puzzle of sub-national differences and patterns. In 1999, if regionalist assertiveness cannot explain these spatial differences, the emergence of administrative resources as a main tool of voters' mobilisation can. This is, however, not just a story of governors supporting party candidates and thereby reducing the chances of independents. The effect of governors' support is significantly dependent on cross-regional differences in the level of political pluralism, first of all pluralism in the realm of production and dissemination of information.

Conclusion

The task of this last chapter is twofold. The first part summarises the main points of the whole thesis. These include the research question, the limits of the existing literature, the adopted research design and explanatory framework, and the findings of the empirical analysis. The second task is to discuss the implications of the findings for a number of scholarly debates. In this respect, the most direct contribution of the thesis is in the field of Russian party and electoral studies: on notions of party identification and on the determinants of voting behaviour in Russia generally (section 9.2). The implications of the empirical findings, however, can reach beyond Russia's borders, and help qualify widely spread assumptions on the role of parties in the processes of democratic consolidation and federal building (section 9.3).

9.1 A summary of the thesis

The research question

This work has presented an empirical investigation of the causes of sub-national variation in the success of independent candidates in Russian elections to the Duma, the Lower House of the Federal Parliament, in the 1990s. The introductory chapter stressed that the proliferation of independent candidates was one of the starkest signs of party weakness in that decade. It has been argued that this is an important subject because political parties are essential to the functioning of modern democracy. Indeed, only institutionalised parties can provide the collective accountability of rulers (Aldrich 1995).

The proliferation of Russian independents has two main dimensions. At the *national* level, independents received a very substantial share of the vote cast in territorial districts, ranging from 35 to 60 percent across the first three post-communist elections. These are very large figures compared to established democracies such as the U.K., but they are also large compared to other post-communist young democracies, the only comparable levels have been observed in Ukraine. This picture, however, only captures part of the phenomenon. There is much to be learnt about independents' proliferation from the *sub-national* level. Indeed, the introductory chapter has shown that the level of success for parties/independent candidates varies widely across the territory of the Russian Federation. Two images of such variability are presented in Map 1.1 and Map 5.1.

The existing literature

The task of the thesis has been to explain this sub-national variation in independent candidates' proliferation. This angle is heuristically fruitful because it challenges the conventional wisdom based on the national picture, and adds a new dimension to the scholarly understanding of party development in Russia. Chapter 2 illustrated the lack of suitable explanations in the existing literature. Indeed, while some scholars have studied party development in the regions, they have either chosen a limited number of federal units (e.g. Colton and Hough 1998; Moser 1999; Hutcheson 2003); investigated regional-level elections (e.g. Golosov 1997, 1999; Gelman and Golosov 1998); or failed to adopt a convincing explanatory framework or methodology (e.g. Moser 1999; Golosov 2002; Golosov and Shevchenko 2000). As a result, the approach to party weakness that receives most currency takes two shapes, both confined to the national average and the stereotypical aspects of the phenomenon.

The first group includes empirical studies based on opinion surveys and on the proportional representation (PR) side of Russia's mixed electoral system (e.g. White, Rose and McAllister 1997; Colton 2000; Colton and McFaul 2003). Because PR ballots by definition only include party labels, these works can study the determinants of support for one party vs. the other, but not the causes of partisanship as such. This limitation also affects the contributions of electoral geographers who have sought to

explain spatial patterns in the distribution of PR votes (e.g. Clem and Craumer 1996, 2000).

The second group of studies includes qualitative approaches that link party weakness to the legacies of the Soviet regime (e.g. a "flattened" social structure and authoritarian political culture, see Linz and Stepan 1996 and Eckstein et al. 1998, respectively), or to contingent factors (e.g. presidentialism, the electoral system, above-parties stance of the first president, see Huskey 1999, Moser 2001 and Fish 1995a, respectively). Useful as it is for explaining Russia's party weakness at the national level, this approach is of little help in explaining sub-national variations because the proposed factors are constant across the regions.

Research design

How should the research question be addressed then? As the Introduction and chapter 5 have explained, this thesis has adopted a statistical large-*n* design that takes into account all districts in all regions where the Duma vote took place in 1993, 1995 and 1999. The focus of attention has been on the sub-national variability in the success of independent candidates, measured as the total vote share received by the independents in each of 225 single-member districts (SMDs). SMDs constituted the unit of analysis: the smallest level at which the data are gathered or aggregated. The design took into account the fact that electoral districts are grouped within regions. This is important because key explanatory factors of cross-regional variation in the election outcome apply at the level of region and make SMDs belonging to the same region more similar to each other than SMDs randomly taken.

In the jargon of statistics this phenomenon is called *autocorrelation* and leads to biased estimates if not dealt with in the quantitative analysis. The best way to take this data property into account is to use multilevel modelling. One key advantage over the more traditional analysis of variance technique is that multilevel modelling allows one not only to detect cross-regional differences, but also to explain them by means of regional variables (chapter 5). Indeed, while the main variables of the explanatory framework of this thesis apply at the level of regions, other variables are properties of districts. Just which variables were expected to explain sub-national variations in the success of the independents is summarised in the next sub-section.

The explanatory framework

Chapter 3 has shown that the explanations put forward by this research revolve around the notion that the electoral process should be considered within its wider political context. In particular, it has been argued that it is important to link voting behaviour to the process of federal bargaining unfolding over much of the 1990s, after seventy years of fictitious federalism under the Soviet regime. In this respect, the 89 Russian federal units ("regions" for brevity) can be ideally placed on a continuum according to the degree of autonomy advocated in the federalisation process. Some regions demanded a federation in which units had greater autonomy or even independence (Chechnya), while at the opposite end of the spectrum were regions that advocated greater centralisation in centre-regional relations. A quantitative measure of these regional autonomy stances was adapted for use here from an index elaborated by Kathleen Dowley (1998).

A key claim of this thesis has been that **regionalist assertiveness** (the degree of autonomy demands) had a positive effect on the success of independent candidates. This hypothesis rested on two considerations. Firstly, the more assertive a region, the stronger its anti-centralist sentiments and the less popular national parties based in Moscow. Secondly, regionalist parties, which would likely be popular in assertive regions, are heavily discouraged under the electoral system (registration rules, and PR barrier of representation) and have been absent from the ballots. Under these circumstances, regionalist assertiveness constituted a territorial cleavage (in the sense defined by Lipset and Rokkan 1967) that gave the independents a competitive advantage over political parties in articulating and representing regionalist sentiments. However, centre-regional relations clearly involved two actors – the regions and the federal centre. In addition to regional demands, therefore, it was necessary to consider (and statistically control for) **central responses**. In particular, Moscow tried to appease the most vocal regions by means of bilateral treaties and other concessions that defused anti-centralist sentiments.

Moreover, for the 1999 models, regional "**administrative resources**" were also considered. This factor refers to the support that a regional governor can provide for a given candidate. Data kindly made available by Henry Hale were used to identify which candidate received a governor's support in which district. The effect of such support was

expected to be greater the tighter the governor's control over regional politics (as indicated by the level of freedom of speech observed in the region). The independents would be advantaged or penalised according to whether the governor supported an independent or a party candidate. For the 1999 vote, Hale's data also allowed a test of the impact of **financial backing** on independents' success. **Geographic accessibility** was also considered as an explanatory factor of spatial differences in the proliferation of the independents. This effect has been posited to be indirect, as it negatively affects the ability of national parties to nominate their candidates in regions with very cold temperatures or mountainous territories, especially as the elections are held in December.

The explanatory factors mentioned so far apply at the level of region. Independents' success, however, was observed at the sub-regional level of electoral districts and varied widely among SMDs. Clearly, this portion of variability had to be addressed by district-level factors. Two such factors were identified in the strategic decisions of key actors of SMD races – political parties and notable candidates. As for political parties, the expectation was that **major national parties** are endowed with greater name recognition (brand name effect) and could be expected to reduce the chances for independents simply by entering an SMD race (no party managed to nominate its candidate in all, and very few in most, districts). It should be remembered that *regionalist* parties are virtually absent due to electoral rules (chapters 3 and 7 discussed marginal exceptions). With regard to **notable candidates**, the assumption was that they have greater *a priori* chances of success (due to their local visibility, resources, connections with the local administration, incumbency, etc.). Therefore, they would boost or dampen the success of independents according to their decision to stand as independent or party candidates, respectively.

The explanatory framework also took into account the fact that the decisions of parties to enter a given race, and of notables to stand as independent vs. party candidates, are strategic. This means that such decisions are affected by the expectation of success or failure that are associated with them. In other words, parties were expected to be more likely to enter an SMD race where they saw greater chances of success. Similarly, notables were expected to be more likely to stand as independents where they felt that

party nomination would reduce their chances of success. One key factor expected to determine these actors' expectations of success was regionalist assertiveness.

It follows that notable candidates were expected to be more likely to run as independents, and parties more likely to avoid entering the contest, the greater the regionalist assertiveness. As a result, in addition to its *direct* effect, regionalist assertiveness was expected to have a positive *indirect* effect on independents' success, mediated through the strategic decisions of notables and parties. A similar indirect effect was also expected for geographic accessibility. A path diagram of direct and indirect causal relations is portrayed in Figure 3.1.

The findings

All the main hypotheses summarised above received confirmation to some extent in the statistical analysis, although the causal dynamic of 1999 vote was different from that behind the previous two elections. Chapters 6 and 7 showed that independent candidates enjoyed a competitive advantage over national parties in articulating territorial cleavages in the first two elections. Indeed, controlling for instances of **central appeasement**, levels of **regionalist assertiveness** had a statistically significant and positive effect on the electoral chances of independent candidates in 1993 and 1995. This effect is not observed in the 1999 elections, when the leaders of assertive regions managed to form a political party to "storm the Kremlin" in view of the 2000 presidential elections (chapter 8). This meant that voters in a number of assertive regions would be induced to support the new interregional party, instead of independent candidates. This explains why, in the models for 1999, the coefficient for regionalist assertiveness, while not meeting conventional levels of statistical significance, had a negative sign.

In the 1999 case, the widespread belief that regional **administrative resources** were paramount has been partially confirmed by the analysis of the SMD vote. Governor's support indeed helped parties challenge the independents, but it did not appear to make a significant difference when it was geared towards the independents. This is because the "weight" of regional leaders backing parties, especially OVR, and those backing individual independent candidates, was markedly different. The "big *khozyains*" (bosses) were behind OVR candidates, not the independents. Also, not surprisingly,

governor's support appeared to be collinear with the support of large **financial interests**. Even so, the backing of Financial-Industrial Groups (FIGs) significantly increased the chances of independent candidates (chapter 8).

It is important to note that, when it did apply – i.e. in 1993 and 1995 – the effect of **regionalist assertiveness** on independents' success was confirmed to be both **direct and indirect**. As expected, the indirect portion of the effect was mediated through the strategic considerations of key electoral actors – political parties and notable candidates. The analysis confirmed that **parties** tended to nominate candidates in favourable environments (low regionalist assertiveness) and to write some SMDs off as too impervious. However, already in 1995, parties appeared to start widening their spatial reach and contesting districts located in less favourable regions. Indeed, in 1995 major parties contested a larger number of SMDs than in 1993. Nevertheless, both in 1993 and 1995, levels of regionalist assertiveness were shown to play a significant role in the strategic entry decisions for several parties (chapters 6 and 7).

The impact of the nomination decisions of major political parties and local notables were also confirmed to be statistically significant. In terms of **party challenges** to the independents, in 1999 an effective threat was represented, in descending order, by the KPRF, OVR, "Unity" and, somewhat surprisingly given its poor PR performance, NDR (chapter 8). In 1995, the independents were effectively challenged by the APR, the "Bloc of Independents", NDR and the KPRF (chapter 7). In 1993, the greatest challenges were posed by "Dignity and Charity", "Russia's Choice", the APR, the LDPR, the DPR, Yabloko, "Civic Union", and the PRES (chapter 6). As for **notable candidates**, in 1995 the independents were significantly more successful where they could count members of the regional and federal elite, or the district incumbent in their ranks. In 1999 this effect was confined to incumbency and regional elite status.¹⁴⁴

Moreover, purely **geographic considerations** also played a significant role in determining party resource allocations to the SMDs. For some parties, the difficulty of reaching populations located in remote and inhospitable areas significantly reduced the probability of entering the race. In addition to the effect of regionalist assertiveness and geographic accessibility, levels of urbanisation are confirmed to be significantly associated with a high probability that parties like Yabloko and Russia's Choice

¹⁴⁴ This variable could not be tested for the 1993 elections due to data availability constraints.

nominate candidates. Geographic remoteness also negatively affected the probability that local elites would run as party candidates (as shown by the model on "Regpol" in chapter 7, Table 7.7).

9.2 Implications for the scholarly understanding of Russian elections

This study leads to an important reinterpretation of the phenomenon of the independents. As noted in chapters 2 and 3, the prevalent view is that a strong showing by independents is simply a sign of party failure. According to this view, the reason for the proliferation of independent candidates in the 1990 elections was that most parties lacked the organisational capacity to campaign effectively in the districts, and also failed to attract local notables to their ranks. Because parties could not offer much in the way of campaign resources, candidates endowed with personal assets (or supported by the governor and/or by financial groups) decide to run as independents. This study has shown that such an account is only partially accurate.

This research has shown that the success of independents is not merely a sign of party failure; a significant portion of their success was due to the fact that they fulfilled a positive articulation and representation function. In those regions where territorial cleavages were salient, the independents had a competitive advantage over national parties, regardless of the latter's organisational resources. This advantage also took the form of a disincentive for national parties even to contest districts in areas of high regionalist assertiveness.

The influence of regionalist assertiveness on the entry decisions of political parties also suggests a qualification to the cross-contamination hypothesis, according to which the mixed electoral system provides parties with the incentive to nominate candidates in as many SMDs as possible. Even if they don't stand a chance of winning the district seat, parties gain in local visibility by running a local campaign and are thought thereby to improve their vote returns in the PR tier of the vote (Herron 2002). However, in the light of the findings of this research, this view needs to be qualified. Party incentives to nominate candidates in the SMDs also have a territorial dimension linked to regional anti-centralist sentiments, thus the contamination effect posited by Herron should not be

taken to apply equally across the territory. However, the thesis that the incentives for cross-tier contamination were stronger in 1995 (Belin and Orttung 1997), is consistent with the finding that fewer parties were affected by levels of regionalist assertiveness in their 1995 SMD entry decision than in 1993.

Moreover, as explained in chapter 3, the findings of this study help specify the assertion found in the existing literature that the independents benefit from posing as the true representative of "local interests". It is not just any kind of local interest that provides them with a competitive advantage over national parties; local interests may well coincide with the articulation of functional cleavages that are the domain of party representation. Only local interests that coincide with a territorial cleavage – i.e. interests that set a territorial community apart from the rest of the country – can be expected to provide an advantage to the independents. Regionalist demands provide a clear example of such a territorial cleavage because they are by definition rooted in individual regions. Thus even though several federal units demanded greater autonomy, their co-ordination proved difficult until 1999 due to the different claims generating their regionalist demands (mainly ethno-cultural defence vs. resistance to fiscal exploitation) (Solnick 1996).

Perhaps the most direct contribution this study makes to the literature on Russian electoral politics regards the issue of "party identification". The reliance on opinion surveys based on the PR tier meant that the existing literature missed a great deal of relevant information related to the proliferation of the independents in the SMDs. This study suggests that the weakness of party attachments was not felt equally throughout the country, nor was this inequality randomly distributed. Because attachment to regionalist parties is practically ruled out by the electoral system, the only party attachment that voters can develop (i.e. to national parties) is more likely to grow where centre-regional relations are co-operative rather than conflictive, other factors being equal. Moreover, the analysis of the 1999 vote confirms the cynicism of those who stressed the mobilisational sources of Russian voting behaviour. The governors of important regions can induce their voters to show "attachment" to the "right" party.

With regard to the 1999 elections, the importance of administrative resources also qualifies, with regard to the 1999 elections, the view that the Russian electorate is becoming structured along social cleavages. Some persistent lines of division among

voters are indeed linked to social traits (education, age, income, etc.) or to the urban/rural cleavage. However, macro-political regional effects should be added to these individual-level perspectives. Namely, the re-opening of the nation- and state-building processes after the collapse of the Soviet system, and the ensuing process of centre-regional bargaining. These have brought back to prominence the territorial type of cleavage.

9.3 Comparative implications

One grounding assumption of this research has been the importance of the party institution for the functioning of democracy and for democratic consolidation. In addition to being the only way to ensure the collective accountability of the rulers towards the ruled, parties are deemed to perform the vital task of deepening the legitimacy of the political system through possibly integrating all sectors of society into the political process. As a result, institutionalised parties can prevent alienated and anti-systemic sentiments from taking root outside democratic institutions (Huntington 1968; Morlino 1998).

In the case of federal systems, one possible source for anti-system sentiment is the articulation of strong autonomy demands. By integrating and moderating centrifugal forces, political parties are considered to be a key institution to counter this danger and help sustain federal stability. In the paradigmatic formulation of the "integrated party", the party is expected to bridge "sectional" (territorial) divisions because it needs to be a *national* organisation in order to conquer highly desired national offices (primarily the presidency). The party cannot afford internal divisions, and each individual member politician is inclined to moderate the demands of his particular constituency in order to advance a common cause and to keep the reputation of the whole (Aldrich 1995, Cox 1997, Filippov et al. 2004). In this literature, the requirements for the emergence of such integrated party are mainly institutional. Parties should aspire to win important national office, and control its spoils, in order to have an incentive to be national and to bridge territorial cleavages. If integrated parties are the solution, regionalist parties are part of the problem. Indeed, one clear implication of the theory of the "integrated party" is that

regionalist parties, i.e. parties based in one federal unit (or a subset of units) and representing the territorial (sectional) cleavage, should be avoided as inimical to federal stability.

This approach to federal stability parallels the discussion of the role of parties in democratic consolidation in that it focuses on the *type* of party that can best promote the outcome,¹⁴⁵ while the prior logical step of considering *whether* the party institution is necessary at all is usually skipped.¹⁴⁶ This thesis, by looking at non-party candidates, suggests taking a step back and considering the question of "*whether* parties". The relationship between party development and federal stability is inherently different for transitional and consolidated democracies. In established federations like the USA and Canada, territorial cleavages emerged *after* the development of the party system. The party was the natural channel for regionalist grievances, if only because an organisation was needed to compete with existing party organisations. By contrast, in a transitional setting, especially in one as difficult as post-communist transformations, parties are doomed to be organisationally weak and deprived of local and social roots. In Russia, the federalisation process began at the very beginning of the transition from Soviet system, even before the formal birth of sovereign Russia, and could not find an effective channel of representation in the party institution.

In a transitional setting the very emergence of parties should be taken as problematic. It makes more sense to ask what the impact of centre-regional relations on party development is, than the opposite question of what type of party can best stabilise federal relations (as with the "integrated party" approach). Indeed, this thesis has shown how centre-regional relations can become a key casual factor of uneven party development across the country, at least under Russian conditions. Clearly, the drafters of Russian electoral law sought to undermine the possibility for genuine and viable regionalist parties to emerge. At the same time, however, the parties that did emerge, while "national" in name, did not live up to the standards of the "integrated party" model. Especially, they could not effectively "bridge" territorial/sectional divisions and completely replace regionalist with national loyalties. As a result, regionalist sentiments

¹⁴⁵ The effect of centre-regional relations on party type is sometimes explored. See, for example, Tuschhoff (1999) and Thorlakson (2002).

¹⁴⁶ Both in the field of democratisation and in federal relations, the role of corporatist institutions, instead of political parties, is sometimes explored (Pelinka 1999, Encarnacion 1999).

were salient in some regions, especially in the first half of the 1990's, and this favoured independents in the 1993 and 1995 elections.

The Russian case suggests that, in the absence of strong national parties, and given that regionalist parties are to be avoided, non-party electoral representation in the form of independents can provide a suitable compromise solution for federal stability. On the one hand, the possibility to vote for independent candidates gives a "voice" opportunity to regionalist sentiments, which would otherwise lack any channel of expression absent regionalist parties. Lacking a "voice" option would increase the alienation from the political process and feed into the anti-systemic potential of regionalist sentiments.

And yet, while independents would provide such a "voice" for autonomy demands, they lack the ability to effectively promote the regionalist agenda. Indeed, independents failed to constitute a cohesive and disciplined group in the Duma. Many joined party factions immediately after elected or decided to form different groups.¹⁴⁷ They came from different regions, so it could be expected their interests would have been difficult to reconcile. Their policy impact was less dramatic than that of a cohesive regionalist party based in one or few regions would have been.¹⁴⁸ In this sense, the independents (unwittingly) contributed to federal stability.

They provided a "safety valve" for the expression of anti-systemic pressures, while ultimately failing to constitute an effective opposition to the centralisation drive in federal relations that prevailed after 1999, with Putin. On the contrary, regionalist parties would have entrenched and helped crystallise territorial cleavages, subjecting the stability of the federation to far greater pressure than the independents could ever manage. The independents, therefore, introduced an element of flexibility in the Russian political system, that (together with more prominent flexibility tools, such as bilateral negotiations) allowed the federal arrangement to survive the peak phase of regionalist assertiveness.

¹⁴⁷ Parliamentary 'factions' formed primarily by independent candidates are "New Regional Policy" in the first Duma, "Russia's Regions" in the second and third Duma, and "People's Deputy" in the third Duma.

¹⁴⁸ Prominent students of the roll call voting in the Duma (Smith and Remington 2001; Remington 2003), have not investigated the effect of independent nomination on legislators' policy attitudes. Smith and Remington (2001) have seen the Duma as dominated by policy debates on the left-right dimension, while regionalist issue would be salient in the Federation Council. Much as this is true, this research invites an exploration of the stances of deputies elected as independents in the Duma voting. The names of the parliamentary factions (see previous fn.) formed by so many independents, indeed suggests a regionalist concern.

By casting some doubts on the desirability of purely party-based representation under transitional conditions in unstable federations, this research invites a reconsideration of the role of parties in the general task of democratic consolidation. The function of articulating and representing interests is not always best carried out by political parties when these are weak and federal stability is under threat. Under such circumstances, while it is sensible to discourage regionalist parties, it might be advantageous for stability to allow regionalist sentiments to find a channel in non-party representatives.

Appendix

Table A.1.1: *Federal units in economic regions*

Economic region	Federal units
Central	Bryansk Oblast, Vladimir Oblast, Ivanovo Oblast, Kaluga Oblast, Kostroma Oblast, Moscow Oblast, Orlovskaya (Orel) Oblast, Ryazan Oblast, Smolensk Oblast, Tver Oblast, Tula Oblast, Yaroslavl Oblast, Moscow City
North West	Kaliningrad Oblast, Leningrad Oblast, Novgorod Oblast, Pskov Oblast, St. Petersburg
North	Karelian Republic, Komi Republic, Arkhangelsk Oblast, Vologda Oblast, Murmansk Oblast, Nenets Autonomous Okrug
Volga-Vyatka	Mariy El Republic, Mordovian Republic, Chuvash Republic, Kirov Oblast, Nizhny Novgorod Oblast
Volga	Kalmikiya Republic, Tatarstan Republic, Astrakhan Oblast, Volgograd Oblast, Penza Oblast, Samara Oblast, Saratov Oblast, Ulyanovsk Oblast
Central Black Earth	Belgorod Oblast, Voronezh Oblast, Kursk Oblast, Lipetsk Oblast, Tambov Oblast
North Caucasus	Adygey Republic, Daghestan Rep, Ingushetiya Rep, Kabardin-Balkar Republic, Karachay-Cherkess Republic, North Osetian Republic, Chechen Republic, Krasnodar Kray, Stavropol Kray, Rostov Oblast
Urals	Bashkortostan Republic, Udmurt Republic, Kurgan Oblast, Orenburg Oblast, Perm Oblast, Sverdlovsk Oblast, Chelyabinsk Oblast, Permyak Autonomous Okrug
West Siberia	Altay Republic, Altay Kray, Kemerovo Oblast, Novosibirsk Oblast, Omsk Oblast, Tomsk Oblast, Tyumen Oblast, Khanty Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug, Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug
East Siberia	Buryat Republic, Tyva Republic, Khakass Republic, Krasnoyarsk Kray, Irkutsk Oblast, Chita Oblast, Aga-Buryat Autonomous Okr, Taymyrskiy (Dolgano-Nenets) Autonomous Okrug, Ust-Ordynskiy Buryat Autonomous Okrug, Evenk Autonomous Okrug
Far East	Sakha Yakut Republic, Primorsky Kray, Khabarovsk Kray, Amur Oblast, Kamchatka Oblast, Magadan Oblast, Sakhalin Oblast, Jewish Autonomous Oblast, Koryak Autonomous Okrug, Chukotka Autonomous Okrug.

Table A.4.1: *Ranking of regions on Dowley's index, with time-specific mean scores*

Rank	Region	Dowley's index (1991-95 mean)	1988-93 mean score	1992-93 mean score	1994-95 mean score
1	Chechen Republic	4.62	4.37	4.58	4.72
2	Tatarstan Republic	4.33	4.37	4.44	4.07
3	Bashkortostan Republic	4.00	3.97	4.09	3.69
4	Mariy El Republic	3.86	3.40	3.60	3.50
5	Tyva Republic	3.80	3.71	3.82	3.57
6	Sakha Yakut Republic	3.68	3.49	3.58	3.77
7	Khakass Republic	3.64	3.56	3.75	3.33
8	Adygey Republic	3.62	3.30	3.38	.
9	Chuvash Republic	3.62	3.27	3.25	3.57
10	Karelian Republic	3.56	3.52	3.58	3.25
11	Buryat Republic	3.50	3.69	3.67	2.33
12	Ingushetiya Republic	3.50	3.50	3.53	3.31
13	Komi Republic	3.44	3.36	3.23	2.40
14	Udmurt Republic	3.43	3.38	3.78	4.00
15	Altay Republic	3.33	3.25	3.40	3.00
16	Nenets Autonomous Okrug	3.33	4.00	4.00	3.00
17	Khanty Mansiysk Aut Okrug	3.33	3.25	3.67	3.00
18	Chukotka Autonomous Okrug	3.33	3.75	3.00	2.00
19	Kalmikiya Republic	3.29	3.65	3.73	2.50
20	Yamalo-Nenets Aut. Okrug	3.25	3.60	3.50	2.50
21	Mordovian Republic	3.20	3.31	3.25	2.33
22	Taymyrskiy Aut. Okrug	3.17	3.67	3.67	2.75
23	Tyumen Oblast	3.13	3.08	3.20	2.33
24	North Osetian Republic	3.12	3.03	3.11	3.18
25	Kabardin-Balkar Republic	3.05	3.16	3.16	3.80
26	Sverdlovsk Oblast	3.04	2.95	2.90	3.07
27	Karachay-Cherkess Republic	3.00	3.31	2.88	2.33
28	Aga-Buryat Autonomous Okrug	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.50
29	Permyak Autonomous Okrug	3.00	3.50	4.00	3.00
30	Ust-Ordynskiy Buryat Aut. Okrug	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.50
31	Irkutsk Oblast	2.88	2.91	2.88	2.86
32	Vologoda Oblast	2.86	3.00	3.00	2.50
33	Daghestan Rep	2.84	2.90	2.94	2.20
34	Khabarovsk Kray	2.83	3.00	3.00	2.67
35	St. Petersburg	2.82	2.76	2.70	2.60
36	Omsk Oblast	2.80	2.00	2.00	2.67
37	Jewish Autonomous Oblast	2.80	3.00	3.33	2.50
38	Kaliningrad Oblast	2.79	2.88	3.20	2.43

39	Nizhny Novgorod Oblast	2.79	2.82	2.90	2.71
40	Vladimir Oblast	2.75	2.50	3.00	2.67
41	Magadan Oblast	2.75	2.50	2.40	2.33
42	Chelyabinsk Oblast	2.75	2.75	2.73	2.33
43	Evenk Autonomous Okrug	2.75	3.00	3.00	2.50
44	Moscow City	2.72	2.70	2.50	2.71
45	Bryansk Oblast	2.71	2.50	2.50	2.00
46	Voronezh Oblast	2.71	2.67	2.75	2.67
47	Novosibirsk Oblast	2.69	2.73	2.67	2.14
48	Primorsky Kray	2.67	3.17	3.00	2.64
49	Astrakhan Oblast	2.67	3.00	3.00	2.00
50	Ivanovo Oblast	2.67	2.50	2.50	2.00
51	Kurgan Oblast	2.67	3.00	3.00	2.00
52	Murmansk Oblast	2.67	3.00	3.00	2.25
53	Novgorod Oblast	2.67	3.00	3.00	2.60
54	Orlovskaya (Orel) Oblast	2.67	2.57	2.50	1.80
55	Pskov Oblast	2.67	2.75	2.33	2.50
56	Chita Oblast	2.67	2.78	2.83	2.20
57	Kemerovo Oblast	2.64	2.71	2.57	2.50
58	Krasnoyarsk Kray	2.63	2.67	2.72	2.44
59	Volgograd Oblast	2.62	2.50	2.40	1.80
60	Amur Oblast	2.60	2.40	2.40	2.20
61	Leningrad Oblast	2.60	2.75	2.67	2.00
62	Altay Kray	2.57	2.40	2.67	2.33
63	Arkhangelsk Oblast	2.57	2.75	2.75	2.33
64	Tomsk Oblast	2.57	2.38	2.33	2.33
65	Samara Oblast	2.54	2.50	2.67	2.50
66	Kaluga Oblast	2.50	2.33	2.00	2.00
67	Kamchatka Oblast	2.50	3.00	3.00	2.67
68	Kirov Oblast	2.50	3.00	.	2.00
69	Penza Oblast	2.50	2.25	2.25	1.67
70	Perm Oblast	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.33
71	Saratov Oblast	2.50	2.75	2.88	2.20
72	Tambov Oblast	2.50	2.00	2.00	2.50
73	Yaroslavl Oblast	2.50	3.20	3.00	2.00
74	Moscow Oblast	2.43	2.50	2.50	2.33
75	Orenburg Oblast	2.43	3.00	3.00	1.67
76	Tula Oblast	2.43	2.50	2.33	2.29
77	Sakhalin Kray	2.38	2.25	2.00	2.00
78	Ulyanovsk Oblast	2.38	2.50	2.50	2.00
79	Krasnodar Kray	2.36	2.75	2.71	2.63
80	Kostroma Oblast	2.33	3.00	3.00	2.00
81	Smolensk Oblast	2.33	1.60	1.33	2.00
82	Stravropol Kray	2.25	2.71	2.50	2.27

83	Belgorod Oblast	2.25	2.00	2.00	2.00
84	Rostov Oblast	2.20	2.56	2.60	2.10
85	Ryazan Oblast	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
86	Tver Oblast	2.00	2.67	2.00	2.00
87	Koryak Autonomous Okrug	2.00	.	.	2.00
88	Lipetsk Oblast	1.75	1.67	1.80	2.00
89	Kursk Oblast	1.60	1.60	1.75	2.00
	Russian Federation	2.84	2.91	2.91	2.53

The ranking is based on Column 3.

Table A.4.2: *Ranking of regions on Dowley's index adjusted for 1999*

Rank	Region	Asser99a	Asser99b
1	Chechen Republic	4.62	4.72
2	Tatarstan Republic	4.42	4.29
3	Sakha Yakut Republic	4.09	4.14
4	Bashkortostan Republic	4.00	3.85
5	Mariy El Republic	3.86	3.50
6	Nenets Autonomous Okrug	3.83	3.50
7	Khanty Mansiysk Aut Okrug	3.83	3.50
8	Chukotka Autonomous Okrug	3.83	2.50
9	Tyva Republic	3.80	3.57
10	Yamalo-Nenets Aut. Okrug	3.75	3.00
11	Taymyrskiy (Dolgano-N.) Aut. Okrug	3.67	3.25
12	Khakass Republic	3.64	3.33
13	Tyumen Oblast	3.63	2.83
14	Adygey Republic	3.62	3.62
15	Karelian Republic	3.56	3.25
16	Chuvash Republic	3.56	3.54
17	Buryat Republic	3.50	2.33
18	Ingushetiya Republic	3.50	3.41
19	Aga-Buryat Autonomous Okrug	3.50	3.00
20	Permyak Autonomous Okrug	3.50	3.50
21	Ust-Ordynskiy Buryat Aut. Okrug	3.50	3.00
22	Udmurt Republic	3.47	3.75
23	Komi Republic	3.44	2.40
24	Kalmikiya Republic	3.40	3.00
25	Vologoda Oblast	3.36	3.00
26	Altay Republic	3.33	3.00
27	Khabarovsk Kray	3.33	3.17
28	North Ossetian Republic	3.31	3.34
29	Jewish Autonomous Oblast	3.30	3.00
30	Kaliningrad Oblast	3.29	2.93
31	Samara Oblast	3.27	3.25
32	Vladimir Oblast	3.25	3.17
33	Magadan Oblast	3.25	2.83
34	Evenk Autonomous Okrug	3.25	3.00
35	Bryansk Oblast	3.21	2.50
36	Voronezh Oblast	3.21	3.17
37	Mordovian Republic	3.20	2.33
38	Astrakhan Oblast	3.17	2.50
39	Ivanovo Oblast	3.17	2.50
40	Kurgan Oblast	3.17	2.50
41	Murmansk Oblast	3.17	2.75
42	Pskov Oblast	3.17	3.00
43	Chita Oblast	3.17	2.70

44	Kemerovo Oblast	3.14	3.00
45	Volgograd Oblast	3.12	2.30
46	Amur Oblast	3.10	2.70
47	Leningrad Oblast	3.10	2.50
48	Altay Kray	3.07	2.83
49	Arkhangelsk Oblast	3.07	2.83
50	Kabardin-Balkar Republic	3.05	3.80
51	Sverdlovsk Oblast	3.02	3.04
52	Karachay-Cherkess Republic	3.00	2.33
53	Kaluga Oblast	3.00	2.50
54	Kamchatka Oblast	3.00	3.17
55	Kirov Oblast	3.00	2.50
56	Perm Oblast	3.00	2.83
57	Saratov Oblast	3.00	2.70
58	Tula Oblast	2.93	2.79
59	Irkutsk Oblast	2.88	2.86
60	Sakhalin Oblast	2.88	2.50
61	Ulyanovsk Oblast	2.88	2.50
62	Krasnodar Kray	2.86	3.13
63	Daghestan Rep	2.84	2.20
64	Primorsky Kray	2.84	2.82
65	Kostroma Oblast	2.83	2.50
66	St. Petersburg	2.82	2.60
67	Omsk Oblast	2.80	2.67
68	Nizhny Novgorod Oblast	2.79	2.71
69	Stravropol Kray	2.75	2.77
70	Chelyabinsk Oblast	2.75	2.33
71	Moscow City	2.72	2.71
72	Rostov Oblast	2.70	2.60
73	Novosibirsk Oblast	2.69	2.14
74	Novgorod Oblast	2.67	2.60
75	Orlovskaya (Orel) Oblast	2.67	1.80
76	Krasnoyarsk Kray	2.63	2.44
77	Tomsk Oblast	2.57	2.33
78	Penza Oblast	2.50	1.67
79	Ryazan Oblast	2.50	2.50
80	Tambov Oblast	2.50	2.50
81	Yaroslavl Oblast	2.50	2.00
82	Koryak Autonomous Okrug	2.50	2.50
83	Moscow Oblast	2.43	2.33
84	Orenburg Oblast	2.43	1.67
85	Smolensk Oblast	2.33	2.00
86	Belgorod Oblast	2.25	2.00
87	Kursk Oblast	2.10	2.50
88	Tver Oblast	2.00	2.00
89	Lipetsk Oblast	1.75	2.00
	<i>Russian Federation</i>	3.11	2.82

Figure A.6.1: *The impact of regional assertiveness on APR entry decisions*
(Predicted from the "APR" logistic model in Table 6.6)

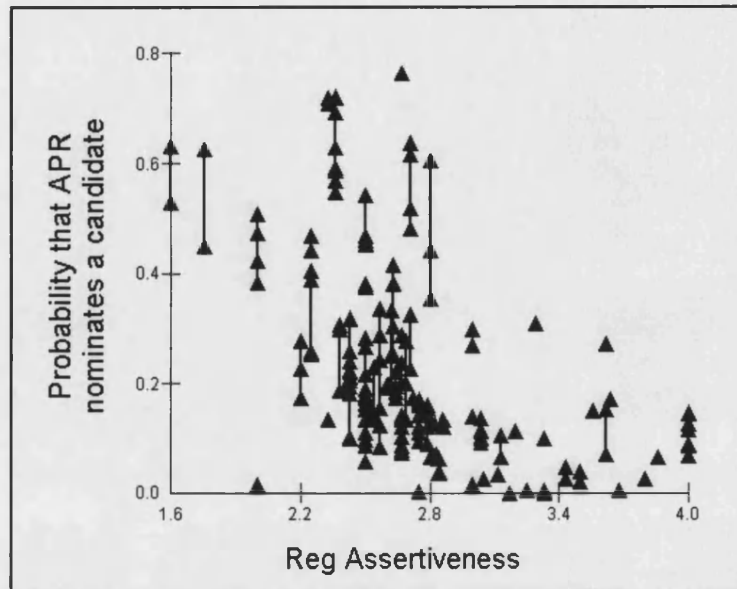


Figure A.6.2: *The impact of regional assertiveness on Russia's Choice entry decisions*
(Predicted from the "Russia's Choice" logistic model in Table 6.6)

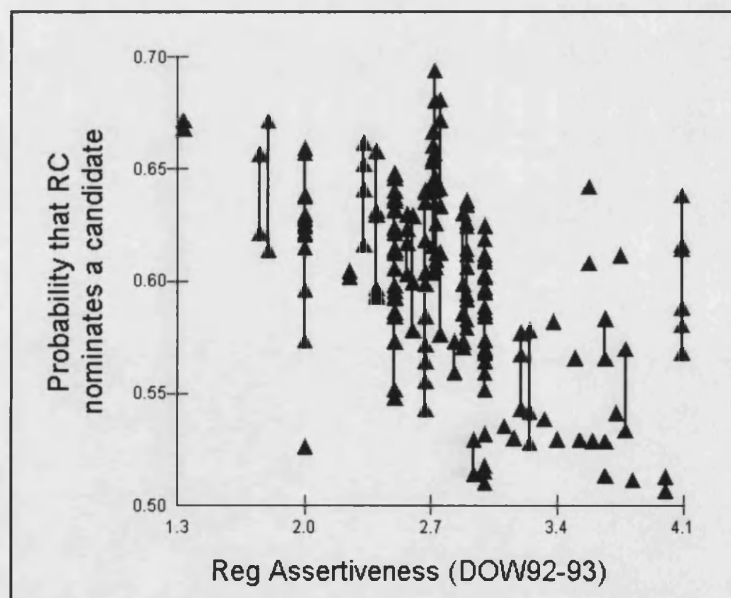
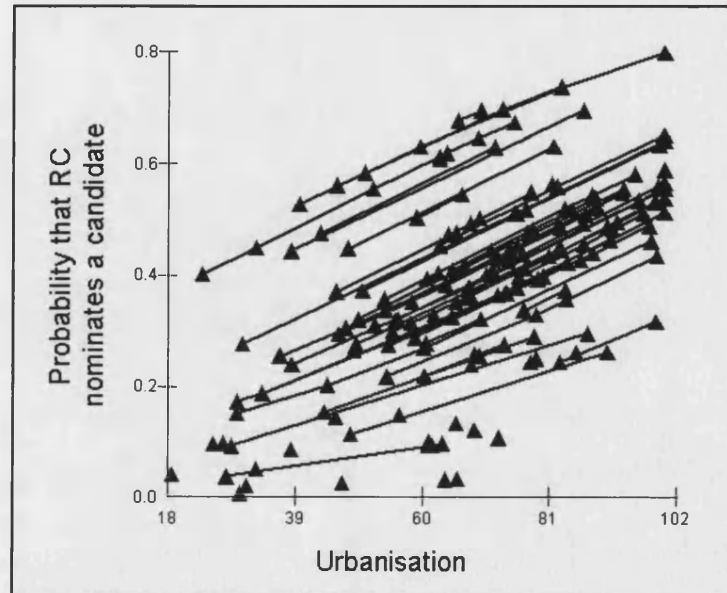


Figure A.6.3: *The impact of urbanisation on Russia's Choice entry decisions*
(Predicted from the "Russia's Choice" logistic model in Table 6.6)



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