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SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE ON THE STATE AND VOTING BEHAVIOUR IN RUSSIA

The paper attempts to determine whether an individual's socio-economic dependence on the state in Russia translates into a higher propensity to turn out for elections and to vote for the ruling party or its candidate. It also explores the mechanisms employed by the state to mobilise dependent voters based on the case of two contrasting regions: Yaroslavl Oblast and the Republic of Tatarstan. The quantitative analysis carried out based on data coming from the Russia Longitudinal Monitoring Survey of the Higher School of Economics indicates a positive association between socio-economic dependence on the state and turnout in regard to sector and formal nature of employment, pensioner status and rural residence. At the same time, the results do not provide sufficient evidence to state that dependence on the state in these spheres makes people more likely to cast their votes for the ruling elites (with rural residence constituting an exception).

Keywords: socio-economic dependence on the state, voting, electoral mobilisation, public sector, Russia

INTRODUCTION

An individual's socio-economic dependence on the state may be understood in terms of the utilisation of resources offered by the state. It includes both income obtained via public channels (through employment in the public sector of the economy and through enjoying state-provided social benefits) and reliance on state services, e.g. in the sphere of education and health care. In contrast, economic autonomy from the state may be defined as 'ability to earn a living independent of the state' (McMann 2006). Citizens' economic autonomy from the state is believed to be a prerequisite for democracy (McMann 2006; Youngs 2002), while a lack thereof leads to authoritarian forms of governance (Balabanova 2006). In her book devoted to Russia and Kyrgyzstan, Kelly McMann (2006: 4–5) claims that 'economic autonomy enhances people's ability to exercise their democratic rights', while 'a decrease in economic autonomy [...] would hinder democratic participation'. The positive relationship

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between economic autonomy from the state and political engagement does not, however, pertain to all forms of the latter. Forms of political protest and voting adhere to different rules. Dependent individuals are expected to be less eager to engage in oppositionist activity than those who are more autonomous from the state (see McMann 2006; Rosenfeld 2015, 2017). Are they, however, also more state-obedient when it comes to electoral behaviour? In other words, are they less likely to abstain from voting and more likely to vote for the ruling elites? And finally, how does the state influence their voting behaviour? These research questions will be addressed by the current study, based on the case of Russia.

The starting assumption for the study is that voters act rationally – they attempt to maximise their utility by voting only when the potential gain from taking part in elections exceeds the costs of voting (Aldrich 1993) and by voting for candidates who provide the most convincing incentive. In other words, it is the trade-off between rewards and punishments (or rather between the promise of a reward and the threat of a punishment) that determines one's choice. Rewards and punishments with respect to voting have been described, among others, in terms of political machines and electoral clientelism (Nichter 2008; Stokes 2005), perverse accountability (when voters might be punished for not voting for a particular party, Stokes 2005), and administrative resources (Allina-Pisano 2010). In the case of rewards, political actors have to find additional resources to provide an incentive. Punishment is easier – it does not require any new resources; it is enough to threaten to deprive people of goods and services already at their disposal. To make the threat real, those entitlements have to be vital for people, and political actors need to have control over them (see Allina-Pisano 2010; Greene 2010; Rosenfeld 2017). Socio-economic dependence on the state thus provides favourable conditions for negative incentives. The theoretical model of electoral mobilisation gains additional relevance in an authoritarian context.

Drawing from these theoretical premises, I assume that socio-economic dependence on the state should be positively related both to participation in elections and to voting for the ruling elites in an authoritarian setting. While non-democratically ruling authorities suppress any form of opposition activity, they attempt by all means to legitimise their rule with positive electoral results. To mobilise voters to turn out in elections and to vote for them, they may reach for both incentives and coercion. I assume that socio-economic dependence on the state makes people more susceptible to the state's influence and thus I expect them to vote at higher rates (*hypothesis 1*). Moreover, I hypothesise that through the existing administrative resources (bureaucratic hierarchies) it is not only easier to reach dependent voters and make them turn out for elections, but also the chances that they will cast a 'correct' vote, to vote for the party of power and its candidates, are higher (*hypothesis 2*). Given the specificity of the Russian context, it may be assumed that it is the state's attempts to mobilise the dependent voters that underlie the expected differences between dependent and non-dependent voters regarding both turnout and the voting preference of the rulers.

The study consists of two parts: qualitative and quantitative. The former aims at answering the question of which forms of dependence matter for voting behaviour, and at deepening the knowledge of the mechanisms employed by the state to mobilise dependent voters in Russia. It is based on in-depth expert interviews conducted in 2015 in two contrasting Russian regions, Yaroslavl Oblast and the Republic of Tatarstan. The quantitative part attempts to

determine whether the selected forms of socio-economic dependence on the state identified in the qualitative study are significant predictors of electoral participation and of voting for the ruling elites. It uses data coming from the Russia Longitudinal Monitoring Survey of the Higher School of Economics (RLMS-HSE), 2004.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows. First, it briefly introduces the Russian context. The subsequent two sections offer insights from expert interviews and present the results of the quantitative analysis, respectively. Each of these sections is divided into two subsections: describing the data and methods used, and presenting the results. The last section summarises the findings, indicates the limitations of the study, and draws some broader conclusions.

THE RUSSIAN CONTEXT

Contemporary Russia, a hybrid regime in which democratic institutions coexist with authoritarian elements, with a dominant party and lack of any real alternative to it or to its leader Vladimir Putin, does not provide voters much incentive to take part in elections. Under the conditions of electoral authoritarianism, with election results predictable in advance, many electors do not see any point in voting. Before 2006, the Russian electoral system offered voters the possibility to vote 'against all' candidates and parties, which constituted a method of protest for disenchanted voters (Hutcheson 2004; McAllister and White 2008). Since then, voters' choice in the absence of viable alternatives to the ruling elites has been actually limited to either abstention or voting for the ruling party and its candidates. Therefore, increasing turnout often in practice means increasing support for the governing administration. This association is especially visible in ethnically-defined republics, in which pressure for voter mobilisation is relatively stronger as regional authorities attempt to show their loyalty to the centre through ensuring the highest support possible, counting on increased fiscal transfers (Kalinin and Mebane 2012; Popov 2004; see also Goodnow, Moser and Smith 2014; White and Saikkonen 2017).

Authorities try to influence voters through various channels (Gilev [2017] refers to them as socio-demographic foundations of political machines), including exerting influence on employees through their employers. Frye, Reuter and Szakonyi (2014: 28) find the workplace 'a key site of political mobilisation' in Russia. In their newer work, they term it 'the primary locus for electoral intimidation' (2018: 2), and by 'intimidation' they mean threats against voters and directives to vote backed by implicit threats. Frye et al. (2014) present the results of a survey carried out after the 2011 December Duma elections showing that the share of workers who declared that their employer tried to influence their decision to turn out in the elections was indeed higher in the case of public sector employees. Stronger pressure from employers also concerns companies which are under 'manual control' of the state (a term borrowed from Radygin, Simachev and Entov 2015), e.g. those that belong to oligarchic structures having informal ties with the ruling elites. Furthermore, as the study of Frye et al. shows, the autocrats are more interested in mobilising workers in big companies since, thanks to economies of scale, such actions prove more effective and require less effort. Large enterprises in Russia are usually under direct or indirect control of the state (often officially

having the status of a joint stock company). The state also holds greater influence over enterprises that work on public procurements (Frye et al. 2014), as government business might depend on the extent to which management has been able to mobilise their workers to vote.

An important factor influencing people's susceptibility to employer pressure are in-kind benefits tied to the workplace and the provision of various infrastructure services by companies, which are still encountered in Russia (Juurikkala and Lazareva 2012; Leppänen, Linden and Solanko 2012).[1] According to the law, social assets belonging to privatised enterprises were supposed to be moved into municipal ownership. In practice, not all of the companies divested these assets (Haaparanta et al. 2003). The fact that a workplace is not only a source of earnings but also a provider of additional resources enhances the attachment of an employee to the employer. Consequently, a threat of punishment for non-compliance may concern not only remuneration for work, but also access to public infrastructure and social services, including public education and health care (Allina-Pisano 2010; Lankina 2002). Moreover, although it is becoming increasingly infrequent, some people in Russia still live in communities concentrated around their place of work, such as an enterprise or a school. An extreme case are monotowns (*monogoroda*) – cities dependent on a single industry, often with a single major employer (called a city-forming enterprise),[2] where all family members often work in the same place and there is nowhere else to go, which heightens dependence on the employer (see Frye et al. 2018; Rochlitz 2016). The scarcity of exit options also pertains to industries dominated by the public sector, such as education and health care (cf. Rosenfeld 2017).

QUALITATIVE STUDY

DATA AND METHODS

The qualitative part of the study is based on 33 face-to-face semi-structured in-depth interviews (in Russian) with local experts conducted in August–October 2015 in Yaroslavl Oblast (17 interviews) and the Republic of Tatarstan (16 interviews). Key informants were identified through an extensive internet search combined with the 'snowball' approach. The experts represented different institutions ranging from academia, NGOs, business, and authorities to the media (see Appendix 3). An effort was made to assemble a diversified group representing different professions, points of view (those of both pro-regime and oppositionist forces) and areas of expertise. Following each excerpt or piece of information from a particular interview there is a number in square brackets corresponding to a number given in Appendix 3.

This study is a part of a larger research project devoted to state-society relations in Russia (see Brunarska 2015, 2018). The two regions were selected as sites for the project

[1] They are encountered, even though a 2005 reform theoretically transformed in-kind benefits into cash grants (for more on effectiveness of the reform see Alexandrova and Struyk 2007) and most companies transferred their social facilities to municipalities in 1990s (Healey, Leksin and Svetsov 1999).

[2] Not without importance in the context of mobilising voting turnout is the fact that employment in monotowns has been heavily subsidised by the state, especially during the 2008–2009 economic crisis (see Crowley 2016).

based on the differences between them in terms of the intensity of economic and political (as manifested by electoral abstention rate) disengagement as well as their differing federal status and population structure by ethnicity. An additional rationale behind the choice of the two regions was that they meet the postulate of selecting comparable cases with regard to the controls (Kaarbo and Beasley 1999), as they are both relatively prosperous industrial regions with fairly stable labour markets, with similar climatic conditions. From the point of view of this paper, their differing regional political regimes are also important.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

The two regions covered by the qualitative comparative field study differ considerably from each other in terms of their political regimes and voting patterns. Tatarstan represents a hegemonic authoritarian regime. Its elites want to boast of high support for both regional and federal authorities and thus show their loyalty towards the federal centre. In order to do so, they aim for the highest turnout possible. Because the ruling elites, in particular the president of the republic, in fact enjoy high support among the population and because they do not allow any real entry of the opposition in elections, they direct their mobilisation actions at the wider masses. Yaroslavl Oblast, in contrast, represents a competitive authoritarian regime (cf. Buckley and Reuter 2015; Oreshkin and Oreshkina 2006; Petrov and Titkov 2013) and stands out against other Russian regions as a relatively 'liberal' region with democratic traditions, where candidates of the ruling party usually enjoy relatively weak support and authorities are concerned with turnout to a lesser extent.

The first key factor responsible for the differences between the two regions is financial and administrative resources at the disposal of both the state and potential oppositionist forces. Tatarstan's model of privatisation stood out from the rest of the country in that the state retained a significant part of its ownership in large enterprises (the so-called 'soft entry into the market', Safronov and Zubarevich 2005; Salagaev, Sergeev and Luchisheva 2009). High revenues from energy resources combined with effectiveness in attracting federal funds for organisation of mega-events and realisation of innovative projects (Safronov and Zubarevich 2005; Sharafutdinova 2013) provide the means to stimulate citizens' electoral behaviour. Thanks to these funds, the local administration is capable of providing relatively high standards of living, while the potential opposition, deprived of access to resources, which are monopolised by the state, has limited capabilities of presenting people with appealing alternatives. In Yaroslavl Oblast, the authorities have smaller financial resources at their disposal to effectively influence electoral behaviour of their residents, while independent capital exists and functions relatively freely.

The second key factor influencing voting patterns is the presence or absence of political pluralism (which may be explained by referencing historical factors). In Yaroslavl Oblast, the presence of local media offering a relatively pluralistic view of regional politics enhances critical thinking and makes the citizenry of the oblast more sceptical towards the authorities and less obedient to the central government. This allowed Evgeniy Urlashov, an independent candidate running against the Kremlin's nominee, to win the elections for the mayor of

Yaroslavl in 2012. In Tatarstan, with its authoritarian style of rule and the longevity of its political machine (Sharafutdinova 2013), the authorities would never let any oppositionist candidate constituting a viable alternative run for election. Moreover, the lack of any truly independent media and the intense propaganda in the state-dependent media praising the achievements of the ruling authorities make the Tatarstani population less conscious of the political situation both in the republic and in the country, and guarantee high levels of support for the ruling elites.

RESULTS

The interviews confirm that the state utilises administrative resources to mobilise people to take part in elections and its actions are targeted at dependent electors, mainly public sector workers. Are state-dependent workers made to vote for a particular candidate? According to my interviewees, workers in state-controlled companies in Yaroslavl Oblast are directly told by their supervisors to vote for the ruling party and its candidates. At the same time, this rarely happens in Tatarstan, possibly because, given the high support for the ruling elites, there is no need for such explicit orders. As the quotation below illustrates, sometimes the pressure takes an implicit form:

> A chief, who is a member of United Russia, often a member of the State Council, gathers his subordinates and says: 'You should go and vote. I won't tell you outright for whom to vote, but you know that United Russia means stability' [20].

While the state has instruments to control turnout, does it have instruments to control the vote as well? Expert interviews provide some evidence supporting the claim that while it is relatively easy to get people to vote, it does not necessarily mean that they will vote as required. In Yaroslavl Oblast, the experts did not mention any turnout control mechanisms, nor anything about vote control. In Tatarstan, the state uses many different methods of control, the most widespread being telephone reporting in public institutions and enterprises controlled by the state: Either a representative of an organisation, usually a head of a department, calls around asking if other workers/his subordinates have voted, or people are obliged to call and report that they have been to polling stations. It also happens that a representative of an enterprise sits at a polling station and notes who has come and voted. A recent innovation is to ask workers to report their number on the voter's list or at least the number of their electoral commission [24, 26 and 27]. In recent years voters have received bracelets which entitled their holders to certain privileges such as free use of public transport, free entrance to a concert at the Kazan Arena, or discounts in selected shops on election day. Although this may be considered in terms of rewards not punishment, some public sector employers have turned it into a method of control. They obliged their employees to bring their bracelets on Monday to confirm that they had indeed voted. All of those methods concern, however, control of the turnout and not of the vote, e.g. regarding telephone reporting, people are not asked for whom they have cast their vote, but only whether they have participated in elections.

Importantly, the state uses the existing social structures of bureaucratic hierarchies and personal contacts. These, in turn, refer to the notion of collective responsibility popular in Soviet times. In institutions where the management prefers a human approach towards its workers, it may ask employees to vote for the sake of the institution or a collective. As exemplified by one of the interviewees, a director may resort to the following persuasion:

> Understand, if we don't report turnout, I will have problems, it will be more difficult for me to solve the school's problems in the district, they may cut funding, it will be more difficult to prove necessity, let's not spoil our life, what is the difference, go and vote and call, yes, we understand, [it's] a madhouse, but this is what we should do [27].

Some people would vote and report it to their employer, because they do not want to harm their direct superior, such as a foreman in a factory:

> People say: 'Ok, I might not call, but it may harm my foreman. I don't want to cause him discomfort, so I'd better call.' Let it be intimidating, well people do not like it, they think that it may harm even if not them personally, then someone from their... [surroundings] [24].

Most of the experts stated that pressure from an employer does not concern the 'private-private' sector (the private sector excluding firms that are officially private but controlled by the state). This is how one of my interlocutors in Yaroslavl explained the lower propensity of entrepreneurs to vote:

> Why in the private sector, all else held constant, do they go to elections less often? They are more independent and they know better than that, that whether they go to elections or not, their life will not change because of that. I live in a block of flats, a new block, with about 500–600 residents, including all household members. I can tell you that at every election, turnout within our block of flats, at every level of elections, has been always the lowest in the district. Do you know why? Because mainly small entrepreneurs who bought these flats with their own money live there. They didn't get it from the state. They are economically independent, they know better than that, that whether you go to elections, vote or not, the state will either push you around and make nobody out of you, or you'll learn how to work in a way that makes you independent from the state [10].

As another expert figuratively put it: 'Perhaps the hand of the state does not reach there yet' [24]. Besides, the private sector resembles that of Europe, and contrary to the public sector it is not organised in the 'Soviet style', i.e. with a vertical of power built into the structure of a company which serves to mobilise and control workers.

Nevertheless, two experts in Tatarstan admitted that pressure on employers, although definitely less intense, might also occur in the private sector. If they want to avoid being constantly harassed by controls, private entrepreneurs have to at least pretend that they agree to mobilise their workers to vote:

> Private business still depends on administration. And to say: we don't care about your elections, we won't take part in it, it means then they will send the sanitary inspection etc. That means, it is easier for a private businessman to pretend that he fully agrees with everything and that he will indeed oblige his workers to go for elections. Openly nobody will refuse or almost nobody, but de facto there will be sabotage [26].

The argument concerning the economies of scale has also been raised:

> Small enterprises have nothing to do with politics. [...] They do not care. And the Minnikhanov [the president of Tatarstan] himself does not care. This is a small percent. [...] The cornerstones are enterprises-giants, the formal joint-stock companies, and the countryside [20].

Most of the experts support the claim that voter mobilisation methods utilised by the state concern primarily the sphere of employment and hardly involve other channels of influence, like housing, social assistance or state unemployment services. As one of the experts put it: 'they [the state] are unlikely to play for small stakes' [7]. Mobilisation practices through other channels are not used on a mass scale or they are less effective because the potential reward or punishment is too small and because the state does not have efficient control mechanisms. For instance, in the case of social benefits, the amounts involved are negligible, while it requires considerable effort to obtain them (as there is much red tape involved). As regards housing, one exception is closed institutions belonging to the state, such as barracks, prisons, hospitals, nursing homes and mental hospitals, whose residents are fully dependent on its administration [13, 25].

One of the Kazan experts [27], when asked about some additional 'dependence situations' in which people may find themselves and which the state may and does at times use to boost voter turnout, gave examples from the spheres of education and health care. For instance, in one of the Kazan schools, teachers arranged parent meetings on Thursday before the elections, asked parents to bring their passports, and made them vote at the meeting using the early voting procedure. In this way the state exploits parents' dependence on the education system to make them vote (cf. Forrat 2018). According to my interviewees in Tatarstan, it also happens that a hospital sends patients who are unwilling to vote back home for election day in order not to spoil its turnout rate. Compelling patients in public health institutions to vote indicates how one's dependence on the state may influence electoral participation, as far as the sphere of health care is concerned.

The qualitative study suggests that the size of a locality one lives in should also be considered in terms of socio-economic dependence on the state, where a higher level of dependence on the state (i.e. local administration) is noted among rural residents in comparison to urban dwellers (see also White and Saikkonen 2017). As the interviews indicate, local administration in the countryside simply has more mechanisms of influence at its disposal, not necessarily relating directly to the sphere of employment. For example, it may blackmail antipathetic electors by threatening to cut off the gas supply, refusing to give them hay, or denying them transport to a hospital [25 and 31]. The interviews suggest, moreover, that it is much easier to control how people vote in small, enclosed communities. Besides, rural residents rarely have access to any alternative sources of information other than state radio and television, which promote the current regime.

In the eyes of my interlocutors, the coercion does not seem to apply to pensioners. Higher turnout among them cannot be explained solely by socio-economic dependence on the state (nor simply by age, as evidenced by the quantitative part of the study). The experts argued that the state does not need to use any mobilisation methods to make pensioners turn out for elections. They are traditionally the most active voters. Politicians resort to positive stimuli

such as pension indexation on the eve of elections[3] or distribution of food products among the elderly to make them vote for a particular candidate or party rather than simply to turn out to vote. The expert interviews suggest that pensioners are more eager to vote because it makes them feel important. Moreover, turning out for an election is an opportunity to socialise with other people. Elections have traditionally been a festival day in Russia, especially in rural areas, an event that adds some variety to a pensioner's life. Overall, the interviews suggest that the higher turnout among pensioners is based on a system of internal rewards rather than on state-imposed punishments.

QUANTITATIVE STUDY

DATA AND METHODS

The quantitative part of the study utilises individual-level data coming from the Russia Longitudinal Monitoring Survey of HSE (RLMS-HSE), round 13, conducted in 2004, which is the last round that involved questions related to voting[4]. Respondents were asked whether they had participated in the previous national elections – the December 2003 Duma elections and March 2004 presidential elections. I selected the latter, as these were closer to the time when the survey was conducted, thereby minimising the risk that information concerning an individual's socio-economic dependence on the state had changed since the elections.

To test the two research hypotheses, I built two types of models with two different responses. In the first one, the dependent variable assigns respondents to two classes depending on whether they have voted in the 2004 elections or not (1 = voted, 0 = otherwise). In the second one, it differentiates between those who voted for the ruling president and those who voted, but not for Vladimir Putin (1 = for Putin, 0 = for Putin's rivals or against all).

The forms of socio-economic dependence on the state covered by the quantitative study include, apart from public sector employment, official employment contracts[5] and pensions (see Appendix 1 for the exact wording of the questions in the survey questionnaire). Since sector and formality of employment are strongly correlated, which entails the risk of multicollinearity, I combine the respective two dummies into one factor variable with four categories: *official public*, *unofficial public*, *official private* and *neither official nor public*, and introduce them as three binaries (*neither official nor public* constituting a reference category[6]). Appendix 2

[3] For example, in 2007 in the last phase of the electoral campaign Putin ordered a rise in pensions on the day before parliamentary elections. Similar measures were employed before 2012 presidential elections.

[4] While other available datasets covering Russia, e.g. the European Social Survey (ESS), contain newer data on voting behaviour in Russia, they are less suitable for this kind of analysis as they do not offer sufficiently detailed data as regards socio-economic dependence on the state. For instance, ESS only allows a distinction between a private and a public company, not accounting for the presence of mixed ownership companies or formally private companies that are under manual control of the state.

[5] I consider formal status of employment as a manifestation of dependence on the state, assuming that workers hired unofficially are invisible to the state and consequently employers are unlikely to pressure them.

[6] This category includes individuals that are neither officially employed nor employed in the public sector of the economy, thus encompassing both employed individuals who may be termed 'unofficial private' and not employed individuals.

presents descriptive statistics of the variables used in the analysis. I include the same set of control variables in both types of models: age, gender, level of education (converted to years of education), having a partner, total monthly household income per capita (in roubles), type of locality (federal subject's capital as a reference), and federal status of a region (oblast as a reference). As shown by the qualitative study, locality type may in fact also be considered as a dependence measure. Federal status was included, since a look at aggregated turnout statistics for Russian regions shows that, compared to other regions, republics usually score exceptionally high in official turnout statistics and low when falsifications are accounted for.[7] Given the three-level structure of the RLMS-HSE data set (individuals–households–regions) I adopt a multilevel approach.

RESULTS

Table 1 presents the results of two multilevel logistic regression models run on RLMS--HSE13 data, with electoral participation and voting for Vladimir Putin as response variables, and the selected forms of socio-economic dependence on the state as the main explanatory variables of interest.

Table 1. Multilevel logistic regression models predicting electoral participation and voting for Vladimir Putin

	DV: electoral participation	**DV: voting for Putin**
Sector of employment (ref: neither official nor public)		
Official private	0.794 (0.105)***	–0.178 (0.190)
Unofficial public	0.821 (0.867)	0.115 (1.096)
Official public	1.231 (0.090)***	–0.007 (0.161)
Pension	0.915 (0.154)***	0.227 (0.231)
Age	0.032 (0.004)***	–0.021 (0.007)***
Education	0.107 (0.011)***	–0.023 (0.021)
Female	0.231 (0.095)*	0.654 (0.106)***
Partner	0.381 (0.091)***	–0.041 (0.132)
Income	3.92e–06 (3.29e–06)	6.21e–06 (1.45e–05)
Type of locality (ref: federal subject's capital)		
Town	0.190 (0.118)	0.160 (0.243)
Urban-type settlement	0.485(0.435)	1.477 (0.714)*
Village	0.761 (0.199)***	0.674 (0.248)**

[7] For official turnout rates, consult the website of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation. For estimates of the level of falsifications across Russian regions, see e.g. Kobak, Shpilkin and Pshenichnikov (2012).

Table 1 cont.

Federal status (ref: oblast)		
Republic	0.209 (0.156)	0.313 (0.271)
Kray	–0.114 (0.214)	0.011 (0.208)
Federal City	–0.194 (0.120)	0.274 (0.209)
Constant	–2.721 (0.230)***	3.129 (0.410)***
Var(constant_household)	3.197 (0.423)	4.301 (0.886)
Var(constant_region)	0.124 (0.052)	0.112 (0.095)
Log pseudolikelihood	–3,563.30	–2,032.50
N	6,934	4,956

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; Robust standard errors in parentheses; weights applied.

Source: own calculations based on RLMS-HSE13

The above results for electoral participation suggest that the forms of socio-economic dependence on the state considered do matter and the respective coefficients have the expected (positive) sign. The model shows that formal status of employment makes a person more likely to take part in elections. Moreover, an additional test indicates that among formally employed workers those working in the public sector are more likely to turn out for elections.[8] Living in a village, which may be perceived in terms of higher socio-economic dependence on the state, influences electoral participation; all else held constant, i.e. independent of the sector and formality of employment as well as pensioner status.

According to the model predicting voting for Vladimir Putin, none of the forms of socio-economic dependence on the state considered are related to voting for the ruling president. One can think of a number of different explanations for this result as regards dependence measures related to employment. First, it may mean that state-dependent individuals are pressured to participate in elections, but not to vote for a particular candidate (cf. Frye et al. 2019: 4). Second, it may mean that despite trying, the state is capable of making people vote, but is not able to control for whom they vote in practice. This interpretation is partly supported by the qualitative part of the study and remains in line with Nichter's (2008) claim that under a secret ballot we should speak of 'turnout buying' rather than 'vote buying'. Third, it is possible that the state exerts pressure on dependent voters to vote for the ruling party (and may even be effective in doing so), but the non-dependent electors who do not support the ruling administration simply do not show up for elections and hence there is no difference between dependent and non-dependent voters in support for the ruling president. This last explanation seems, however, more plausible now than in 2004 when the 'against all' option was available. As regards the pensioner status, it did not prove to be related to voting for Putin, while the latter was negatively associated with age (due to support for

[8] The tests involving the 'unofficial public' dummy did not reach conventional levels of statistical significance because the number of unofficially employed public sector workers was too low.

communists among the elderly[9]). The model revealed, moreover, that rural residents are not only more likely to turn out in elections but also to vote in line with governors' demands (cf. Hale 2003; Saikkonen 2017), which may be explained by the ease of controlling voters in isolated clusters.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The study shows that there is a positive relationship between socio-economic dependence on the state and participation in elections in Russia in regard to sector and formal basis of employment and pensioner status. At the same time, its results do not provide sufficient evidence to state that dependence on the state and its resources makes dependent voters more likely to vote for the ruling elites. In other words, the key puzzle identified by the quantitative analysis concerns the fact that dependent voters – people officially employed and public sector workers as well as pensioners – proved to be more likely to vote, but not to vote for the ruling candidate. While lower level of support for Putin among pensioners in 2004 was not surprising, I proposed several explanations for this puzzle as far as employment-related dependence measures are concerned. This points either to the capacity of the state to mobilise turnout accompanied by a lack of ability (or will) to control the vote, or to efficiency in influencing the voting behaviour of both dependent and non-dependent voters. Expert interviews indicate that the state may also use such channels as education and health care to influence the voting behaviour of its citizens, which is in line with earlier reports of Allina-Pisano (2010) and Lankina (2002). Both parts of the study demonstrate that the sheer fact of residence in a small locality should be perceived as a form of socio-economic dependence on the state, as it makes residents of such localities more prone to the state's influence, independent of their employment or pensioner status. The findings suggest that dependence of rural residents goes beyond dependence based on a state-reliant employer or progressive population aging of rural communities.

Hale (2003) underlines the importance of the Soviet legacies, which have led to the creation of the state-dependent and thus easily manipulable groups. This study points to an additional legacy of the Soviet period that facilitates mobilisation practices. While the phenomenon of greater susceptibility to voter mobilisation among small-locality residents may also be observed in other geographical contexts, clientelistic actions in Western societies are based on rewards and are usually targeted at the individual, whereas people in Russia are often mobilised to vote through threats directed at a group (such as a working collective or a rural community).

Analysis of the situation in the two contrasting regions of Yaroslavl Oblast and the Republic of Tatarstan offers an exemplification of interregional differences in the character of electoral mobilisation in Russia, pointing to the role of regional political regimes and resources in shaping the mechanisms utilised by local authorities to influence voters.

[9] Older voters more frequently voted for Nikolay Kharitonov in 2004 – the candidate of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation.

The study has several limitations which should be acknowledged. First, the quantitative analysis is based on self-declared voting, which is often associated with the problem of over-reporting (see Silver, Anderson, and Abramson 1986). One may assume that public sector workers are more likely to overreport their participation in elections while being surveyed in order to minimise their cognitive dissonance. In other words, they feel that their place of employment obliges them to manifest loyalty towards the state (even if in reality they do not experience it) and therefore, they declare they voted even if in fact they did not. Moreover, people tend to overreport voting for the winner (see Atkeson 1999) and again dependent voters are more likely to do so. However, a recent study by Frye and collaborators (2017) shows that social desirability bias as regards voting-related survey questions is less common in Russia than often perceived. As a second limitation, the 2004 RLMS-HSE data set does not allow for control of such attitudinal characteristics as interest in politics, trust in institutions or satisfaction with the state's performance, which are widely perceived as significant predictors of electoral participation. Third, it also has to be borne in mind that the boundary between the public and the private sphere is often blurred in the post-communist context (Oswald and Voronkov 2004). Many of the companies are formally private while in reality they are strictly controlled by the state and work solely according to state orders. In this regard, we may ask whether all respondents were well informed of the status of their employer or whether they answered the question referring to the formal or the *de facto* status. Last but not least, ideally, the survey should ask respondents to report their socio-economic situation on election day.

Despite these limitations, the study contributes to the existing research on determinants of voting turnout in authoritarian regimes, exploring the specificity of the Russian electoral mobilisation model and pointing to the role of socio-economic linkages to the state in authoritarian politics and mechanisms employed by the state to influence voters. It offers a broad view of the interrelations between an individual's socio-economic dependence on the state and voting behaviour in Russia by considering various forms of dependence. It extends previous studies which pointed to public sector employees as more frequent voters and/or focused on the public-private cleavage when discussing workplace mobilisation, by showing additionally that the formal nature of employment decreases electoral abstention, which suggests that voter mobilisation may also happen in the private sector and that it is less common in the informal labour market. This result may be considered innovative, as it suggests that not only the employer's ownership status may matter for mobilisation practices among its employees, but also the status of their employment, which had not been raised by previous research. Another interesting finding arising from the study concerns the presence of a positive relationship between socio-economic dependence on the state and participation in elections by the absence of a significant association between dependence on the state and voting for the ruling candidate.

The 2004 presidential elections were the last national elections when Russians could vote 'against all', which offered an alternative method of protest to electoral abstention. Its elimination deprived those people not supporting the political elites of the possibility to express their discontent. We may expect that the lack of political alternatives and the extensive pro-Kremlin propaganda in the media nowadays mean that, in the more recent elections, in many cases, increasing turnout actually means increasing support for the ruling elites. Moreover,

a side-effect of the recent expansion of the state in Russia (Radaev 2011; Radygin et al. 2015; Tompson 2007) has been the growing susceptibility of the electorate to state pressure as regards voting and further development of administrative resources responsible for monitoring and control over electoral choices. Further studies based on more recent data are needed to prove whether these changes indeed had an impact on the relationship between socio-economic dependence on the state and the voting behaviour of Russian citizens. Future research would benefit from the performance of a new custom-made survey designed specifically to measure an individual's position relative to the state at the time of elections, potentially utilising list experiments to elicit true answers to sensitive questions.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Variables measuring an individual's socio-economic dependence on the state

Variable	Questions in the questionnaire
Public sector of employment[a]	Is the government the owner or co-owner of your enterprise or organisation?
Formality of employment	Are you employed in this job officially, in other words, by labour book, labour agreement, or contract?
Pension	Do you now receive a pension? Do not take into account pensions for children.

[a] Contrary to Jensen et al. (2009), I classify companies of mixed ownership as belonging to the public sector. Such an approach may be explained by the fact that the state in an authoritarian context has potentially stronger influence over a company in which it has a stake (even if small) than in a company in which it does not own any shares.

Source: RLMS-HSE13

Appendix 2. Descriptive statistics, weighted data

Variable	Range	N	Whole sample M(SD) or per cent	N	Those who voted M(SD) or per cent
Dependent variables					
Voted	0/1	7,087	70.4%	–	–
Voted for Putin	0/1	–	–	5,053	83.1%
Independent variables					
Sector of employment					
Official private	0/1	6,977	16.9%	4,988	16.8%
Unofficial public	0/1	6,977	0.2%	4,988	0.2%
Official public	0/1	6,977	27.9%	4,988	31.4%
Neither official nor public	0/1	6,977	54.9%	4,988	51.6%
Pension	0/1	7,105	33.3%	5,073	38.3%
Age	18–96	7,109	45.3 (17.9)	5,075	47.8 (17.5)
Female	0/1	7,109	55.0%	5,075	56.7%
Education[a]	0–21	7,103	12.7 (3.7)	5,071	12.8 (3.8)
Income	0–124,000	7,109	3,592.7 (6,465.2)	5,075	3,534.0 (6,413.8)
Partner	0/1	7,098	61.9%	5,071	64.6%
Type of locality					
Federal subject's capital	0/1	7,109	41.2%	5,075	39.7%
Town	0/1	7,109	26.7%	5,075	26.5%
Urban-type settlement	0/1	7,109	6.7%	5,075	6.9%
Village	0/1	7,109	25.4%	5,075	26.9%
Federal status					
Oblast	0/1	7,109	51.8%	5,075	51.9%
Republic	0/1	7,109	16.3%	5,075	16.9%
Kray	0/1	7,109	18.5%	5,075	18.4%
Federal city	0/1	7,109	13.4%	5,075	12.8%

[a] Years of education, calculated from education level referring to (World Data on Education 2010/2011)

Source: own calculations based on RLMS-HSE13

Appendix 3. Expert interviews conducted in Yaroslavl Oblast and Tatarstan in August–October 2015

[1] Politician, Yaroslavl Oblast
[2] Journalist, Yaroslavl Oblast
[3] Official, Yaroslavl Oblast
[4] Social activist, Yaroslavl Oblast
[5] Journalist, Yaroslavl Oblast
[6] Businessman, Yaroslavl Oblast
[7] Journalist, Yaroslavl Oblast
[8] Official, Yaroslavl Oblast
[9] Scholar, Yaroslavl Oblast
[10] Businessman, Yaroslavl Oblast
[11] NGO worker, Yaroslavl Oblast
[12] Social activist and businessperson, Yaroslavl Oblast
[13] Scholar and NGO worker, Yaroslavl Oblast
[14] Scholar and NGO worker, Yaroslavl Oblast
[15] Scholar and NGO worker, Yaroslavl Oblast
[16] Scholar, Yaroslavl Oblast
[17] Journalist, Yaroslavl Oblast
[18] Businessman, Tatarstan
[19] Businessman, Tatarstan
[20] Scholar and social activist, Tatarstan
[21] Scholar and social activist, Tatarstan
[22] Businessman and official, Tatarstan
[23] Journalist and scholar, Tatarstan
[24] Scholar and social activist, Tatarstan
[25] Scholar and political activist, Tatarstan
[26] Scholar, Tatarstan
[27] Scholar and social activist, Tatarstan
[28] Journalist, Tatarstan
[29] Businessman, Tatarstan
[30] Scholar and official, Tatarstan
[31] Political activist, Tatarstan
[32] Scholars, Tatarstan
[33] Scholar, Tatarstan

SPOŁECZNO-EKONOMICZNA ZALEŻNOŚĆ OD PAŃSTWA A ZACHOWANIA WYBORCZE W ROSJI

Artykuł odpowiada na pytanie, czy społeczno-ekonomiczna zależność jednostki od państwa w Rosji przekłada się na większą skłonność do udziału w wyborach i do głosowania na partię rządzącą lub jej kandydata. Na przykładzie dwóch regionów – obwodu jarosławskiego i Republiki Tatarstanu – opisuje także mechanizmy wykorzystywane przez państwo do mobilizowania zależnych wyborców. Analiza ilościowa bazująca na danych pochodzących z sondażu Russia Longitudinal Monitoring Survey of the Higher School of Economics wskazuje

na istnienie pozytywnego związku między społeczno-ekonomiczną zależnością od państwa a partycypacją wyborczą w odniesieniu do sektora i formalnego statusu zatrudnienia, statusu emerytalnego oraz zamieszkiwania na obszarach wiejskich. Jednocześnie wyniki nie dostarczają wystarczających dowodów na poparcie tezy, że zależność od państwa w tych sferach przekłada się na większą skłonność do oddania głosu na elity rządzące (zamieszkiwanie na obszarach wiejskich stanowi wyjątek).

Słowa kluczowe: społeczno-ekonomiczna zależność od państwa, głosowanie, mobilizacja wyborcza, sektor publiczny, Rosja

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