

ELECTORAL COMPETITION IN HYBRID REGIMES:
EXAMINING INCUMBENT AND OPPOSITION BEHAVIOR
IN POST-SOVIET STATES

By

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Abstract

This dissertation asks how electoral factors shape incumbent and opposition strategies in non-democratic post-Soviet hybrid regimes. The study of hybrid regimes recognizes that the basic presence of elections does not represent the existence of democracy, and that elected leaders can and do engage in an authoritarian behavior. Given that as many as a third of states worldwide fall into this category, elections in these states are routinely unfair and imbalanced. Incumbent and regime candidates interfere in the electoral process and can attempt to suppress opposition behavior. Yet incumbents also ask for genuine voter support, while opposition parties and candidates also continue to participate in this unfair process. This dissertation seeks to understand the various strategies used by both opposition and incumbent actors given these conditions. While some of these elections are rather predictable, others are highly contested and offer the opposition an opportunity for victory. Incumbent dominance within the state can vary from election to election as well. I analyze the relationship between these two factors, electoral contestation and incumbent dominance, on the electoral strategies of incumbent and opposition actors. These strategies include attempts at overt and legal voter persuasion as well as electoral interference. To do this, in this dissertation I develop a theory that recognizes that the primary goal for any actor during an election may not always be victory. Instead, these goals can vary for opposition and incumbent actors depending on the electoral conditions present. This dissertation examines these relationships in the post-Soviet region using both quantitative statistical analyses as well as case study comparisons. It finds that both incumbent and opposition actors vary their electoral strategies depending on the conditions present during the election, which I argue demonstrates the existence of different goals for elections.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In 2013, the city of Moscow, Russia held its first mayoral election in ten years following a decade of filling the position through executive appointment. The return to popular elections was widely seen as a conciliatory move by the Russian government. Massive public outcry and demonstrations followed the 2011 parliamentary elections, which highlighted electoral fraud and popular discontent with the political situation. The 2013 mayoral campaign was primarily a contest between two candidates, the incumbent Sergei Sobyenin and Aleksei Navalny. Sobyenin, who while officially politically independent, was seen as an ally of President Vladimir Putin. Conversely, Navalny stood as an independent candidate, and rose to prominence as an anti-corruption blogger during the 2011 demonstrations. Prior to the election, Navalny faced charges of embezzlement and fraud, seen by many as concoctions of the state to hinder his efforts. Yet Navalny was freed on appeal and legally allowed to participate in the mayoral election. While his candidacy represented a clear opposition to the incumbent and broader regime, Sobyenin remained confident that he would be victorious. Nonetheless, Navalny campaigned energetically, utilizing a grassroots style of voter mobilization through one-on-one meetings and large numbers of campaign volunteers. Sobyenin was seen as altering his own campaign methods by reaching out to voters more directly and commenting on the issues emphasized by Navalny's campaign, including political corruption. In the end, Navalny secured almost 28% of the vote, far higher than polls and political observers had predicted, while Sobyenin won in the first round with 51%.

The Moscow 2013 mayoral election example features many counter-intuitive actions on the parts of both the incumbent and opposition candidates. Sobyenin, and the broader Russian political system, were not legally required to rely on elections to fill the position of mayor, but

they still chose to re-introduce a political institution that directly brings public scrutiny upon its occupant and provides a highly visible forum for criticism. Moreover, the state could have prohibited Navalny from registering as a candidate due to his pending legal issues. Yet instead, the elections were organized within the span of a few months, and Navalny was allowed to participate. Navalny, stating publicly that he understood his participation was a concession and a move to legitimate the electoral process, nonetheless chose to remain a candidate. More than that, he campaigned vigorously and blatantly critiqued Sobyenin and the entire Russian political system headed by Vladimir Putin. Already facing legal action, he understood the risks and potential for further blowback following what everyone knew would be an unsuccessful bid for mayor.¹ I argue that the behavior witnessed by both Sobyenin and Navalny demonstrate that these elections still matter for both incumbents and opposition, but that the logic governing such skewed or interference-laden elections likely departs from what we know about elections in consolidated democracies.

This election featuring Sobyenin and Navalny illustrates many of the complexities embedded within many contemporary states that hold elections and allow even nominal political competition. While a vast majority of states worldwide hold some type of election to determine their political leadership, elections themselves do not guarantee democracy. Such recognition has led to a growing field of scholarship devoted to understanding elections in both autocratic states as well as in hybrid regimes, a third regime type separate from both consolidated democracies and fully authoritarian states. While elections in autocratic states are often constrained to one political party or may limit the number of candidates on the ballot (Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009;

¹ Indeed, most recently Navalny, along with his brother Oleg, has been convicted and sentenced for further embezzlement charges on December 29, 2014, which bars him from seeking political office for the near future.

Hyde and Martinov 2011), elections in hybrid regimes typically allow competition, but still witness authoritarian practices by elites including electoral interference and an unfair electoral playing field (Schedler 2006; Levitsky and Way 2010). Many of these studies examine behavior similar to that seen in the example cited above. Incumbent politicians and parties often engage in electoral interference even in elections they already know they will win, and often to a higher degree than when they electoral outcome is in question (Simpser 2013). Opposition figures have also demonstrated variation in running well-coordinated campaigns that have proven crucial to their ability to achieve victory (Bunce and Wolchik 2011). Yet the majority of studies have explored these issues with a focus on one side or the other, ignoring the likely interconnections between opposition and incumbent forces as well as the interaction between incumbent strategies at electoral interference alongside legal attempts at voter persuasion. As Boix (2007) reminds us, political parties and actors inherently consider the goals, strategies and behavior of their competitors in establishing their own programs as well as their campaign tactics. I consider this relationship to be especially important due to the lopsided scale of political conflict in hybrid regimes. This leads me to ask what explains incumbent and opposition political behavior during elections in hybrid regimes?

I argue that in such hybrid regimes, the uneven power held by incumbent leaders, and often their party, significantly dominates the electoral and political landscape. Due to this power imbalance, and the government's ability to hinder opposition development, both opposition and incumbent political actors likely face puzzling dilemmas. The opposition, like parties and candidates operating under more democratic circumstances, seek to persuade voters to support them, often by differentiating themselves from their competition on policy positions and issue preferences. However, the political environment in hybrid regimes is marked by the uneven and

often unfair electoral situation dominated by incumbents. If parties and candidates want to try to win votes away from such dominant political actors during electoral campaigns, they may risk regime blowback that could threaten their continued ability to exist or function normally. But they also want to win votes and secure seats in elected office, which is typically done by appealing to voters and distinguishing themselves from the competition (and the ruling government). Incumbents, on the other hand, typically have the legal ability to eliminate elections altogether, but instead choose to allow them to continue, and allow themselves to face regular public scrutiny. They face the dilemma of how much to focus on voter persuasion and electoral interference during the election in seeking to ensure that they are victorious without threatening their popular support in the state. This dilemma is especially important given the potential for public unrest and demonstrations after the usage of obvious electoral interference strategies. I contend that, given these conflicting motivations, the electoral behaviors of both the opposition and incumbents are likely related to one another, and should be examined together.

I argue that we can better understand the electoral behavior of incumbents and opposition politicians and political parties by recognizing that both sets of actors may have different goals depending on the conditions of the elections. In democratic states, the primary goal for incumbents and competitors is electoral victory, although secondary goals exist as well. Given this I assert that in hybrid regimes, incumbent and opposition actors likely hold various goals instead, or in addition to, electoral victory. This dissertation therefore seeks to examine certain features of elections in hybrid regimes that may alter the goals of the opposition and the ruling regime. In particular, I argue that the level of incumbent dominance in the state as well as the extent of contestation between incumbents and the opposition will alter these goals. Given that incumbents and opposition figures are likely to have varied goals depending on these factors, I

then theorize that we should see evidence of this relationship through the electoral strategies pursued by each side. Such electoral strategies include both efforts at voter persuasion, including the political messages disseminated by both incumbents and the opposition, as well as the amount of electoral interference utilized by the incumbent ruling regime.

This dissertation contributes to a growing literature on election and political developments since the end of the Cold War. While initially much of this scholarship focused on democratization and democratic consolidation,² it has shifted toward differentiating states beyond the conventional democratic/ autocratic dichotomy. Many of these studies on hybrid regimes continued to investigate these states based on their propensity to become fully democratic (Levitsky and Way 2010; Brownlee 2009; Donno 2013). Conversely, others have sought to analyze and explain political behavior within these states as they currently stand (Schedler 2013; Simpser 2013). This latter focus asserts that the logic governing political decision-making in hybrid regimes differs from other regime types and deserves attention. For example, even when elections do not create turnovers in power, they matter because they serve an informational purpose (Hermet, Rose and Rouquie 1978; Magaloni 2006; Miller 2015; Little et al 2014). This information can signal how strong or weak an incumbent is to the public and the opposition, for example. In this dissertation, I build and contribute to this stream of research I develop clear goals for both incumbents and opposition actors given the conditions of the election, as I assume that elections can serve multiple purposes, but particularly an informational role.

The second notable contribution comes from the dual focus on incumbent and opposition electoral goals. While the opposition (Bunce and Wolchik 2011) or incumbents (Birch 2011;

² See, for example, Dunlop 1995; Dawisha and Parrott 1997; McFaul 2002; Herron 2009

Simpser 2013; Schedler 2013) have been for the most part considered separately, I contend that comparative scholarship would benefit from a focus on political party behavior during elections both by the opposition and incumbents by examining the two in conjunction with one another. Specifically, this dual focus helps us understand what strategies are both possible and available given the election-level conditions in place, as well as state-level constraints that may exist. By demonstrating that the opposition recognizes the options available to them, we not only better comprehend the degree of regime control and influence, but also what pathways may exist for regime change. Moreover, the electoral strategies and behavior of the opposition matter, as political shifts within hybrid regimes increasingly come from opposition victories (Bunce and Wolchik 2011; Greene 2007). This is in contrast to many earlier explanations of democratization, that have focused on elite compromises (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986; Karl and Schmitter 1991). Bunce and Wolchik (2011) demonstrate that when the opposition carries out a well-developed, savvy campaign, it often makes opposition victories possible, leading to the potential for democratic openings. But such savvy campaigns may be more likely under circumstances of diminished incumbent resources and increasing opposition party development (Greene 2007). As this study argues, opposition strategies are related to the incumbent's degree of dominance in the state as well as to the amount of contestation present in the election. Therefore, the types of electoral strategies that are selected in states with low incumbent dominance may not be the same ones that are prioritized in states with high incumbent dominance. Opposition actors in such settings may instead have different goals in mind that affects the electoral strategies pursued.

Third, the focus on election-level explanatory factors provides a novel perspective in explaining political outcomes in hybrid regimes. Most previous studies have focused on state- or

international factors in exploring electoral behavior and interference. International factors such as connections to and leverage from the West (Levitsky and Way 2010), Western democracy assistance (Birch 2011) or civil society support (Bunce and Wolchik 2011) have all received a great deal of attention. While these factors have been useful in explaining successful shifts toward democracy, they have been less useful in understanding electoral strategies. Instead, I argue that more attention should be put on factors that vary from election to election, as these are more likely to alter the goals of incumbents and opposition actors. Moreover, some studies have noted the importance of individual election-level factors, but have not considered them collectively. For instance, in considering incumbent dominance, which can vary between elections, many consider low or high dominance states, but not both. The primary distinction made in the literature on elections in hybrid regimes is between competitive and hegemonic authoritarian states, with the former being those with low dominance. Often, these studies have either often focused on one type over the other (Levitsky and Way 2010; Schedler 2006) or have mainly sought to explain which cases are more likely to democratize (Roessler and Howard 2009; Brownlee 2009; Donno 2013). Only recently have studies begun to explore the implications of incumbent dominance beyond hopes of democratization. Similarly, studies have begun to identify features that can alter the degree of contestation in election. This includes the presence of an opposition electoral bloc (Howard and Roessler 2006) and economic conditions (Magaloni 2006). Yet these features have been treated individually, ignoring their combined effects on the amount of contestation present in the election. This dissertation addresses this by combining these factors into an index that measures contestation in the election.

This dissertation also differentiates between types of strategies aimed at both voter persuasion and electoral interference. Given that I expect the goals of both opposition and

incumbent actors to vary depending on the conditions of the election, I assert that the strategies will vary as well. As this dissertation will argue, some strategies are more likely serve the goals of the election than others. Given this, I argue that the strategies utilized shed light on these varied goals by both opposition and incumbent actors. While many studies have noted the strategic choices incumbents are assumed to make (Schedler 2006), most have focused exclusively on electoral interference (Birch 2011; Simpser 2013). Thus the combined focus on strategies of voter persuasion and electoral interference is a novel attempt to acknowledge and address this.

Finally, the regional focus on elections in post-Soviet hybrid regimes contributes to the evolving scholarship on political development in these states since the collapse of the Soviet Union. I contend that the multi-method approach contributes to the regionally-focused scholarship on politics in post-Soviet states. More specifically, this dissertation uses both quantitative analyses, which include elections from seven to ten states from the former Soviet Union, as well as case studies, to consider many of the relevant issues facing the political development in this region, including executive dominance, dominant political parties, the impact of state energy profits, the aftermath of the Color Revolutions, and varying degrees of opposition development.

This dissertation proceeds as follows. In the next chapter, I begin by briefly considering the recent scholarship on elections in competitive and hegemonic authoritarian regimes. Given the relevance of elections in hybrid regimes, I then develop theoretical expectations about the potential goals of both opposition and incumbent politicians, both in regards to efforts at voter persuasion as well as electoral interference. I then pose a series of hypotheses about political party and candidate behavior during elections in such states. Chapter 3 discussed the research

design of this dissertation, including case selection and the concepts used to empirically test these relationships. Chapter 4 provides the first empirical analysis of the hypotheses developed in the second chapter. This chapter uses data from seven post-Soviet states, focusing on efforts of voter persuasion by both incumbent and opposition parties by considering the issues emphasized during legislative elections. This chapter finds that some types of issue appeals are more likely in highly contested elections, in less contested elections, and depending on incumbent dominance. Next, in Chapter 5, I quantitatively investigate different strategies of electoral interference by incumbent actors in both legislative and executive elections in ten post-Soviet states. This chapter finds support for the notion that different strategies of electoral interference are associated with electoral contestation and incumbent dominance.

Finally, Chapters 6 and 7, integrate the combined hypotheses posed in the Chapter 2. Each chapter contains two comparative case studies of executive elections that seek to examine the entire context. Chapter 6 considers two presidential elections in Russia, held in 2004 and 2008. These elections both contained very low contestation, yet differ in terms of incumbent dominance. This chapter finds that the strategies of both opposition and incumbent actors varied between these two elections, even with most contextual factors being held constant. Chapter 7, conversely, examines Ukraine's 2004 and 2010 presidential elections, where incumbent dominance remains low, but contestation increases. In particular, 2004 election represents a potential negative case, in that the election witnessed large public protests that ultimately produced a new election. This allows me to consider the change in electoral strategies by incumbent actors both before and after this clear example of the costs of electoral interference. Both Chapters 6 and 7 allow me to consider the strategic interaction of efforts at voter persuasion and electoral interference by the incumbent, as well the election strategies utilized by the

opposition. These case studies provide illustrations of the relative importance of electoral contestation or incumbent dominance in influencing the goals, and subsequent electoral strategies used by incumbent and opposition actors.

Chapter 2: Theory and Hypotheses

Background and Impetus for Study

Elections have long been scrutinized on multiple fronts. At their most basic level, they serve as a tool that determines the officeholders of various state positions. Elections inherently allow citizens to hold these officeholders accountable for their actions and decisions. This accountability typically produces competition and incorporates debate into the process of governing. Elections of course have also historically been held in fully closed authoritarian states (Hermet, Rose and Rouquie 1978). Under these circumstances, elections have been argued to provide a façade for legitimacy (Linz 2000). Yet such elections have also been argued to serve other functions. These include a communicative or informational purpose, as well as promoting competition and even generating legitimacy (Hermet, Rose and Rouquie 1978; Simpser 2013; Schedler 2013; Cox 2009; Little, Tucker and LaGatta 2014; Miller 2015). Elections can provide information to voters on the strength of the regime (Magaloni 2006; Simpser 2013; Schedler 2013) as well as a regime's weakness and lack of popularity (Little et al 2014), causing voters to protest the results in elections perceived to be close and fraudulent. Election results can also spur policy shifts in hybrid regimes by demonstrating to the incumbent regime that voters are dissatisfied (Miller 2015). These multiple purposes of elections are important given that elections are now held in over eighty percent of states worldwide,³ yet the same high rates of democratization have not been observed. Indeed despite hope that elections

³ As calculated from data made available by Hyde and Martinov (2011).

could serve as the impetus to democratization (Lindberg 2009; Teorell and Hadenius 2009; Brownlee 2009b), this has not always been observed. Others have suggested that elections in developing states are inherently problematic in enabling democracy given the lack of legitimate and stable institutions (Nooruddin 2014) or that elections can ultimately be tools used to keep an authoritarian regime in power (Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009). This has contributed to the burgeoning research on hybrid regimes, states that, like many, hold regular elections but that maintain more restrictions on civil and political liberties and routinely witness authoritarian incumbent behavior to a degree that they cannot be considered “democratizing.”⁴ In these states, electoral unfairness is not the exception, but rather the norm, with elections that “exist and are meaningful, but (are) systematically violated in favor of the incumbent” (Levitsky and Way 2010:19). These elections can vary in terms of competition, sometimes yielding genuinely unpredictable contests while others lack any surprise concerning the outcome. It is within these states that much of the recent research on the informational or communicative role of elections has focused, as they can serve an instrumental purpose to these states in particular (Schedler 2002; Simpson 2013; Little et al 2014).

With all this considered, Morse (2012:179) reminds us that we still know relatively little about “the underpinnings that sustain electoral authoritarianism,” with much still to be uncovered. As elections, they still require popular participation and voter support, even given the uneven playing field, with both incumbents and opposition figures still likely to appeal to voters. Given this reality, I am interested in how the amount and content of such electoral strategies of both incumbents and opposition actors may vary depending on the conditions present within the election. Previous studies have explored aspects of this, though more often

⁴ A more detailed discussion of the conceptualization of hybrid regimes will follow in Chapter 3.

producing questions rather than answers. Schedler (2006) posits that incumbent electoral behavior is likely based on strategic decisions to engage in both electoral manipulation and electoral persuasion to remain victorious. Similarly, Birch (2011:56) agrees that all incumbents and governments have the opportunity to pursue “a package of fair and foul electoral strategies” in seeking victory. This decision, she argues, is likely based on considering the threshold of both needed to win and still maintain legitimacy. Ultimately Birch (2011) notes that it is usually the perceived costs of foul electoral strategies in the form of domestic (protests, coups) and international (suspended aid or foreign direct investments) repercussions that may compel incumbents to avoid such methods. This suggests that incumbents in hybrid regimes, while likely to consider electoral interference as an option, may also seek to genuinely win votes. For example, Magaloni (2006) demonstrates the strategic usage of budget cycles and state resources to convince voters to support the regime, both of which relied on consistent economic performance. Thus, in Mexico prior to 1980, she argues that outright fraud was not necessary, as the economic benefits and the manipulation of state resources were often enough to generate enough votes for victory. More recently, Miller (2015) reveals that incumbents in electoral authoritarian regimes do alter their policy responsiveness when they suffer a loss of vote share. While he focused on policy innovation after elections, his results do not preclude the possibility that such policies may be revealed during elections or in subsequent elections as a strategy of letting voters know that they have heard their concerns.

When it comes to electoral interference, there have been some suggestions that this behavior varies as well. Simpson (2013) shows that incumbents may in fact be most likely to significantly interfere in elections when they are already extremely powerful. Magaloni (2006) notes that electoral interference shifted in Mexico from state resource abuse to outright fraud

given the deteriorating economic conditions of the 1980s. Birch (2011) goes further and specifically differentiates between types of electoral interference, including strategies initiated before elections, during electoral campaigns, and on the election day itself, finding that election day fraud is used far less often than other methods of interference, a finding she attributes to its perceived costs. Most of these works on electoral interference (Birch 2011; Kelley 2012; Hyde 2011; Schaffer 2007) have focused predominantly on international and domestic institutional factors that may explain its occurrence, producing mixed results.

Turning to the opposition, there have also been some assertions regarding election behavior in hybrid regimes. More generally the focus has typically been on opposition cohesion and cooperation as the key to victory (Diamond 2002; van de Walle 2006) as well as their ability to innovate and adopt new, creative campaign strategies (Bunce and Wolchik 2011). Bunce and Wolchik specifically address the question of how opposition actors select strategies,⁵ but they do not ultimately make many general suggestions or expectations other than to note that, “we in fact know very little about the role of electoral campaigns in mixed regimes” (2011: 47). They do suggest intuitively that opposition actors may be more likely to invest in new, savvy electoral strategies when they see potential political openings, but this is an assertion they do not empirically test. Opposition protest behavior following elections has received some focus, as well as the decision to boycott elections altogether (Schedler 2009). Huntington (1968) suggests that opposition (or in his language “minor”) parties in democratizing states should seek new issues or policies on which to focus, as these issues can attract voters dissatisfied with the ruling party. Policy shifts and rhetoric are cited as potential strategies by Rakner and van de Walle (2009) as well, since opposition actors inherently suffer from resource limitations when

⁵ See pages 46-48.

compared to well-supported incumbents. Miller (2015) continues this logic, arguing that opposition issue shifts and subsequent vote gains can reveal voter discontent to dominant incumbents. Conversely, Greene (2007) discusses how opposition development under a hegemonic party regime can produce few incentives for change and adaptation within opposition parties; he stresses how many of the opposition's strategies were in fact limiting or self-defeating due to their origin and tight-knit organizations.

Considering all these studies on electoral behavior and strategies in hybrid regimes, I stress three issues. First, efforts at voter persuasion and electoral interference should be considered jointly both theoretically and empirically. Multiple authors have suggested this, but no comprehensive attempts have been made thus far to do so. Second, given the political imbalance present in hybrid regimes, with incumbents shaping and influencing the holding of the elections themselves, incumbent and opposition electoral strategies should be considered together. Their strategies are likely to be related to one another, yet scholarship typically separates the two.⁶ Finally, I assert that election-level factors need to be systematically considered in seeking to understand electoral strategies of incumbent and opposition political actors. I agree that corruption in particular likely influence such strategies, particularly those of electoral interference, but I am less convinced that corruption levels can explain variation in electoral strategies over time within a state. As multiple authors above have noted, such strategies do change and evolve, and this should be considered. Magaloni's (2006) and Bunce and Wolchik's (2011) findings in particular suggest that factors present within the election may be important to consider. Therefore this dissertation focuses on election-level factors in seeking to understand the variation in electoral strategies.

⁶ Greene (2007) remains an exception here as he considered the rise and fall of the PRI as well as the history and development of opposition parties in Mexico.

It is important to note that much is still unknown within the study of regime types and elections in non-democratic states. Many studies highlight the importance of economic concerns, patronage, and clientelism⁷ as tools to motivate voters to turn out, but none has systematically sought to understand how electoral factors may influence the behavior of both opposition and incumbent political actors. We may logically expect incumbents in hybrid regimes to seek to limit voter exposure to the messages and policies of the opposition through media control and restrictions on civil liberties (Schedler 2002). Yet beyond this, little has been theorized about the actual political and electoral behavior of incumbents or opposition candidates. We expect that incumbents will benefit from positive coverage and favorable treatment by the media, but we know little about what issues, if any, incumbents or the opposition emphasize to the public. Are specific policies raised? Do politicians attempt to differentiate themselves from one another? Or are such elections void of serious campaigning altogether? More attention has been put on electoral fraud and/or interference typically carried out by those supporting the incumbent or the regime (Birch 2011; Simpser 2013). Many of these studies have illustrated that electoral interference often does not necessarily alter the outcome that would have been reached without any interference at all, which is puzzling. Simpser (2013) asserts this is due to the informational role that manipulation serves within the context of the election, which also suggests the importance of election-level factors. Simpser's analysis considered cumulative manipulation, while this dissertation, like Birch's (2011) study, differentiates between the types of electoral interference strategies available to incumbents.

⁷ This has been demonstrated by Magaloni (2006), Grzymala-Busse (2008), and others, despite the claims of Acemoglu and Robinson (2006) that authoritarian regimes redistribute resources less than democracies. Furthermore, while clientelism and patronage are no doubt related, these concepts refer to distinct activities. Clientelism refers to the exchange of goods or money for political support, typically votes, with those in the public. Patronage, on the other hand, concerns the exchange of state benefits for allegiance or support within the state apparatus.

Thus, while much more attention has been put on interference, rather than other electoral strategies, this dissertation seeks to explore the usage of both interference and persuasion depending on the conditions of the election, as these tactics can provide evidence of the goals of both the incumbent and opposition actors under less than democratic circumstances.

Explanations for Electoral Strategies in all States

Politicians and parties in democracies have generally been argued to have three main strategies available for voter persuasion: programmatic appeals (those based on clear, specific policy positions), clientelistic appeals (those associated with the exchange of goods or services for support), and personalistic or populist appeals (typically characterized by the candidate's charisma and usage of anti-regime and/ or anti-establishment statements void of issue positions) (Kitschelt 2000). Roberts (2002) agrees with this list and adds what he identifies as two additional linkage strategies: encapsulating linkages and marketing linkages. Encapsulating linkages mean building networks of grassroots and mass support and connecting voters to the party through participatory activities. Marketing linkages instead refer to especially strategic behavior, whereby parties are extremely professionalized and adopt certain policy positions and critiques of other candidates based on the current conditions. According to Roberts (2002), these marketing linkages are more temporary and are likely to be pursued by parties comprised of career, professional politicians that rely on political consultants for support.

Before proceeding, I briefly consider clientelistic linkages and whether they constitute a form of voter persuasion or electoral interference strategy. Scholars differ on their approach to and treatment of clientelism and what it reveals about politician- voter linkages. Roberts(2002) and Kitschelt(2000) both treat clientelism as one of many potential strategies available to politicians as they seek to win voter support and make no normative judgments about its usage.

As Kitschelt and Kselman (2013) point out, clientelism still offers voters the opportunity to hold their elected officials accountable through the promised exchange, and to them, is not normatively superior to programmatic politics. Within the practitioner world of election monitoring, clientelism is viewed as detrimental to the development of democracy globally. Indeed, many studies on clientelism note that this strategy is illegal and typically requires the usage of state resources to carry out, thus making it a type of electoral interference. For instance, Birch (2011) includes clientelism as an occurrence of the manipulation of vote choice. Schaffer (2007) discusses the duality of clientelism: that it serves as a tool through which to motivate voters, but it also constitutes electoral manipulation. He separates clientelism from other options of electoral interference in that, unlike limits put on the organizing abilities of the opposition, which is done without the consent of the opposition, for example, clientelism ultimately requires the participation of the voter by giving them a choice. For this study, I am not interested in making a normative statement about the practice of clientelism. However, its usage does represent a strategy of electoral interference because it utilizes state resources to carry out and represents an illegal and secret attempt at winning votes. Thus while I discuss it alongside other linkages, I empirically separate it from other strategies of voter persuasion.

Recent studies have found that as democracies develop both economically and politically, candidate and party behavior often shifts toward predominantly programmatic appeals (Kitschelt and Kselman 2013; Keefer 2007). Conversely, in less developed democracies, parties and candidates often rely on clientelistic and/or personalistic appeals for voter support; this is typically attributed to the underdevelopment of political party programs or established social and political cleavages (Hagopian 2007). In Latin America, Roberts (2002) notes that programmatic and encapsulating linkages have declined while personalistic and marketing linkages have been

increasingly used. Similarly, Innes (2002) demonstrates the rise of catch-all parties in post-communist Europe, typically void of policy platforms. These parties often exhibited marketing linkages by responding to the actions of other parties instead of voter cleavages. Tavitz and Letki (2014) do find more attention played to interests over time in post-communist Europe, but that right-wing parties are more likely to focus on values over economic issues to win support. Within developing democracies, identity and ethnic politics have reemerged as a strategy for winning voter support. Ethnic and identity appeals have been argued to represent a clear short cut to voters (Birnie 2007) and are often observed within elections that are more competitive (Eifert, Miguel and Posner 2010; Wilkinson 2004), suggesting it is a strategic decision on the part of politicians. Moreover, due to the uncertainty present in many developing states, politicians and parties are often more likely to highlight valence issues over others (Bleck and van de Walle 2013) or simply exclude any reference to policies at all (Lupu and Riedl 2013). This allows candidates and parties to avoid taking strong positions that either they know that they cannot fulfill or that they fear will be unpopular or divisive.

Politicians and political parties may also have different and competing goals during elections in democracies. At a minimum, parties may be vote seeking, office seeking or policy-seeking during campaigns and elections (Strom 1990). Parties may also be simply interested in maintaining representation of their members' wishes (Harmel and Janda 1994). Vote seeking behavior suggests that parties aim to maximize the total number of votes received, and comes from Downs (1957) work on electoral competition. Here the emphasis is on appealing to large amount of voters with a broad message and package of strategies. While this behavior is most expected in two party systems where a simple plurality of votes is needed, the latter two categories bear more relevance to multi-party parliamentary systems (Strom 1990). For office

seeking, parties are interested in office benefits and inclusion into a governing coalition simply to attain power and access. To achieve this, parties are likely to identify and emphasize issues on which there are shifting or elastic public opinion to heighten their differences from other parties (Kitschelt 2007). Policy-seeking behavior suggests that parties are devoted to a particular issue or set of issues and aim to influence the overall political discussion of such issues (Strom 1990). Finally, representation seeks to ensure that parties actively consider the preferences and positions of party members to accurately represent such issues nationally; this has also been referred to as intra-party democracy (Strom 1990; Harmel and Janda 1994).

Electoral behavior also may vary between elections in democracies. As elections become more competitive, candidates are more likely to pay close attention to voter public opinion and shape their campaigns around issues that are important to voters (Hobolt and Klemmensen 2008). They are also more motivated to polarize the electorate in their favor by utilizing fear-inducing (Brader 2005; Ridout and Searles 2011) or negative (Damore 2002) campaign appeals. These arguments likely also help explain the usage of value-based (Tavitz and Letki 2014) and identity appeals in some elections (Birbir 2007; Eifert, Miguel and Posner 2010; Wilkinson 2004).

In hybrid regimes, much of the focus has been on attempts at electoral interference and its consequences for the opposition as well as for democratization. Nonetheless, these studies also reveal some tendencies regarding voter persuasion both by incumbents and the opposition. Gandhi and Lust-Okar (2009) argue that incumbents may be especially interesting in appealing to voters coercively when faced with significant competition. Relatedly, Blaydes and Linzer (2012) argues that heightened electoral competition leads incumbents to rely on anti-American sentiment to foment resentment both against the West, but also, theoretically against the

opposition. Moreover, Lust-Okar (2006) points out that in non-democratic states, there is a reduced area for policy making, particularly for legislators, leading candidates to focus less on specific issues and more on cultivating clear ties to voters through clientelism or patronage. Yet Miller (2015) does note that incumbents are likely to alter their public policies following an election in which their share of the vote declined, suggesting that elites in electoral authoritarian states do try to cater to the public will.

While opposition actors typically face hurdles in their attempts at voter persuasion, they are more likely to focus on developing strong, savvy campaigns only when they feel they have a realistic chance at winning (Bunce and Wolchik 2011). Opposition parties also have greater motivations to offer moderate policy appeals when they sense that they have a chance at winning, as such positions allow them to try and attract voters away from the incumbents. However, absent of a chance at winning, they often focus instead on niche or extreme issues at the margins of the electorate, as a strategy to turnout their own bases, with no real efforts made at appealing to the incumbent's supporters (Greene 2007). Thus these discussions have highlighted competition or contestation within the election as an especially relevant influence. Both incumbents and opposition actors are theorized to consider the likelihood of victory within the election when selecting electoral strategies.

Turning to electoral interference, incumbents in hybrid regimes engage in such behavior regularly, although in varying degrees (Levitsky and Way 2010; Birch 2011). Yet this behavior remains visible even when incumbents are confident of victory. In fact, Simpser (2013) demonstrates that incumbents are more likely to blatantly and excessively interfere with elections when they are confident of victory, as this produces a concrete demonstration of their power both

to voters but also to the opposition. Likewise, Magaloni (2006) details how in Mexico, the PRI abused state resources to drive up voter turnout especially when they were sure of victory.

The research on elections in hybrid regimes has noted the variation in the level of incumbent dominance in the state. In all hybrid regimes, it is the case that incumbents benefit from access to state resources and are able to alter the degree of fairness on the electoral playing field. Yet incumbent dominance can extend far beyond this so that the incumbent regime, often due to a powerful political party or significant resource assets from large public sectors or natural resource wealth, is able to influence most aspects of political competition (Magaloni 2006). These states are referred to as hegemonic authoritarian states, one type of hybrid regime. In these states, incumbent dominance is so high that there is a much smaller space for opposition actors to participate and function openly (Goode 2011). In hegemonic authoritarian regimes, the opposition often faces far greater challenges to their participation in their ability to access the public through the media and regular campaign activities. Incumbent dominance in hegemonic authoritarian regimes is typically witnessed particularly in terms of executive power over the state, with elections and reelections for these positions being quite predictable. Greater contestation often exists at the legislative or regional level (Roessler and Howard 2009; Brownlee 2009a; Donno 2013).⁸

⁸ This distinction mirrors the one made about the dominant party regimes by many scholars (Greene 2007). I stick with the hegemonic authoritarian label for three reasons. First, the concept of ‘hegemonic authoritarian regime’ allows for the existence of a dominant party as a potential resource that contribute to an incumbent’s regime dominance. Secondly, the distinction between hegemonic and competitive authoritarian regimes ensures that the two concepts do not overlap with one another; something that would be possible with the concept of dominant-party regimes. As this study examines political party and politician behavior depending on the degree of dominance enjoyed by the incumbent, it is important that the two main concepts do not overlap with one another. Finally, dominant party regimes may be either democratic, autocratic or hybrid (Friedman and Wong 2008), as this term has been used to simply mean a political regime where a single political party dominates, whether through consistent reelection or

Conversely, competitive authoritarian states are typically missing these incumbent assets such as a strong party or natural resource wealth that can lead to high levels of incumbent dominance (Levitsky and Way 2010). Competitive authoritarian regimes do not see such stark incumbent victories at the executive level, and thus also witness a larger electoral space for opposition figures to organize and campaign (Roessler and Howard 2009). Incumbents in competitive authoritarian states still engage in clear electoral interference such as voter fraud or limit access to the public through pressure on the opposition. But due to the lower degree of incumbent dominance in the state, they are less able to produce the strong victories often seen for executives in hegemonic authoritarian regimes (Roessler and Howard 2009). Thus, while competitive and hegemonic authoritarian states are both varieties of hybrid regimes with clear similarities, they do not overlap with one another. A state can shift from being a hegemonic authoritarian state to a competitive one, or visa versa, but it cannot be classified as both simultaneously.

Having considered the arguments and findings related to electoral strategies in hybrid regimes, I now turn towards the theoretical development of this dissertation. Here I build on these various literatures on candidate and party linkages, candidate and party goals, and voter persuasion and electoral interference in hybrid regimes to generate a theory of opposition and incumbent electoral goals and electoral strategies in hybrid regimes.

Theoretical Development

I begin my theoretical development by noting that I assume elections, however tainted or flawed, offer both incumbent and opposition figures an arena for political competition. Echoing Schedler (2013), I contend that elections in hybrid regimes, while they may often be used as

persistent repression. With all these reasons considered, I utilize the competitive/ hegemonic authoritarian regime distinction.

tools of control by incumbent regimes, also provide opposition parties and politicians with a public and legitimate space for political organizing. Of course this arena for political competition is unbalanced and often witnesses interference by the incumbent. Yet since incumbents continue to accept elections as the means that ultimately decides who will govern and occupy the primary seats of state power, these contests remain important to them as well. Such elections may serve incumbents by providing them with greater domestic legitimacy (Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009) as well as helping incumbents remain informed about their competition within, as well as outside, the regime (Gandhi and Lust Okar 2009; Birch 2011). Moreover, despite the flawed playing field, elections remain legal avenues for non-regime, opposition parties to operate. The opposition can use elections as opportunities to publicly campaign, which, when successful, can sometimes propel them to victory over incumbent candidates (Bunce and Wolchik 2011). Even when not successful, the opposition parties and candidates can still benefit from participating in such elections by garnering voter attention, and simply reminding the electorate that other options exist (Greene 2007). The opposition may even be motivated to maintain their participation as a result of witnessing incumbent electoral interference. Such behavior can signal to opposition figures that the incumbent regime's status could potentially deteriorate when faced with genuine competition (Schedler 2006).

Having established that elections remain important, if not consequential, events for both incumbents and the opposition, I now return to the overarching research question guiding this dissertation project: what explains political party and candidate behavior in competitive and hegemonic authoritarian states? More precisely, how do strategies of voter persuasion and electoral manipulation vary under these conditions?

Before generating theoretical expectations about both incumbent and opposition candidate and political party behavior, I assert that the goals of both incumbent and opposition actors need to be considered. As is the case within democracies (Strom 1990; Harmel and Janda 1994), I expect that parties and candidates within hybrid regimes are also likely to maintain various goals, and that these goals will differ depending on the circumstances of the election. In particular, I expect that these goals can be derived for each of the two opposing sides, incumbents and opposition actors, within hybrid regimes. Given this, I clarify what the goals are for both sides regarding voter persuasion and electoral interference.⁹ While vote seeking is the most obvious goal available to parties within democracies, others exist. Therefore, vote seeking is likely to be one of multiple competing goals for opposition and incumbent actors within hybrid regimes.

As the discussions above regarding voter persuasion and electoral interference illustrate, electoral factors matter regarding these strategies in all types of states. For instance, competition within the election and the incumbent's confidence of victory can affect efforts at voter persuasion as well as electoral interference. This leads me to suspect that the amount of competition or contestation may be connected to the electoral goals of incumbent and opposition candidates. However, as some of the studies on elections in hybrid regimes and authoritarian states have also illustrated that electoral strategies of interference exist in all elections, regardless of the amount of contestation present. This leads me to suspect that other factors likely affect electoral strategies, including to the degree of incumbent dominance in the state as well as the type of the election being held.

⁹ While both incumbents and opposition actors are expected to engage in voter persuasion, electoral interference is only available to incumbents as they have access to the both state and administrative resources as well as the architecture of the elections, including electoral commissions and election poll workers.

Electoral contestation is often referred to in other studies as competition or competitiveness.¹⁰ While often not explicitly defined, the terms competition or contestation refer to how close the contest between rival candidates or parties will be during an election. When a candidate is widely expected to win, campaigns without much scrutiny, and wins by a large margin, this would be an example of an election with low contestation. Conversely, a highly contested election would see an unpredictable outcome, with at least more than one side competing for potential victory. Contestation varies within democratic as well as non-democratic elections. Yet within hybrid regimes, given the uneven electoral play field, I assert that the distinction over contestation is often more pronounced and meaningful. As Schedler (2013) discusses, control over the state institutions and resources is at stake during elections within hybrid regimes. This change can have profound effects on the short-term and long-term trajectory of the state, as control has become particularly polemical. When incumbents fear their control over state institutions is threatened, they are more likely to behave coercively to maintain control (Schedler 2013). Thus contestation is likely to be of utmost importance when considering the goals and accompanying strategies of incumbent and opposition actors.

Here, I focus specifically on electoral contestation. While this concept could overlap with the degree of incumbent control within the state (i.e. whether the state is competitive or hegemonic), I argue these aspects are distinct. Previous studies have found that elements such as the formation of an opposition electoral bloc (Howard and Roessler 2006; Bunce and Wolchik 2011), negative economic conditions (Case 2006) or an extended economic crisis (Magaloni 2006) can alter the likelihood of an incumbent victory, and thus affect contestation. Instead,

¹⁰ I prefer to use the term “contestation” here instead of competition to avoid confusion with the two sub-types of hybrid regimes considered, competitive and hegemonic authoritarian regimes, even though theoretically, electoral contestation refers to the degree of competition present within an election.

incumbent dominance typically refers to the overall control or influence over the electoral playing field. As it is typically determined by the share of the incumbent vote in the previous election, incumbent dominance varies depending on the share of the vote received. A large share of at least 70% both benefits incumbents with tangible and intangible assets, and it reduces the space in which opposition actors can compete. Given this, I argue that these concepts, while likely related, are separate considerations.

As stated earlier, contestation varies in democratic elections as well, as the potential for a change in power exists (Przeworski 1991; Dahl 1971). Yet I argue that in both competitive and hegemonic authoritarian regimes, the contest for political office holds more significant short-term implications for the state. The outcome of an election also translates into which parties or candidates will have control over the over-arching rules and institutions that govern the state. It is precisely these institutions and rules that can be modified to facilitate regime interference and often play an active role in the authoritarian behavior practiced there. Thus I expect that both high and low contestation likely is related to both incumbent and opposition electoral behavior.

As the previous discussion of the literature showed, contestation is related to both opposition and incumbent behavior in all types of regimes. Both sides may seek to emphasize particular issues when the election is more contested in an effort to discredit the other. The motivation to polarize the electorate is higher when greater contestation is present. Incumbents may behave coercively when they genuinely fear that they could lose. Similarly, the opposition may be more willing to put in the time and effort needed to craft a successful campaign when they see a potential opening available. Given this, I argue that electoral strategies can be explained with a better understanding of the goals of both incumbents and the opposition under these circumstances. When an election is highly contested, I assume that the goals of both

incumbent and opposition candidates and parties should align: they both are focused on winning the most votes to win the election outright. Like in the case of parties interested in vote seeking in democracies, both sides aim to maximize the number of votes they receive. Strom (1990) even theorizes that vote seeking is most expected in the presence of high contestation. High contestation means that the stakes of the election are high, thus incumbents are at risk of losing power while opposition parties or candidates may view a path toward victory. Under these conditions, I expect that this goal will alter the strategies selected by both sides. Such strategies include both voter persuasion as well as electoral interference. I will first focus on effects at voter persuasion.

When the goal for both incumbent and opposition actors is to simply win the election, I argue that both sides are likely to pursue strategies aimed at convincing voters to not only vote for them, but also to vote against their opponents. Within hybrid regimes, the uneven electoral playing field is inherently biased in favor of incumbents, leading me to expect that the primary cleavage within the electorate stems from voter support for or against the incumbent regime. Thus this likely affects the types of voter persuasion strategies when both incumbent and opposition actors are ultimately trying to win the election outright. Under these conditions, I expect that any potential costs associated with persuasion strategies for both incumbents and the opposition are less important. This means that both sides may be likely to select strategies that align with voter preferences in seeking victory, such as focusing on moderate economic issues (Hobolt and Klemmensen 2008). High contestation may also lead each side to turn to negative or value and identity-related strategies (Damore 2002; Brader 2005; Hillygus and Shields 2008) in an attempt to discredit their opponents or cast doubt on their credibility. For example, while incumbents in hybrid regimes often aim to appear “above politics” by avoiding explicit

campaign promises or activities, they may be more active and accessible prior to a highly contested election. I would expect them to be more likely to assert clear positions that could set them apart from the opposition but could also make them more vulnerable to alienating some voters' preferences.

Yet turning more immediately to the expected goals of opposition actors, I focus on the logic asserted by van de Walle (2006); Donno (2013) and Greene (2007). All these studies agree that for the opposition to be successful within hybrid regimes, they need to expand their bases of voter support. This necessity to attract a larger share of the vote explains why opposition coalitions are often employed, as this strategy can more effectively capture votes. It also makes sense that a focus on expanding the voter base would be done by moderating policies and developing more innovative campaign techniques and strategies. Under these circumstances, opposition actors are less likely to worry about any governmental backlash in the short term. Given the uneven playing field in hybrid regimes, incumbents often have the discretionary power to target opposition actors, which could potentially hinder opposition activity. Yet during a highly contested election, I posit that they may be less likely to fret over such potential repercussion. Instead, they may feel comfortable directly criticizing the incumbent regime, which may affect their strategies of voter persuasion. For example, this is likely when the opposition would expend the most effort on creating and sustaining a persuasive campaign (Bunce and Wolchik 2011), a task that is costly and potentially risks negative consequences from the regime if they are not victorious. It is clear that the opposition is more likely to cooperate and form electoral coalitions in competitive authoritarian regimes (van de Walle 2006; Donno 2013). The logic here is that a weaker incumbent regime allows for the possibility of opposition unity while a more dominant hegemonic authoritarian regime is more capable of keeping the

opposition fragmented. Moreover, the opposition is more motivated to work together when they feel the opportunities for victory exist. Ultimately, a highly contested election is likely to motivate opposition actors to pursue electoral victory no matter what costs may be.

The same logic holds true for incumbent interference in elections. We can logically assume that when an election is more contested, when the incumbent is not assured of victory, that they may be more likely to interfere in elections. This particularly makes sense since interference can threaten an incumbent's legitimacy, and potentially can lead to popular unrest, so they may only resort to such strategies when they feel desperate. Intuitively, it holds that incumbents would find strategies of electoral interference the most beneficial when they are worried about losing the election. Indeed this has often been argued to be the case in elections held in democratic states (Argersinger 1985; Nyblade and Reed 2008), but this logic has also been asserted in studies on elections in hybrid and non-democratic regimes (Magaloni 2006; Greene 2007). Yet many recent studies on electoral interference point out that when the elections are already systematically unfair and biased in favor of the incumbent, as they are in hybrid regimes, incumbents are likely to rely on manipulation no matter what, and especially when they know they will win (Simpser 2013). Or they may only be deterred when they feel such behavior significantly threatens their legitimacy (Birch 2011). These arguments suggest that there is no consensus on how contestation within an election may affect the frequency of strategies of electoral interference.

Yet I contend that with a more detailed focus on the types of electoral interference strategies available to incumbents, I might uncover the nuances of these arguments. It is entirely plausible that some strategies of interference may serve the goal of winning an election better than others, and the literature on electoral interference has suggested as much. Multiple authors

have noted that strategies of interference carry varying degrees of risks, and that incumbents may only being willing to incur such risks when the stakes of the election are high, implying that contestation figures in to this calculation (Schaffer 2007; Birch 2011). In particular, strategies sought to deliberately hinder or obstruct opposition activities often carry especially high costs to incumbents, and thus are typically used only when the incumbent genuinely fears losing the election (Collier and Vicente 2011). This leads me to believe that contestation likely figures into the strategic decision to interfere with elections, and that incumbents are likely to select strategies that are best suited to serve these goals. During a highly contested election, incumbents are more likely to select strategies that may carry higher risks, as their ultimate goal is to win the election no matter what. Conversely, when the election has little to no contestation, I argue that incumbents may prefer to avoid more costly electoral interference strategies since the goal is not to win the election.

Table 2.1: High Electoral Contestation

Electoral Contestation	<i>Incumbent Actors</i>	<i>Opposition Actors</i>
<i>High</i>	<p>Goal: Win the election</p> <p>Aims of voter persuasion and electoral interference: Likely to select strategies to convince electorate to vote for incumbent and against opposition</p>	<p>Goal: Win the election</p> <p>Aims of voter persuasion: Likely to select strategies to convince electoral to vote against incumbent and for opposition</p>

Turning toward low electoral contestation, I argue that this likely alters the goals for both incumbents and opposition actors. I do not expect either side to focus on vote getting or winning election when its outcome is quite predictable. Beyond that, however, I suspect that low contestation alone may not be enough to reveal the goals for incumbents or opposition actors.

For incumbents, the goal during a predictable election with low contestation may be to maintain the status quo and build greater legitimacy among the populace. It could also be to win the election by large margins to demonstrate strength to voters as well as opponents. Similarly, opposition actors may want to avoid publicly criticizing an incumbent under such circumstances to avoid further unwanted restrictions. These opposition actors may also see an election with low contestation as an opportunity to let the populace know that even though they may not win, they oppose the incumbent regime fundamentally. This goal of demonstrating dissatisfaction could help them remain relevant and potentially be more competitive in subsequent elections if public support shifts, even if in the short term it may not yield much traction. Yet based on these potential goals for both sides, I posit that the second explanatory variable, incumbent dominance, can help reveal these theoretical expectations. There is a relationship between electoral contestation and incumbent dominance, as I have discussed earlier. High contestation, particularly during executive or presidential elections, is more likely to occur in states with low incumbent dominance, or in competitive authoritarian states. Conversely, we can expect to see elections with low contestations in both competitive and hegemonic authoritarian states. Thus when considering elections with low contestation, I argue that incumbent and opposition goals can be understood based on the amount of incumbent dominance in the state.

First, I begin with lowly contested elections in states with low incumbent dominance, those within competitive authoritarian states. For incumbents under these circumstances, they are not supremely dominant within the state and thus lack access to powerful state assets and resources. Regime power is by definition less cemented, which I argue also means that the incumbents' legitimacy is potentially more unstable. While they may feel confident of victory in the election in the short term, I expect them to be interested in cementing their power and

legitimacy for greater long-term benefits. Thus I contend that incumbents would be more interested in building legitimacy among the electorate by avoiding any actions that could invoke heightened public scrutiny or unrest.

With this in mind, I expect that they will select strategies of voter persuasion and electoral interference that address this goal. In terms of voter persuasion, incumbents may seek to illustrate their accomplishments and contributions to voters and opponents alike. Incumbents are likely to try and avoid emphasizing any issues that could be controversial or divisive within the state. Polarizing and divisive issues would potentially have the unwanted effect of emphasizing divisions within the electorate, which could backfire and possibly detract from the ultimate goal of enhancing legitimacy. Such voter persuasion strategies may thus be vague and lack clear positional stances. Concerning electoral interference, incumbents are likely aware of the strategic costs of certain types of electoral strategies. In particular, some electoral interference strategies have the potential to reduce legitimacy and spark popular unrest. As incumbents are interested in building legitimacy and long-term support, I expect incumbents to select strategies that would minimize any potential public outcries or demonstrations of disapproval. Thus, unlike in the case of highly contested elections, I argue that during elections with low contestation within competitive authoritarian regimes, incumbents are likely to avoid interference strategies that carry costs. Such interference strategies like blatant voter bribery or opposition intimidation in particular could attract unwanted attention. Thus I expect that they would seek to avoid any behavior that could challenge their domestic legitimacy.

Next I turn to the goals of opposition actors in competitive authoritarian states during elections with low contestation. Bunce and Wolchik (2011) have discussed opposition behavior in hybrid regimes, focusing on innovative, savvy campaigns designed by the opposition,

behavior that they note is rare in such regimes and especially in the post-Soviet region. Instead, they note that the majority of opposition campaigns are passive, dull affairs unlikely to inspire voters to abandon the more tested and known incumbents. With this in mind, I expect opposition actors, like incumbents, to consider short versus long-term goals under these circumstances in determining their goals for the election. In the short term, they likely see that winning the election is not likely or realistic. They may not wish to exert the energy and resources needed to explicitly campaign for voter support. I suspect that they may not prioritize creating a persuasive and informed election platform based on the pressing current issues. So, like the incumbents, they may avoid taking any clear positional stances but for different reasons. They are not likely to be worried about the potential consequences of stoking any divisive issues. Instead, I expect that they simply do not see any benefit in expending valuable resources on publicizing precise issue positions when they know that they will not be elected. This can explain the logic of many opposition actors who engage in campaigns that observers may consider lackluster (Bunce and Wolchik 2011; Greene 2007). Such behavior may appear self-defeating and unproductive.

But I content that they also may have long-term goals in mind under these circumstances. While the current election may be unwinnable, this is not necessarily true of subsequent contests. Opposition actors may consider a long campaign on the issues to be costly and unnecessary. Instead, opposition actors with a long-term perspective might see value in prominently emphasizing their displeasure with the status quo. Under such conditions, the status quo refers to the impending incumbent victory in the election. Thus opposition actors may use the election as an opportunity to signal their dissatisfaction with the overall situation, with the intention that such demonstrations could be beneficial in future elections. As the incumbent dominance in the state is still low, subsequent elections could be highly contested even if the current one is not.

This leads me to assert that the goal for opposition parties and candidates under these circumstances is to signal their dissatisfaction with the status quo, and by default, the regime. This behavior can serve the opposition in long-term ways even if it cannot alter the status quo in the short term. Moreover, they may want to take advantage of a less dominant incumbent by using the election to remind the electorate that other options exist for future contests. As I consider this focus on incumbent dominance to be an electoral-level, rather than a structural factor, I assume that parties that have operated within a hegemonic authoritarian regime are capable of evolving under a shift to a competitive authoritarian one, although this may be difficult. Greene's (2007) focus has shown that this can take time, but nonetheless that opposition parties that emerged within a dominant, hegemonic state, can shift due to the actions of newer party members who changed course after state power had been visibly reduced. The expectations for both incumbent and opposition actors are displayed in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: Low Electoral Contestation and Low Incumbent Dominance

Electoral Contestation	Incumbent Dominance	<i>Incumbent Actors</i>	<i>Opposition Actors</i>
<i>Low</i>	<i>Low</i>	<p>Goal: Build Legitimacy</p> <p>Aims of voter persuasion and electoral interference: Likely to select strategies to build legitimacy, preserve status quo, avoid public scrutiny</p>	<p>Goal: Signal Dissatisfaction</p> <p>Aims of voter persuasion: Likely to select strategies to show dissatisfaction with status quo to voters</p>

In states with high incumbent dominance, or hegemonic authoritarian states, incumbents operate from a place of clear dominance with greater state resources at their disposal. I expect that this dominance affects the goals of both incumbent and opposition actors. For incumbents within hegemonic authoritarian states, I expect the goal for them to be to demonstrate strength.

They do not need to prioritize winning the election as the vast majority of elections within hegemonic authoritarian states are expected to have low contestation. This is especially the case for executive elections. Greater contestation may exist within legislative or regional elections, but is rare in contests for the executive (Goode 2011; Donno 2013). Thus I expect incumbent actors to prioritize strategies that can assert strength to all voters, elites and members of the opposition. They are likely to be interested in demonstrating that their regime is in no risk of losing power and that victory is inevitable. As elections are highly visible events, it provides incumbents with a public setting to explicitly make clear just how powerful the regime is and the vast reserves of resources available to them. This could then have the post-election effect of suggesting that opposition to the regime is futile.

To demonstrate this, incumbents may be interested in driving up the vote turnout through their electoral strategies of both voter persuasion and electoral interference. Regarding persuasion strategies, incumbents may focus less attention on outright campaigning, instead using their image to promote strength and stability. This may lead incumbents to appear “above politics” by avoiding any clear appeals for votes. Incumbents in hegemonic authoritarian states are less likely to even acknowledge their competition in the election directly. Instead, incumbent candidates are likely to emphasize their outsize role within the state and society more broadly. Thus outright attempts at voter persuasion may be minimal, as the actual act of campaigning may contract from the resolute demonstration of regime strength, the theorized goal of the election.

Electoral interference can actually serve this goal more visibly. As Simpser (2013) notes, incumbent behavior during an election generally can demonstrate the strength of their regime both to the public as well as to other political actors. Therefore, he argues, blatant and excessive electoral interference signals incumbent strength and dominance, not desperation or efforts to

reverse the will of the people. Conversely, electoral interference to a lesser degree could signal such weaknesses, and could also threaten the incumbent's legitimacy (Birch 2011). Moreover, interference is likely to be more common and more excessive when the regime simply has the capacity to engage in such behavior, which is typically found in states with more incumbent dominance (Simpser 2013). Similarly, Grzymala-Busse (2008) contends that in states where there is a fusion between the government institutions and a powerful political party, as is often the case in hegemonic authoritarian regimes, incumbents distribute rents through the state apparatus in an attempt to diminish the opposition.¹¹ As incumbents are likely to be more focused on demonstrating strength to voters, opponents and also allies, I expect that incumbents may not view all strategies of electoral interference equally. Some strategies may not be sufficient to contribute to the goal of demonstrating state strength or may in fact be counter-productive. As Birch (2011) has discussed, strategies regarding electoral rules and registration can be passed off as legally appropriate and well within the abilities of the regime. Thus interference strategies aimed at rules of the election may be less likely to serve the intended purpose of electoral interference in hegemonic authoritarian regimes. Moreover, strategies that antagonize the opposition, infringing on their ability to organize and campaign, are often utilized by those seen occupying a fragile position (Collier and Vicente 2011; Birch 2011). Thus I contend that incumbents are aware of such trade-offs and are likely to select strategies that best serve their intended goal of demonstrating strength to voters, the opposition and other elites.

¹¹ While Grzymala-Busse (2008) contends that the effect of state-party fusion is to hinder the opposition by making resource distribution contingent on an alliance with the state, I posit that this relationship still assumes that the goal behind such behavior is not to win the election. As I argue, the goal for incumbents in hegemonic authoritarian states is likely to be the demonstration of strength and power, and I contend that this can also be accomplished by the fusion of state and party structures.

When it comes to the opposition, their goals within a hegemonic authoritarian regime likely change as well. Greene (2007) has noted that opposition parties in Mexico while the PRI dominated were often slow to innovate, often due to the way party evolution occurred within a dominant-party state. As in hegemonic authoritarian states, the presence of a dominant party contributed to insular, hierarchical, and static opposition party structures that resisted more innovative and open campaigning even when faced with a more contested political and electoral environment. Yet within a hegemonic authoritarian regime, the dominant incumbent regime may make opposition actors more focused on preserving the status quo rather than expanding in the face of a reduced space for opposition organization (Goode 2011; Donno 2013). Regime dominance may actually pose a threat to the status and operations of the opposition, as a strong regime may try to use its resources to compel more opposition to defect and join the incumbent's organization (Gryzmala-Busse 2008). With this reality in mind, I expect that the goal for the opposition is simply to maintain its existing support and structures. They understand that winning the election is not attainable in the short-term. Moreover, in the long-term, their continued existence could be threatened by the significant incumbent dominance. Given this, I argue that opposition actors are likely to be concerned with simply preserving their organization and existing voter base. Thus this could explain why opposition parties in Mexico focused on issues and voters at the margins for year (Greene 2007). Under these circumstances, multiple opposition parties or candidates may either seek to maintain the current voters contained within their organization. To accomplish this, it may be necessary to emphasize the foundational issues associated with their parties, which can include more niche issues with limited mass appeal. It is not the right opportunity for opposition actors to voice their displeasure with the regime. Incumbents within hegemonic authoritarian regimes have the capacity to target and limit

opposition activities. I suspect that incumbents are more likely to do so if opposition actors are publicly critical toward the regime. Thus opposition actors are likely to refrain from such appeals within a hegemonic authoritarian regime. In this scenario, the opposition would be basically competing against itself. Not only is a more complex campaign not worth the costs and effort, but it may actually attract regime attention to try and limit their operations even more. Table 2.3 displays these expectations.

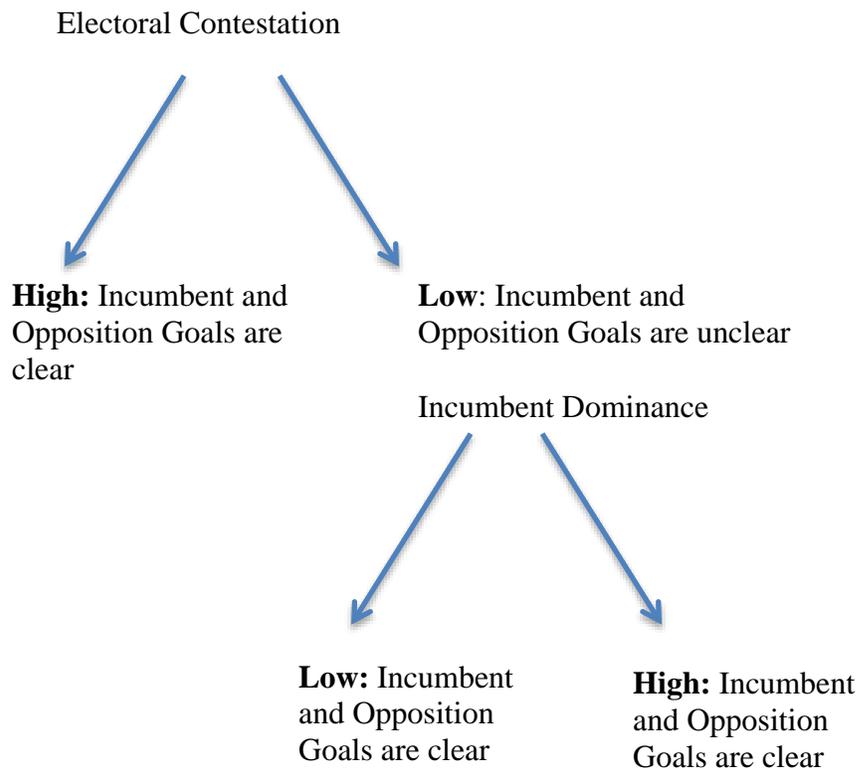
Table 2.3 Low Electoral Contestation and High Incumbent Dominance

Electoral Contestation	Incumbent Dominance	<i>Incumbent Actors</i>	<i>Opposition Actors</i>
<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>	<p>Goal: Demonstrate Strength</p> <p>Aims of voter persuasion and electoral interference: Likely to select strategies that will signal strength and control to voters and opponents</p>	<p>Goal: Maintain Electoral Base</p> <p>Aims of voter persuasion: Likely to select strategies aimed at preventing the atrophy of base supporters, and to avoid antagonizing the regime</p>

The expectations presented thus far have revealed that I have not theorized any opposition and incumbent goals within hegemonic authoritarian states with high electoral contestation. This is for a few reasons. First, when the election is highly contested, I expect this to be the most important factor that influences the goals of opposition and incumbent actors. A highly contested election presents the clearest opportunity for electoral victory, more so than incumbent dominance. Thus the anticipated goals and aims presented for highly contested elections can theoretically apply to both competitive and hegemonic authoritarian states. Second, previous research has argued that elections in hegemonic authoritarian states are

typically less contested (Brownlee 2009a; Donno 2013). While I consider electoral contestation and incumbent dominance to be separate concepts, I recognize the likely correlation between these two factors. While there are likely to be low contestation elections in both competitive and hegemonic authoritarian regimes, high contestation elections are far more likely to appear solely in competitive authoritarian regimes. The same scholars have argued that legislative and regional elections in hegemonic authoritarian regimes tend to experience more contestation than executive elections (Brownlee 2009a; Donno 2013). Thus I posit highly contested elections to be rare in hegemonic authoritarian states. But if and when they do occur, then I contend that the high contestation will matter more than incumbent dominance. This theoretical relationship is illustrated in Figure 2.1. Thus incumbent and opposition goals would follow those theorized for contested elections in competitive authoritarian regimes. Table 2.4 presents the complete theoretical expectations for this dissertation.

Figure 2.1: Relative Importance of Theoretical Factors



Having outlined the varying goals of incumbents and the opposition depending on the degree of certainty in the election, I now turn to my theoretical expectations for actual candidate and political party strategies at voter persuasion and electoral interference. In doing so, I focus in particular on the issue appeals made as evidence of voter persuasion as well as efforts at the abuse of state resources as evidence of electoral interference. In particular, I disaggregate such issue appeals into various sub-categories to help demonstrate their relations to the fore-mentioned goals: these categories are interest-based appeals, identity or values-based appeals, valence issue appeals and niche issue appeals. I also follow Ohman's (2013) differentiation between various strategies of abusing state resources, which divides such activities into four categories: institutional, financial, regulatory and enforcement resources.¹² Using these studies, I develop hypotheses for incumbent and opposition behavior during certain and uncertain elections, as well as within competitive and hegemonic authoritarian regimes.

Before getting into these expectations and hypotheses, I will briefly elaborate on the various types of appeals considered. *Interest-based appeals* refer to policy positions focused on material or economic concerns. Such appeals are expected to fall somewhere on the traditional left-right ideological spectrum, from a greater emphasis on state involvement in the economy and state welfare spending, to more market based solutions and privatization. *Identity or values-*

¹² I argue that the distinctions offered by Ohman (2013) are superior for a few reasons. First, unlike other studies on electoral manipulation (Simpser 2013), these distinctions focus on different types, as opposed to cumulative manipulation. Second, Ohman's distinctions are fairly similar to those made by Birch (2011), who included the manipulation of the legal framework, vote choice and the electoral administration. These factors are all covered by Ohman (2013) and I argue that his divisions are better apt to capture the varying goals of incumbents discussed in this dissertation. I also contend that Ohman's four types are more straight-forward in allowing for the direct measurement needed for hypothesis testing.

based appeals instead focus on non-economic, cultural issues. Such appeals are often divisive or exclusionary as they stress in-group and out-group boundaries. Third, *niche issue appeals* refer to policy positions that are at the margins or are highly specialized. Interest-based, identity/value-based, and niche issue appeals can all be considered positional appeals, as they take a clear position that can be opposed by another party (Stokes 1963). *Valence issue appeals*, in contrast, refer to emphasizing issues over which there is broad agreement (including issues such as law and order, national security or corruption) that do not represent partisan or ideological differences. It seems very unlikely that one party could say they are for national security, while another claims to be against it.

Next, I briefly expound on the four types of the abuse of state resources I consider as evidence of electoral interference, as detailed by Ohman (2013). *Institutional resources* refer to using state or government property or state functions for campaign activities, compelling state employees to attend or help with campaign events, or affecting the coverage of the campaign by state-owned media outlets. *Financial resources* include campaign announcements of unplanned state spending on social programs as financial activities that clearly benefit the incumbent candidate or party. *Regulatory resources* refer to activities by election commissions that can be seen as political, as well as restrictions placed on the opposition that may hinder or even prohibit their participation in the election. Finally, *enforcement resources* refer to intimidation by police forces toward the opposition as well as the unbalanced usage of security forces for incumbent versus opposition candidates.

I begin with elections with high contestation. In developed democracies, politicians and parties tend to shift toward a reliance on programmatic appeals as opposed to clientelistic linkages (Kitschelt and Kselman 2013), although the particular issues may vary as many

Table 2.4: Complete Theoretical Expectations

Degree of Incumbent Dominance	<i>Competitive Authoritarian Regime</i>	<i>Competitive Authoritarian Regime</i>	<i>Hegemonic Authoritarian Regime</i>
Amount of Contestation	<i>Medium- High Contestation</i>	<i>Low- Very Low Contestation</i>	<i>Low-Very Low Contestation</i>
Incumbent Goals	Win the Election	Build Legitimacy	Demonstrate Strength
Aims of Electoral Strategies	Likely to select strategies to convince electorate to vote for incumbent and against opposition	Likely to select strategies to build legitimacy, preserve status quo, avoid public scrutiny	Likely to select strategies that will signal strength and control to voters and opponents
Opposition Goals	Win the Election	Signal Dissatisfaction	Maintain electoral base
Aims of Electoral Strategies	Likely to select strategies to convince electoral to vote against incumbent and for opposition	Likely to select strategies to show dissatisfaction with status quo to voters	Likely to select strategies aimed at preventing the atrophy of base supporters, and to avoid antagonizing the regime

candidates and parties may emphasize certain issues over others depending on the ‘issue ownership’ of the party (Riker 1986). More specifically, such issue emphases likely vary depending on how competitive the election is. As elections become more competitive, or for the purposes of this study, more contested, candidates may be more likely to listen to public opinion and alter their campaigns accordingly (Hobolt and Klemmensen 2008). These arguments suggest that while politicians and parties, at least in full democracies, consider issue importance during uncertain elections, it does not, however, necessarily indicate which types of issues will be emphasized. Despite the underdevelopment of parties in such settings, economic and interest-based issues often remain among the most compelling and most salient to voters. With the winner of the election genuinely in question, this likely leads parties, both incumbent and opposition, to consider how best to motivate voters to come out and cast a ballot in support of them. As stated earlier, the goals of the incumbents and the opposition are the same with high electoral contestation: win the election, with the aim of voter persuasion being to convince voters to support them over the others. To do so, I suspect that parties and candidates are likely to be motivated to highlight the issues of the greatest concern to voters, those of economic and material interests, as a strategy of reaching their goal of winning. To clarify, this discussion does not predict a particular ideological position along the left-right spectrum, simply that economic and material interests will be emphasized. Thus I pose the first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: The higher the degree of contestation in an election, the more likely incumbent and opposition parties and candidates are to emphasize interest-based issues, all else being equal.

Of course, hybrid regimes are typically home to underdeveloped political systems, with less profound economic cleavages. Political parties are more fluid and therefore less

institutionalized, which I suspect affects their likelihood to take strong issue positions even given the goal of winning an election with strategies voter persuasion. Such positions, particularly those related to material or economic interests, imply downstream commitments on the part of the victorious party or candidate (Kitschelt and Kselman 2013). Yet during a highly contested election, parties and candidates nonetheless have the same goal in mind: win the election *in the short term*. As Bleck and van de Walle (2013) have noted, parties and candidates are often more likely to avoid taking concrete positions on pressing issues to avoid isolating themselves from certain segments of voters. Candidates and voters, both from the opposition as well as incumbents, may seek to attract the largest segment of voters available. While economic interests are undoubtedly of great importance to the voters, parties and candidates may steer away from such appeals to avoid alienating any voters. This can be especially important within post-Communist settings that have experienced rapid economic change. Voters in post-communist societies have been shown to prioritize economic interests (Evans 2006) and effectively distinguish between the policies of different parties (Herron 2009). Given this, parties and candidates may strategically avoid such topics, viewing economic interest appeals as risky choices for their own chances at victory (Kitschelt 1995). Thus it seems possible that parties and candidates may opt to avoid the risk of making interest-based appeals in highly contested elections. With this, I pose an opposing hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: The higher the degree of contestation in an election, the less likely incumbent and opposition parties and candidates are to emphasize interest-based issues, all else being equal.

I have noted that the goal for both sides is not just to win votes, but to convince the electorate to vote *against* the other side. Within hybrid regimes, the uneven playing field and skewed political competition puts incumbents front and center in electoral politics. In particular,

incumbents as well as opposition figures aim to convince voters to support their organization over the other side. This may lead parties and candidates to seek to polarize the electorate in their favor, while potentially being less reliant on issues that require long-term commitments. In democracies, politicians may be more likely to utilize negative (Damore 2002) or fear-inducing (Brader 2005; Ridout and Searles 2011) campaign strategies with greater uncertainty, while in less democratic or less developed settings, this can mean a focus on cultural or identity concerns such as anti-Americanism (Blaydes and Linzer 2012). From this, I argue that all parties and candidates may gravitate toward value- or identity-based appeals. Such appeals still serve the goals of seeking to persuade voters under uncertain electoral conditions but more importantly, they allow parties to try and differentiate themselves from one another by polarizing the election on such value- or identity-based grounds. This can serve the goal of persuading voters to vote against either incumbents or the opposition. They also may provide parties with an alternative to interest-based appeals, as parties may either be hesitant to tie themselves to such commitments or incumbents may prefer to avoid economic issues if the uncertainty is connected to an economic downturn or crisis. This leads me to offer the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: The higher the degree of contestation in an election, the more likely incumbent and opposition parties and candidates are to emphasize identity or value-based issues, all else being equal.

I also suspect that contestation affects incumbent efforts at electoral interference, as well as voter persuasion. With high contestation, I argue that they are likely to pursue strategies to both persuade voters to support them as well as hinder the opposition because their goal is to simply win the election: they are worried first and foremost about winning. I suspect that financial, regulatory and enforcement resource abuse can all fit this goal. The abuse of financial

resources, including clientelism and patronage, have been cited as useful tools in convincing the electorate to support the incumbent, particularly during contests when the incumbent feels threatened (Magaloni 2006). This type of behavior may compel voters to support the incumbent over an opposition that is less able to engage in distributive behavior. Similarly, Birch (2011) has argued that both regulatory and enforcement resource abuse can be used to obstruct opposition campaign activity. As I have noted, the aim for incumbents when confronted with an uncertain electoral outcome is not only to convince voters to support them, but to persuade them to turn against the opposition. Thus regulatory and enforcement state resource abuse can serve this goal. Interference with candidate registration, politicized decisions by the electoral commission as well as security and police interference can all aim to hinder opposition efforts. Thus these types of interference can try to serve the goal of turning voters against the opposition. Some of these strategies are fairly noticeable and could carry costs, but I argue that under these circumstances, incumbents are more willing to take risks since they need to win the election. This leads to the next hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: The higher the degree of contestation in an election, the more likely incumbents are to abuse financial, regulatory and/or enforcement resources, all else being equal.

Yet when electoral contestation is low, then the goals of both incumbents and opposition politicians and parties are altered. I have argued that when faced with low contestation, I expect incumbent dominance to determine the goals for both sides. For incumbents with low dominance, when faced with low contestation, I expect their primary goal to be preserving the status quo. To do this, they are likely to select strategies of voter persuasion and electoral interference that avoid public scrutiny and build legitimacy. For them, the best result is an unsullied victory. Thus they are likely to avoid divisive issues related economic interests as well

as value and identity. Instead, incumbents are likely to emphasize broad issues with mass appeal. I argue that one strategy to achieve this is by focusing on valence issues. Valence issues provide parties, especially incumbent parties, with popular, easily understood appeals that can help motivate a large segment of the population to vote.

Hypothesis 5: The lower the degree of contestation in an election, the more likely incumbent parties and candidates are to emphasize valence issues, all else being equal.

Turning to the opposition, I argue that their goals during elections with low contestation and low incumbent dominance is low is to signal dissatisfaction. They are not aiming to win the election under these circumstances, I suspect. Instead, they hope to display frustration with the incumbent regime in the short-term, with the hope that they can be more successful in the long-term. Thus I expect them to select strategies that will show their dissatisfaction with the status quo. One way to do this is by directing criticizing the incumbent regime. Due to the low incumbent dominance, opposition figures are not likely to fear regime blowback for public demonstrations of disapproval. They can also signal dissatisfaction with general appeals about democracy and democratic principles. Low contestation can drive opposition parties and candidates to acknowledge the unequal electoral conditions by emphasizing democracy as an electoral strategy. With this I hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 6: The lower the degree of contestation in an election, the more likely opposition parties and candidates are to criticize incumbents and/ or emphasize democracy.

Next, I turn to expectations depending on the degree of incumbent dominance in the state. As I have theorized, I expect the goal for incumbents in hegemonic authoritarian states to be the demonstration of strength, and that with this goal in mind, they are likely to pursue interference strategies that serve this goal. Given the four types of state resource abuse considered, I argue

that the abuse of institutional goals fits this description. This type of abuse is both highly visible and also likely to necessitate the existence of a strong organization (Birch 2011). As Geddes (2006:21) has argued, regimes can demonstrate power through “cheering crowds at rallies, TV coverage of adoring supporters, and massive numbers of real voters”. These are all clear examples of institutional resource abuse, particularly if the supporters are state workers compelled to attend the rally, as is often the case. Other examples include campaign activities being conducted in state buildings and with state resources, including personnel as well as the inability to differentiate when the incumbents is carrying out official duties versus campaign activity. Given that these resources have been argued to demonstrate regime strength, I expect that when incumbents in hegemonic authoritarian regime are more likely to abuse these resources than the other types of resource abuse. With this, I pose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 7: Incumbents in hegemonic authoritarian regimes are more likely to abuse institutional state resources during elections, all else being equal.

However, the goal of demonstrating strength may come through in the actual messages and issue appeals of incumbents in hegemonic authoritarian states as well. As I have theorized earlier, incumbents under such conditions may view outright campaigning negatively, and may prefer to appear “above politics” by refusing to appear in debates or make many overt campaign speeches. Yet incumbents and incumbent parties nonetheless likely need to present some sort of message to voters through their heightened media coverage that I theorize occurs within hegemonic authoritarian states. I argue that basic states emphasizing state strength may be used under these conditions. Incumbents may be likely to assert the need for a strong executive, centralization and stability. Given this, I hypothesize:

Hypothesis 8: Incumbents in hegemonic authoritarian regimes are more likely emphasize state strength during elections, all else being equal.

Finally, I expect the opposition to prioritize the preservation of their voter base when faced with high incumbent dominance. As Greene (2007) argues, opposition parties with little chance of winning tend to focus on niche political issues that are only attractive to their base. While this is often seen as puzzling or even a defeatist strategy, I disagree. As they likely recognize that they are unlikely to win, they may not see the value in explicitly reaching out to more moderate voters supportive of the incumbent regime. In the short-term, they may actually worry about losing more of their core supporters given the disproportionate dominance by the incumbent regime. As political parties and candidates, they still aim to have a role in the imbalanced political system, and elections provide a visible opportunity to do so. Thus they may see the value in stressing the core issues of their party or supporters to try and maintain their voter base. With this in mind, I argue that the opposition may avoid moderate issues in favor of more extreme or niche ones:

Hypothesis 9: During elections in hegemonic authoritarian regimes, opposition parties and candidates are more likely to emphasize niche or extreme issues, all else being equal.

Potential Implications

The theory and hypotheses developed in this dissertation thus integrate the previous scholarship on hybrid regimes by considering incumbent and opposition behavior concurrently, which I argue that this approach contributes to our current understandings of elections in hybrid regimes. First of all, by demonstrating that both sides may have various goals depending on the conditions of the election, and by recognizing these goals, we can better be attuned to explaining counter-intuitive behavior by both sides. Such behavior includes opposition actors making very

little efforts at persuading voters or if incumbents are engaged in electoral interference even when they know they will win the election. This dissertation thus provides a full look at all the political actors operating within hybrid regimes, producing a more complete understanding of the political motivations driving such actors. By highlighting the importance of electoral conditions on the goals of both opposition and incumbent politicians, we can better comprehend the political challenges facing the opposition as well as the power held by incumbents. This also facilitates a greater understanding of the potential for democratization and openings in the political system.

Second, this dissertation considers both efforts at voter persuasion as well as electoral interference with state resources, and it does so by differentiated between strategies of each type. While many studies cited in this dissertation have hinted at various types of strategies available to both sets of actors, this is a relatively novel approach within the literature.¹³ The bulk of studies have a) focused on general or cumulative electoral interference, b) zoomed in on one type of interference (ie. clientelism) or c) discussed incumbent or opposition voter persuasion strategies generally. Furthermore, while many previous studies have hinted at the potential strategic interaction of voter persuasion and electoral interference, I plan to examine these assumptions outright in this dissertation. By disaggregating the various types of voter persuasion and electoral interference available to incumbent actors and opposition figures, I argue that this demonstrates the differing goals held depending on the conditions of the election. This approach has the potential to reveal both clear parallels as well as stark contrasts with both fully democratic and fully autocratic political settings, which can help us understand both why

¹³ Birch's (2011) study does differentiate between types of electoral malpractice, but her differentiation is at different stages (in drafting rules, during the campaign, and on election day). I focus even more specifically on interference during the electoral campaign and argue that different strategies at this stage serve different goals depending on the conditions of the election.

incumbents continue to allow elections as well as why opposition forces choose to take part in contests they often know they will lose. Moreover, I argue that the perspective in this dissertation not only helps demonstrate the changing goals for incumbents and opposition depending on the conditions of the election, but moreover it provides a more complete understanding of elections within hybrid regimes. By showing that both incumbent and opposition political actors strategically select particular types of voter persuasion or electoral interference strategies, I show that elections matter within these contexts. While many highlight elections simply as tools for control within non-democratic states, I agree with Schedler's (2013) characterization that by being open to competition and by allowing opposition the right to participate, incumbents do not ultimately control this institution. They, like the opposition, can use it to serve an informational purpose, but they are still confined to its boundaries.

I focus specifically on election-level factors in theorizing the types of strategies used. My argument is in contrast to many other studies, particularly those on electoral interference, that have focused either on international or state-level factors to explain such behavior. I instead argue that variation between elections is more likely to affect incumbent and opposition strategies overall by altering their respective goals of that election. Again, many studies have hinted at the possibility for changes in motivation or goals, but this dissertation develops a specific framework for understanding how such goals may shift on both sides.

The regional focus of this dissertation on states from the former Soviet Union will also contribute to the growing comparative scholarship on the political development in many of these states. The focus on political party and candidate behavior of both the opposition and the

incumbent regimes will expand knowledge not only on the party systems in these settings,¹⁴ but also the increasing focus on both the dominant incumbent regimes¹⁵ as well as opposition party development.¹⁶ I argue that by examining candidate and political party development both on the incumbent and opposition side in the post-Soviet setting through the lens of electoral competition within hybrid regimes benefits our understanding of these political settings. There has been general agreement that the political party systems in these states remain underdeveloped, and in particular that elections are often plagued by electoral interference at the hands of incumbent regimes and the parties loyal to them. This dissertation aims to examine the interconnections of these issues in the post-Soviet setting, with the goal of producing a more complete representation of the power dynamics and avenues of electoral competition available to political actors.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Case Selection

As this dissertation is concerned with incumbent and opposition electoral behavior in hybrid regimes. I begin by operationalizing this concept. Hybrid regimes must contain elections that are meaningful and allow opposition parties to exist; without such legitimate competition, states would instead be considered fully authoritarian regimes. To ensure that I capture the existence of genuine elections, I follow Hyde and Martinov's (2011) three distinctions of electoral from non-electoral competition to determine whether a state meets this criteria: whether the opposition is allowed to formally organize, whether the law allows multiple political parties to legally exist and contest elections, and whether more than one political party or candidate actually takes part in the elections. I also agree with Schedler's (2013) distinction that hybrid

¹⁴ Examples of recent scholarship on political party development and electoral behavior in Russia and other post-Soviet states includes Kulik and Pshizova (2005), Meleshevich (2007), Herron (2009), and Wilson (2005b).

¹⁵ Eg. Roberts (2012), Robertson (2007), Reuter and Turovsky (2014),

¹⁶ Eg. Bunce and Wolchik (2011), March (2009).

regimes must contain elections for the highest executive decision-making office; this serves to avoid the inclusion of fully authoritarian states that hold either legislative or subnational elections but not elections for the top decision-making officials.

Yet for such regimes to be considered hybrid regimes, they must therefore contain factors that prevent them from being classified as full-fledged democracies. Incumbent electoral interference in elections are not only common features of the political landscape in hybrid regimes, they are often put forward as definitional aspects of hybrid regimes themselves. Of course, such activities can be witnessed in democratic regimes as well¹⁷, making its existence far from demonstrative of a regime that is not democratic. Moreover, if I define my sample of states based on the existence of electoral interference and then seek to test what affects electoral manipulation, the analysis would be tautological. Therefore, instead of focusing on the electoral playing field, I follow the framework presented by Gilbert and Mohseni (2011) in their conceptualization of illiberal hybrid regimes by classifying states as such based on the existence of restrictions on civil liberties. They categorized states on this factor depending on whether they were coded as free, partly free or not free by Freedom House's annual civil liberties scores, and considered states illiberal if they fit into either of the latter two categories.

I argue that the theoretical expectations I have developed applies to hybrid regimes broadly. However, I plan to focus on one region in this dissertation, both to potentially control regional variation, as well as due to data limitations. In selecting a region, I have made sure to pay attention to historical legacies as well as variation in the two main independent variables, the degree of incumbent dominance (competitive versus hegemonic) as well as the amount of

¹⁷ Examples include clientelism and vote-buying in Latin America (eg. Stokes 2005) as well as voter outreach in Japan by the Liberal Democratic Party, which often includes patronage, incentives and gifts aimed at persuading voters (Nyblade and Reed 2008).

electoral uncertainty present in the election. With this in mind, I focus on the post-Soviet region for this dissertation. While almost all states in the post-Soviet region have adopted elections since the collapse of the Soviet Union, most have yet to completely democratize.¹⁸ Moreover, they all share a common starting point for such political development, having gained independence after the disintegration of the USSR. This shared past means that none have had any substantial experience with competitive elections or political party development outside the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Moreover, these states have all faced the challenge of corruption, a factor linked in particular to electoral interference. Many studies of hybrid regimes have noted the former Soviet Union as a region of high concentration of such states (Levitsky and Way 2010; Gilbert and Mohseni 2011), which I argue makes it a useful setting to test this theory.

With this in mind, I present the previous factors for all twelve post-soviet states to determine which fit the criteria stipulated. The factors for these states are presented in Table 3.1. To ease with the presentation of the data, state averages are presented for each factor. The civil liberties scores come from Freedom House, which gives states yearly scores from a scale of one to seven: scores of 1-2 are considered free, 3-5 partly free and 6-7 not free. The corruption scale comes from Transparency International and measures corruption on a scale from zero to ten, with ten being completely clean while zero is completely corrupt. Table 3.1 shows that of the states included, there is some variation. All of the states, with the exception Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, fit the minimal criteria for inclusion. These ten states all legal allow for a political opposition to exist and for multiple political parties to organize. Moreover, during actual

¹⁸ The Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia are the notable exceptions here, having become full members of the EU, which mandates democratic governance. I exclude them for this reason, as well as for their shorter experience under Soviet rule.

elections, multiple parties compete and the executive of the state is elected from a popular vote. This means that an analysis of elections is appropriate for ten of the twelve states. All states maintain civil liberties that are coded as either partly free (3-5) or not free (6-7), and also maintain fairly high corruption scores. This provides support that while these states do maintain genuine open and multiple elections, the political conditions face limitations that prevent the states from being fully democratic. Thus I maintain that the inclusion of these ten states in this analysis as hybrid regimes is appropriate.

Table 3.1: Case Selection of all post-Soviet States from 1992-present

State	Is Opposition legally allowed? From NELDA	Are multiple political parties legal? From NELDA	Does more than one party/candidate compete in elections? From NELDA	Is the Executive elected? From NELDA	Average Civil Liberties score (1993-present) From Freedom House	Average corruption score (1995-present) From Transparency International
Armenia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	3.9	3.0
Azerbaijan	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	5.0	2.2
Belarus	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	5.6	2.9
Georgia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	3.9	3.4
Kazakhstan	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4.9	2.6
Kyrgyzstan	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4.4	2.2
Moldova	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	3.9	2.9
Russia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4.7	2.1
Tajikistan	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	5.7	2.1
Turkmenistan	No	No	Yes	Yes	6.9	1.8

Ukraine	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	3.3	2.3
Uzbekistan	No	Yes ¹⁹	Yes	Yes	6.5	2.0

Indicators

Having established the ten relevant states to be included, I next turn to the indicators used in this dissertation. As the theory presented in the previous chapter explained, the two primary independent variables are electoral contestation and incumbent dominance. I will discuss the measures used for each variable, as well as other conceptualizations of each factor.

Electoral contestation

Electoral contestation seeks to capture the degree of competition within the election, or how certain or uncertain the outcome of the election is. While competition or contestation is an oft-discussed factor in the comparative politics literature, the measures used have varied. One typical measure is a retrospective one that measures the difference between the winner and the first runner up in the election (Eifert, Miguel and Posner 2010). However, this measure leaves much to be desired as it captures the contestation of an election by looking at the election's results and then applying it retroactively to the pre-election period. Schedler (2009) addresses this by using a similar measure that notes the difference between the winner and the runner-up in the most recent previous electoral contest. This is an improvement, but the time between elections can be years, during which many circumstances can change. While one party or candidates may have won a resounding victory, such a result may not accurately capture the degree of contestation in an election two or four years later. Finally, other measures are regionally specific and therefore not always generalizable. In analyzing the effect of political

¹⁹ While multiple parties or candidates have competed in Uzbekistan's most recent elections, they were all overtly supportive of the incumbent

competition on anti-American sentiment, Blaydes and Linzer (2012) created an original measure for elite competition within Muslim-majority states, including the percentage of religious individuals within the state and the variation in religiosity.

None of these previously used measures appear to accurately capture electoral contestation for the purposes of this dissertation. To address this, I have create an index based on multiple factors theorized to affect the electoral contestation, especially within hybrid regimes. One such factor concerns the opposition. A competent and coherent opposition increases the likelihood that the incumbent could be removed from office (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003). As Schedler (2002:49) argues, “(t)o a large extent, it is the strategic interaction between authoritarian incumbents and the democratic opposition that determines how the structural ambiguity of electoral autocracies plays out.” Moreover, many studies have highlighted the fact that when the opposition forms pre-electoral coalitions, this can increase the degree of competition in the election as well as the likelihood that they can unseat an incumbent (Howard and Roessler 2006; Bunce and Wolchik 2011). Thus the presence or absence of a pre-electoral opposition coalition included as one factor that can increase the degree of uncertainty. The data for the presence or absence of an opposition electoral coalition come from Donno (2013).

The second indicator refers to a state’s economic conditions, and in particular, when a state faces economic problems. Under such conditions, the opposition is more likely to see regime change as a possibility and thus to attempt to pose a serious challenge to incumbents (Case 2006), or it may compel party member or regime insiders to defect (Reuter and Gandhi 2011). This is related to the idea that democratic transitions can emerge from serious economic crises by either exhausting elite resources (Bratton and Van de Walle 1997; Bueno de Mesquita

et al. 2003), by upsetting the balance of power between elites within the government (Boix and Svolik 2013) or by diminishing regime legitimacy based on economic performance (Gasiorowski 1995). Moreover, voters are more likely to abandon an autocratic leader when faced with a prolonged economic crisis or a serious economic downturn; during prosperous times, the regime could build support based on its performance, but once this is absent, then voters are willing to consider an alternative (Magaloni 2006). To capture this, I include measures for both whether the economy is said to be doing poorly and whether it is in crisis. These indicators come from the National Executive and Legislative elections across Democracy and Autocracy or NELDA dataset (Hyde and Martinov 2012), which includes dichotomous measures for both.²⁰ Finally, I include a measure for incumbent confidence, which, more specifically, indicates that the incumbent is not confident of victory prior to the elections; this dichotomous measure also comes from NELDA.

Finally, I also include a measure that captures incumbent confidence of victory. This measure also comes from the NELDA dataset and captures whether an incumbent candidate or party is publicly confident of victory during the electoral campaign. I argue that incumbent confidence provides evidence of low electoral contestation, while the lack of confidence can reveal some genuine uncertainty over the outcome of the election. With these four factors, I have produced an index of electoral contestation that ranges from zero to four. A score of 4 would indicate a positive on all four factors, and would represent high electoral contestation. A zero, on the other hand, would signify that the election contains extremely low contestation. I contend that this index of electoral contestation is appropriate for this analysis and is preferable to previously used measures. It is appropriate because it includes factors that all can reveal, both

²⁰ Technically, NELDA includes a measure for whether the economy is said to be doing well; I used the reverse of this to indicate that the economy is not doing well.

logically and based on the literature, how competitive or contested a given election is.

Moreover, it is preferable to previous measures due to its reliance on factors more representative with the actual electoral campaign. It avoids using retrospective or prospective measures based on electoral results. Table 3.2 presents the cases according to their distribution along this index of electoral contestation. This table reveals that not one case is completely contested at a four. Given this, I will consider a score of a two or three to signify medium to high contestation and scores of zero to one will represent very low to low contestation.

Table 3.2 Electoral Contestation

Amount of Contestation	4	3	2	1	0
Executive Election		Armenia 1996 Azerbaijan 2003 Georgia 2008 Ukraine 2010; 2014	Armenia 1998; 2008 Azerbaijan 2013 Georgia 2000; 2004 Kyrgyzstan 2009; 2011 Ukraine 1999; 2004	Armenia; 2003; 2008; 2013 Azerbaijan 1998 Belarus 2001; 2006; 2010 Georgia 2013 Kazakhstan 1999 Russia 1996; 2012 Tajikistan 2006; 2013	Azerbaijan 2008 Kazakhstan 2005; 2011 Kyrgyzstan 2000; 2005 Moldova 1996 Russia 2000; 2004; 2008
Legislative Election		Armenia 1995; 2013 Georgia 2008; 2012 Kyrgyzstan 2007 Moldova 2001; 2009; 2010 Russia 1993; 1999 Ukraine	Armenia 1999; 2003 Azerbaijan 1995; 2005 Belarus 2004 Georgia 1999 Kyrgyzstan 2010 Moldova 1998; 2014 Russia 2011 Ukraine	Armenia 2007 Azerbaijan 2000; 2006; 2010 Belarus 1995; 2008; 2012 Georgia 1995; 2003; 2004 Kazakhstan	Belarus 2012 Kazakhstan 2004; 2007; 2012 Moldova 2005

		2012; 2014	1998	1999 Kyrgyzstan 2000; 2005 Moldova 1994 Russia 1995; 2003; 2007 Tajikistan 2000; 2005; 2010 Ukraine 1994; 2002; 2006; 2007	
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Incumbent Dominance

Next, I turn to the second explanatory variable, incumbent dominance. This variable has a straightforward and commonly-utilized operationalization. The distinction between low and high incumbent dominance has been synonymous with the differentiation between competitive and hegemonic authoritarian regimes, respectively. While the differences between these two concepts have been discussed in the previous chapter, I now turn to their measurement. Previous studies have coded a state as hegemonic if its executive is reelected with at least 70% of the vote (Brownlee 2009a; Roessler and Howard 2009; Donno 2013). Such a vote share demonstrates that the incumbent executive is highly dominant enough to be supported by more than two thirds of the electorate. This measure is prospective, by using election results from a previous contest and applying them to future ones. Yet in this case, I find this prospective approach more appropriate. First, it takes into consideration multiple contests, by looking at the reelection of an incumbent. This ensures that the contest is more representative of the political situation and is not an aberration or a one-off event. It takes the long-term trend of incumbent dominance into account. Second, it looks specifically at the executive, which is often the seat of imbalanced

power within hybrid regimes (Schedler 2006). Finally, it is parsimonious enough to clearly capture change in incumbent dominance. If an incumbent or an incumbent-endorsed candidate fails to win at least 70% of the vote, then its classification would also shift from hegemonic to competitive authoritarian. Other measures similar to incumbent dominance, as I will describe next, are less capable of capturing such movement. Thus I am confident that this indicator is suitable for measuring incumbent dominance.

Previous studies have described other measures related to the concept of incumbent dominance. One prominent example of this is of dominant or hegemonic political parties. While dominant parties exist in fully democratic states, scholars have also examined dominant party in non-democratic and hybrid regimes more recently (Magaloni 2006; Greene 2007). Dominant or hegemonic parties are those that maintain supermajorities for extended periods of time, often with the aid of state resources and electoral interference. The existence of such parties can provide additional resources incumbent regimes. First of all, they help regimes remain in power longer than those without such parties (Geddes 1999). Dominant parties can keep elites loyal to the regime and prevent them from defecting to the opposition (Brownlee 2007; Magaloni 2008). Members of the party are often rewarded with leadership roles and prominent positions within the regime that override any desire to leave the regime (Reuter and Turovsky 2014). Thus such parties can be valuable to incumbent regimes. The existence of a dominant political party also is more likely in a hegemonic authoritarian regime. In the post-Soviet region, the only state where an incumbent with high dominance governs without a dominant party is Belarus. Given that the established measure for incumbent dominance contains significant overlap with the presence of a dominant party, I do not include a separate indicator for it. I do discuss the presence of absence of such parties in the case study chapters to take its theoretical advantages into consideration.

Another factor that has received much attention is the export of natural resources. When such exports comprise a sizable percentage of total Gross Domestic Product, the revenue can provide incumbents with significant resources to be used for political ends. As natural resources have been commonly argued to either derail or deter democratization (Ross 2001; Alaksen 2010, although see Haber and Menaldo 2011 for a contrarian take on this), many have also argued that this is due to the revenue from such resources insulating the regime from external pressures to democratize (Levitsky and Way 2010; Boix and Svolik 2013). Similarly, natural resource revenues can be used by a regime to repress opposition challenges (Ross 2001), can potentially serve as sources of revenue for patronage to maintain support (Ross 2001; Miller 2015) or their presence combined with low state capacity may ultimately contribute to the persistence of non-democracy (Haber, Razo, and Maurer 2003). Most of these arguments have still argued that more is better, and have not alluded to a threshold effect. One exception is Boix and Svolik (2013), who suggest that when a state's economy receives at least a third of its total GDP from the export of a single natural resource, it gives regimes strength to maintain their power through the various causal mechanisms discussed above. While I agree that natural resources exports may influence political behavior and political outcomes, particularly within hybrid regimes, I am not convinced that this can always be correlated with incumbent dominance. Natural resources prices are dictated by many global economic factors, as well as OPEC decisions. A drop in the price of oil could be damaging to a state reliant on oil and gas exports. However, this damage may not necessarily be captured by simply measuring the percentage of oil exported, as this number may not have shifted much despite the change in prices. I consider oil exports as a relevant control variable, but thus do not treat it as part of incumbent dominance.

Having discussed these related concepts, I return to the treatment of incumbent dominance as the difference between competitive and hegemonic authoritarian states. The previous chapter argued that I expect elections within hegemonic authoritarian regimes to typically face low electoral contestation. Highly contested elections within hegemonic authoritarian states are expected to be rare, and when they do occur, I expect them to be more likely at the legislative or regional level. Conversely, I expect more variation in contestation within competitive authoritarian regimes. Table 3.3 presents the placement of all cases by incumbent dominance and electoral contestation. Based on this presentation, these expectations appear to have some support. There is high contestation within competitive authoritarian regimes (scored at a three) but such cases are not present within hegemonic authoritarian regimes, with one exception.²¹ Medium contestation (a score of two) exists within both competitive and hegemonic authoritarian regimes. However, three of these four cases are legislative elections, which follows the theoretical expectations that greater contestation is likelier to be at the legislative or regional level within hegemonic authoritarian states. Finally, within competitive authoritarian regimes, all levels of contestation are present. Thus despite the lack of incumbent dominance, elections may face high or extremely low contestation in these states.

Dependent Variables

This dissertation examines the goals and hypothesized electoral behavior of incumbent and opposition actors. The behavior includes strategies at voter persuasion and electoral interference. The following three chapters investigate these relationships using different types and sources of data. Chapter 4 test hypotheses on voter persuasion strategies used by both

²¹ Azerbaijan's 2003 executive election is scored as a three for electoral contestation, and is also considered a hegemonic authoritarian regime.

incumbent and opposition political actors. As multiple hypotheses deal with the issue appeals raised by such actors, I turn to the Comparative Manifestos Project or CMP for data on the dependent variables. These data code political party manifestos published in domestic newspapers at the start of each campaign period for legislative elections. Each sentence is coded based on what it refers to, including particular economic positions (support for free enterprise) as well as values or cultural issues (support for a state's traditions and national values). The data also covers multiple elections in each state, allowing me to examine how changes in the conditions of elections in each state may lead to changes in party messages and appeals. Thus the unit of observation in this analysis is election-year for each state. For the specific dependent variables needed for this analysis, I combine multiple variables from the CMP that reflect appeals made to interests, values or cultural identities, appeals about state strength as well as about democracy. These indicators thus measure the percentage of a total party program that discusses such value and cultural linkages. The specific details about each indicator are presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 5 investigates the hypothesized relationship between contestation, incumbent dominance and electoral interference. As the data discussed in the previous section from the CMP would not allow me to evaluate these hypotheses, I turn to an alternative source of data for these questions. Given the lack of a publicly available dataset on the specific types of interference strategies utilized, I have gathered original data on state resource abuse by

Table 3.3 Incumbent Dominance and Electoral Contestation

Degree of Incumbent Dominance	<i>Low/ CAR</i>	<i>Low/ CAR</i>	<i>Low/CAR</i>	<i>Low/ CAR</i>	<i>High/ HAR*</i>	<i>High/ HAR</i>	<i>High/ HAR</i>
Amount of Contestation	<i>3 (High)</i>	<i>2 (Medium)</i>	<i>1 (Low)</i>	<i>0 (Very Low)</i>	<i>2 (Medium)</i>	<i>1 (Low)</i>	<i>0 (Very Low)</i>
Executive Elections	Armenia 1996 Georgia 2008 Ukraine 2010; 2014	Armenia 1998; 2008 Georgia 2000; 2004 Kyrgyzstan 2009; 2011 Ukraine 1999; 2004	Armenia; 2003; 2008; 2013 Georgia 2013 Russia 1996	Kyrgyzstan 2000; 2005 Moldova 1996 Russia 2000; 2004	Azerbaijan *2003 (actually a 3); 2013	Azerbaijan 1998 Belarus 2001; 2006; 2010 Kazakhstan 1999 Russia 2012 Tajikistan 2006; 2013	Azerbaijan 2008 Kazakhstan 2005; 2011 Russia 2008
Legislative Elections	Armenia 1995; 2013 Georgia 2008; 2012 Kyrgyzstan 2007 Moldova 2001; 2009; 2010 Russia 1993; 1999 Ukraine 2012; 2014	Armenia 1999; 2003 Azerbaijan 1995 Georgia 1999 Kyrgyzstan 2010 Moldova 1998; 2014 Ukraine 1998;	Armenia 2007 Belarus 1995 Georgia 1995; 2004 Kyrgyzstan 2000; 2005 Moldova 1994 Russia 1995; 2003 Tajikistan 2000; 2005 Ukraine 1994; 2002; 2006; 2007	Moldova 2005	Azerbaijan 2005 Belarus 2004 Russia 2011	Azerbaijan 2000; 2006; 2010 Belarus 2008; 2012 Georgia 2003 Kazakhstan 1999 Russia 2007 Tajikistan 2010	Belarus 2012 Kazakhstan 2004; 2007; 2012

incumbents. To do this, I read election reports from election observer missions conducted by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and coded each election for the presence or absence of each instance of state resource abuse. These reports provide summaries of what the election observer missions witnessed firsthand or received reports of regarding the conduct of the elections. Such reports therefore note instances of abuses of state resources, and give specific examples of such behavior. Therefore, I have read the final reports issued by the OSCE for all the elections that they observed, both legislative and executive, in the relevant post-Soviet states included in this dissertation, and coded instances of institutional, financial, regulatory and enforcement state resource abuse. The specific details regarding the coding of these four variables are included in chapter 5.

Chapters 6 and 7 look at case study comparisons of specific elections. The purpose of these case studies is to try and merge the analyses of the previous two chapters by looking at both electoral interference and voter persuasion by incumbent actors, as well as more general electoral strategies beyond the issues raised by both sides. The data for the dependent variable, electoral strategies, come from a variety of sources, including election-monitoring reports, academic treatments of the elections, and domestic and international news coverage.

Control Variables

I also include many controls that may also affect electoral strategies utilized by opposition and incumbent actors. As discussed earlier, economic and political development have been important factors for the emergence of programmatic politics in democratic states (Kitschelt and Kselman 2013). Therefore, I include a measure of the state's GDP per capita as an indicator of the state's economic development. This measure comes from the World Bank. Economic inequality may also affect parties' likelihood of focusing on economic or value-based issues

(Tavits and Letki 2014). Given this, I include a GINI coefficient to measure the amount of inequality present in each state in the year of the election. I also include a variable that codes for how many elections the state has had to account for its experience with the institution of elections²². This variable also can control for time in the analyses. Political institutions may also be relevant to the types of issues raised by parties during legislative elections. In particular, some states in the former Soviet Union contain a mixed electoral system, where some amount of the seats are determined by proportional representation, while the rest are won in single-member districts (SMD); conversely, states may also use either a fully proportional or fully single member district system. Thus I include dichotomous measures for whether the electoral system for the legislative branch is mixed or proportional; SMD districts represent the reference category. These measures come from Norris' data on political institutions, and was confirmed by checking each country's electoral system at the Inter-Parliamentary Union website.

While the previous indicators have been at the country-level, I also include party-level variables. Given that many of the hypotheses are specific to incumbent or opposition parties, I need to control for whether the party is in the opposition or part of the regime. Given that this data only considers political parties during legislative elections, I code this variable based on whether the party publicly supports the incumbent regime or not. As six of the seven states have executives that are elected separately, I argue that support for or against the ruling president captures more variation and nuance.²³ If I used a variable that considered only whether the party had won the most votes in the previous election, thereby representing whether it was the

²² While all states in my sample emerged after the collapse of the Soviet Union, some have held more elections than others. This variable seeks to capture any changes associated with the continued presence of elections since 1991.

²³ Moldova is the only state in this sample that adheres to a parliamentary system of government, with the ruling executive chosen by the party that secures a majority in the legislature.

incumbent party, this would actually miss or overlook important party dynamics. One phenomenon noted in hybrid regimes is that while some parties are overtly connected to the ruling president, others may also serve as pseudo-opposition parties (March 2009). Moreover, some parties may choose to voice their support for the president in states with hegemonic authoritarian states due to the level of incumbent dominance as a strategy to remain viable or to avoid interference. Thus I coded a variable for whether the party supported the president from the election summaries provided by the Inter-Parliamentary Union data. Finally, I also include a variable for the age of each party to consider how a party's development may affect the issues it emphasizes during elections. This variable was created by counting in how many elections each party has participated.

This chapter has clarified the overarching concept of hybrid regime. It has justified the regional case focus for this dissertation by demonstrating that the region meets the necessary conditions for inclusion and contains important similarities in terms of historical legacies as well as domestic factors like corruption. It has justified the operationalization of the two main explanatory variables, electoral contestation and incumbent dominance. Finally, it explained the data sources for the dependent variables of interest. Having accomplished this, I proceed to empirically examine the hypothesized relationships put forward in this dissertation. The next four chapters present both quantitative and qualitative considerations of these hypotheses.

Chapter 4: Quantitative Investigation of Voter Persuasion Strategies of Incumbents and Opposition Parties

I begin the empirical analysis of this dissertation by examining how the conditions of an election may affect strategies of voter persuasion utilized by both incumbent and opposition political actors. This chapter provides a quantitative analysis of the theorized explanatory

variables on the types of issues emphasized during elections. Therefore, it serves as the first empirical investigation into some of the relationships hypothesized in the previous chapter.

Descriptive Statistics

Before I turn to the multivariate analysis, I present some descriptive statistics of the various dependent variables. To begin, I clarify that the hypotheses tested in this chapter are related to the types of issues emphasized by political parties prior to elections. These are presented in Table 4.1. Hypotheses 1 and 2 are competitive and opposing hypotheses, given the unclear theoretical expectations for economic interest appeals. Thus I cannot find support for both of these hypotheses. The remaining hypotheses are not in opposition to one another. As this chapter analyzes the amount of space a political party's official program devotes to certain issue areas, I begin by demonstrating that these issues do vary between elections as well as between parties over time. This is important, as this dissertation argues that electoral factors (incumbent dominance in the state and electoral contestation) are related to the types of issues emphasized by parties and candidates. I cannot expect to find such relationships if these issues appeals do not vary overtime. I begin with the first issue area, economic concerns. In creating this variable, I follow the coding strategy used most recently by Tavitz and Letki (2014) using this same CMP data. The main difference I make is that I am not interested in ideological positions, only whether or not economic issues are present. This variable represents a combination of individual indicators within the CMP data, which is listed in Table 4.2. Figure 1 shows the variation in terms of political party emphasis on these issues in each state. The x-axis contains the years of elections for which there is data, and the y-axis measure the percentage of a

party's program that focuses on economic interest issues. I contend that the data presented for each state²⁴ demonstrates clear party variation on these economic interest issues over time.

Table 4.1: Hypotheses Tested

<i>Hypothesis 1</i>	<i>The higher the contestation of the election, the more likely incumbent and opposition parties and candidates are to emphasize interest-based issues, all else being equal.</i>
<i>Hypothesis 2</i>	<i>The lower the contestation of the election, the more likely incumbent and opposition parties and candidates are to emphasize interest-based issues, all else being equal.</i>
<i>Hypothesis 3</i>	<i>The higher the contestation of the election, the more likely incumbent and opposition parties and candidates are to emphasize identity or value-based issues, all else being equal.</i>
<i>Hypothesis 5</i>	<i>The lower the contestation of the election, the more likely incumbent parties and candidates are to emphasize valence issues, all else being equal.</i>
<i>Hypothesis 6</i>	<i>The lower the contestation of the election, the more likely incumbent and opposition parties and candidates are to emphasize democracy, all else being equal.</i>
<i>Hypothesis 8</i>	<i>Incumbents in hegemonic authoritarian states are more likely to emphasize issues related to state strength, all else being equal.</i>

Table 4.2: Indicators of Economic Issues

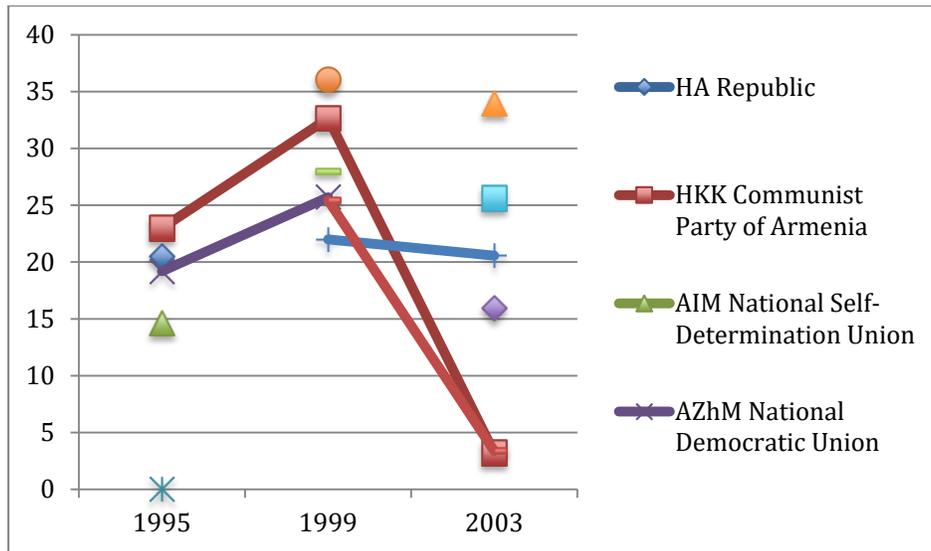
Economic interests	From Comparative Manifestos Project (CMP) data: <i>per401</i> (Support for Free Enterprise), <i>per402</i> (Tax incentives for business), <i>per403</i> (Market Regulation), <i>per404</i> (Economic Planning), <i>per412</i> (State control for Economy), <i>per413</i> (State nationalization of industries), <i>per414</i> (Support for Economic
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²⁴ Data for Belarus was only available for one year, so I cannot claim that there is variation over time there.

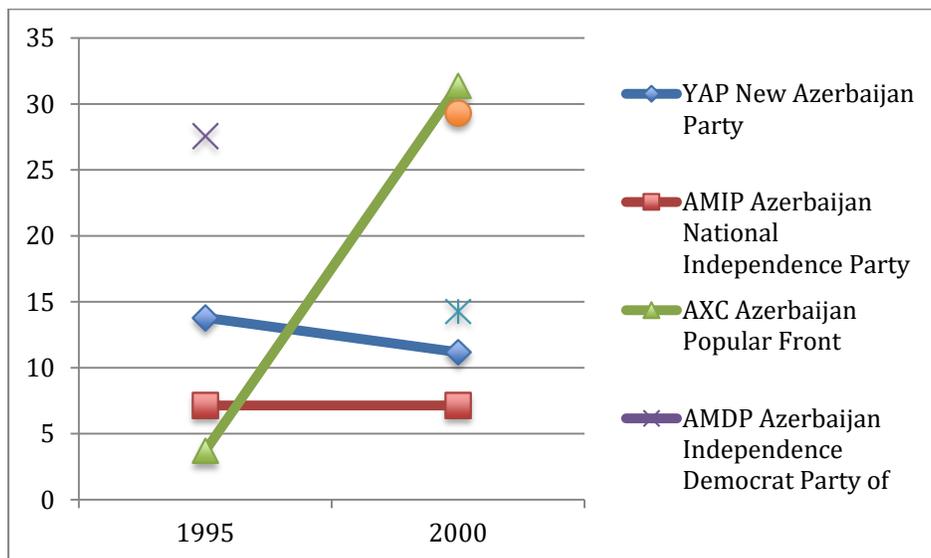
	Orthodoxy), <i>per504</i> (Support for welfare state expansion), <i>per505</i> (Opposition for welfare state expansion), <i>per701</i> (Positive references to labor groups), <i>per702</i> Negative references to labor groups), <i>per703</i> (Support for agriculture and farmers)
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Figure 4.1: Economic Interests Variable Over Time by State

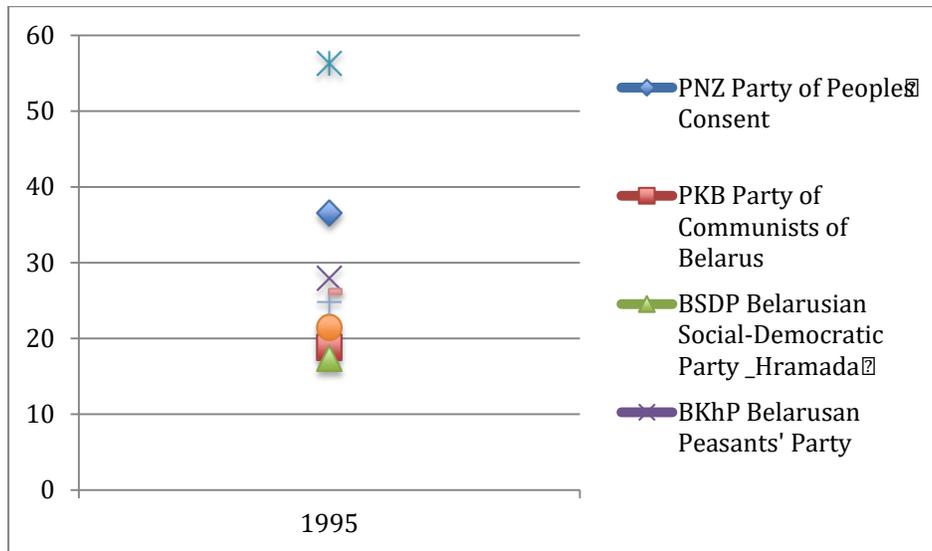
Armenia



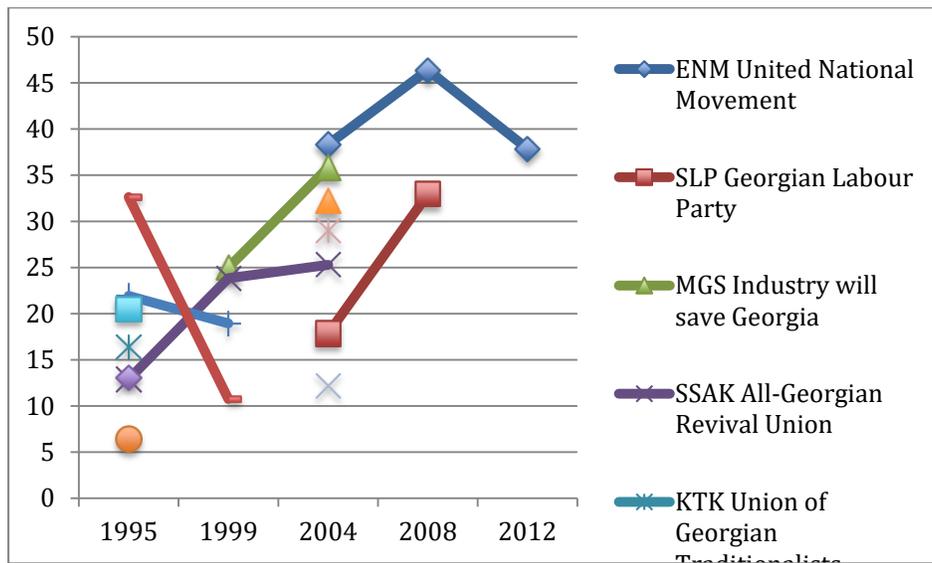
Azerbaijan



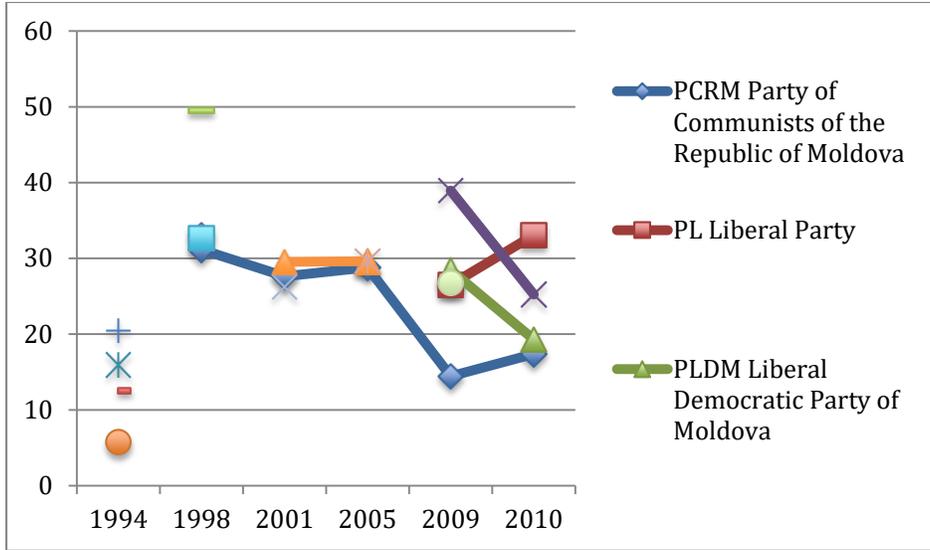
Belarus



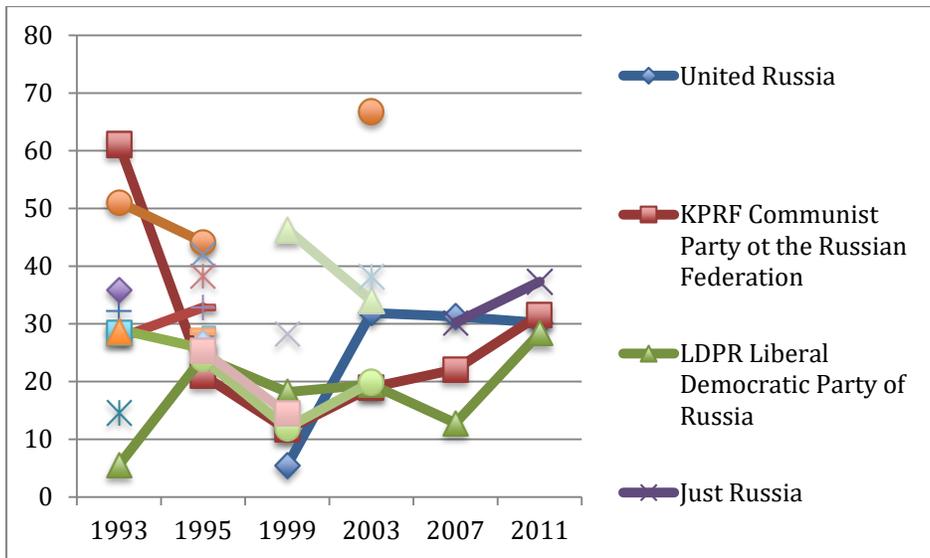
Georgia



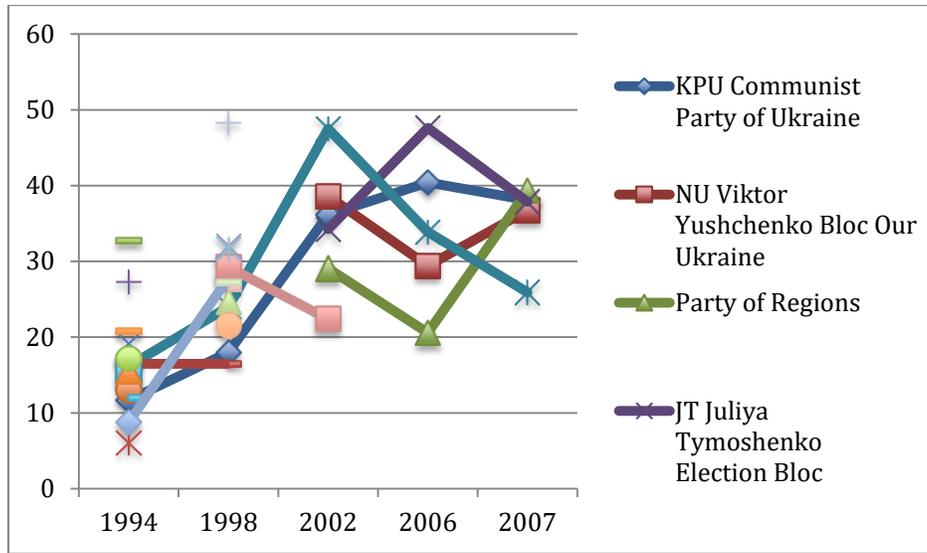
Moldova



Russia



Ukraine



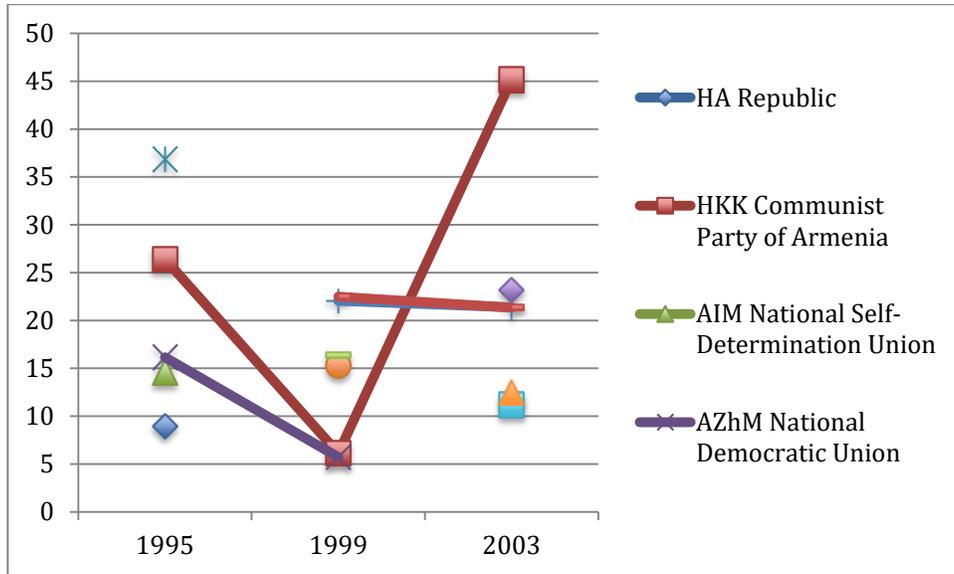
Next, I also present some descriptive statistics on the value and identity-based issue appeals. This variable was also created using a combination of indicators from the Comparative Manifesto Project. Those included are displayed in Table 4.3. As in Figure 4.1 above, Figure 4.2 demonstrates that party emphasis on value and identity issues clearly varies over time in each state.

Table 4.3: Value and Identity Issue Indicators

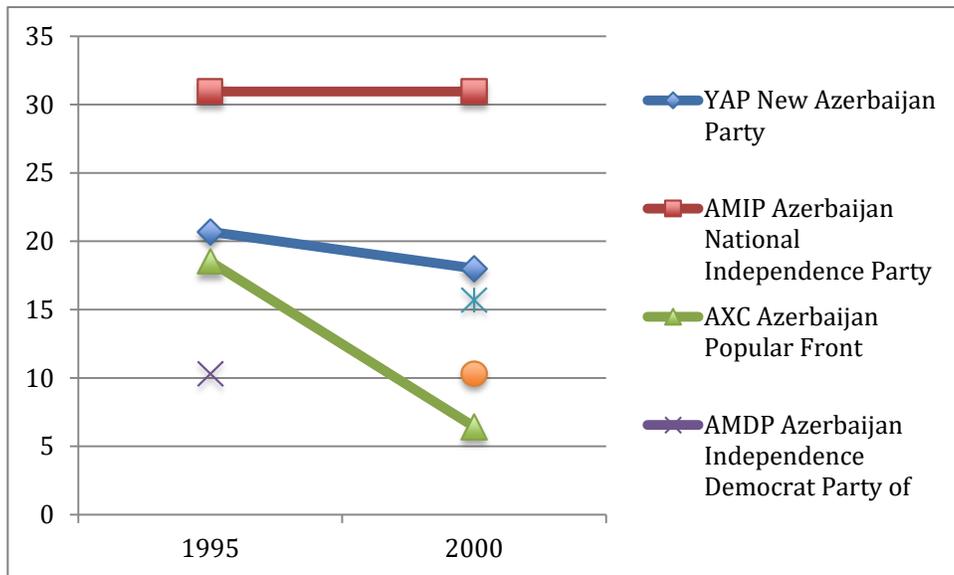
Value and Identity Issues	<p>From CMP data: <i>per601</i> (Support for National way of life), <i>per602</i> (Critical of patriotism), <i>per603</i> (Support for Traditional Morality), <i>per604</i> (Critical of Traditional Morality), <i>per607</i> (Support for multiculturalism), <i>per608</i> (Critical of multiculturalism), <i>per6081</i> (Critical mentions of Roma), <i>per6072</i> (Support for Cultural Autonomy), <i>per705</i> (Support for underprivileged minorities), <i>per706</i> (Support for non-economic demographic groups), <i>per7051</i> (Support for domestic minorities), <i>per7052</i> (Support for national minorities abroad), <i>per7062</i> (Support for refugees)</p>
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Figure 4.2: Value/ Identity Issues Over Time by State

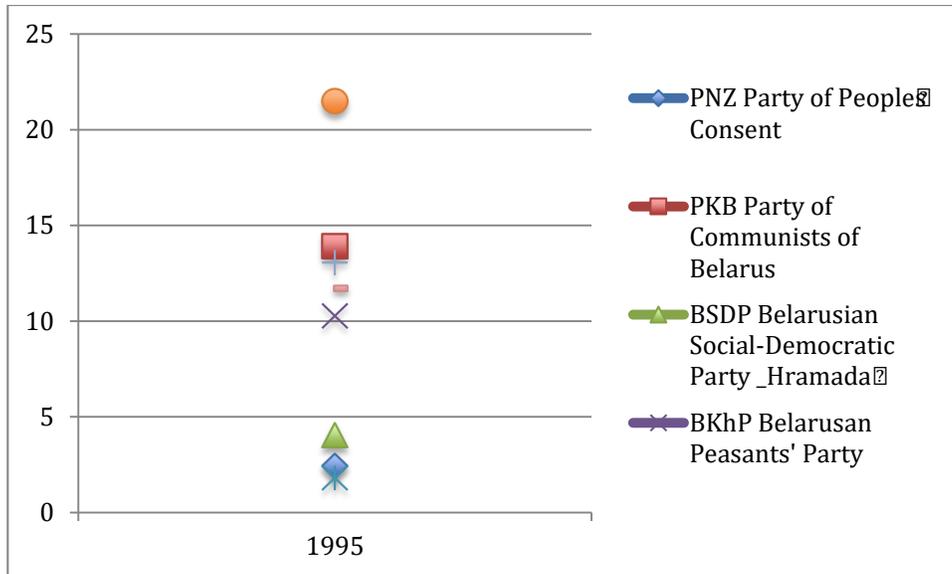
Armenia



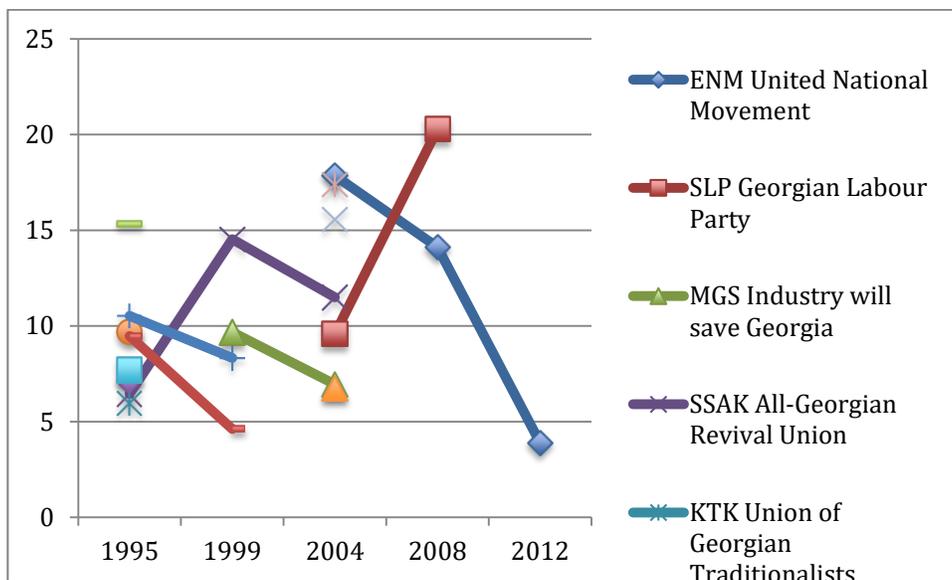
Azerbaijan



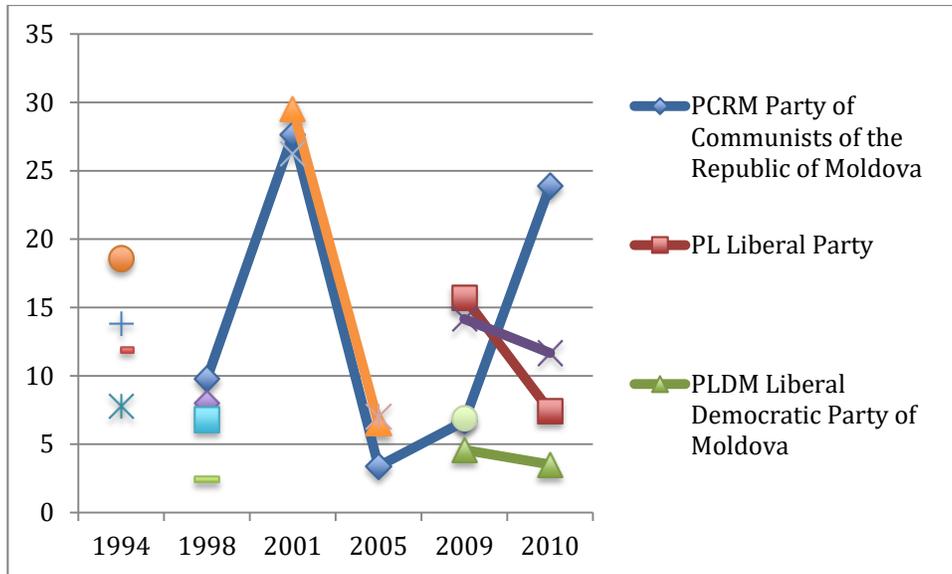
Belarus



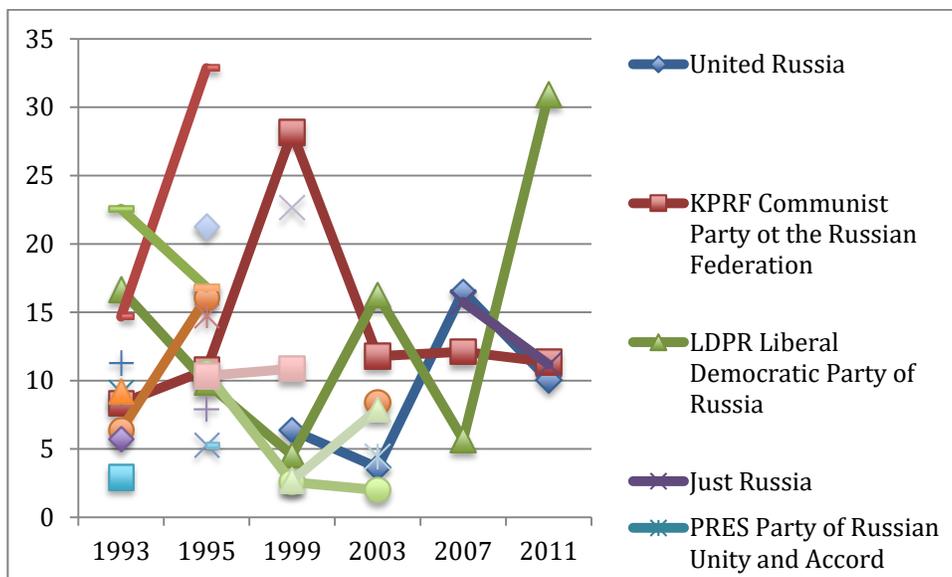
Georgia



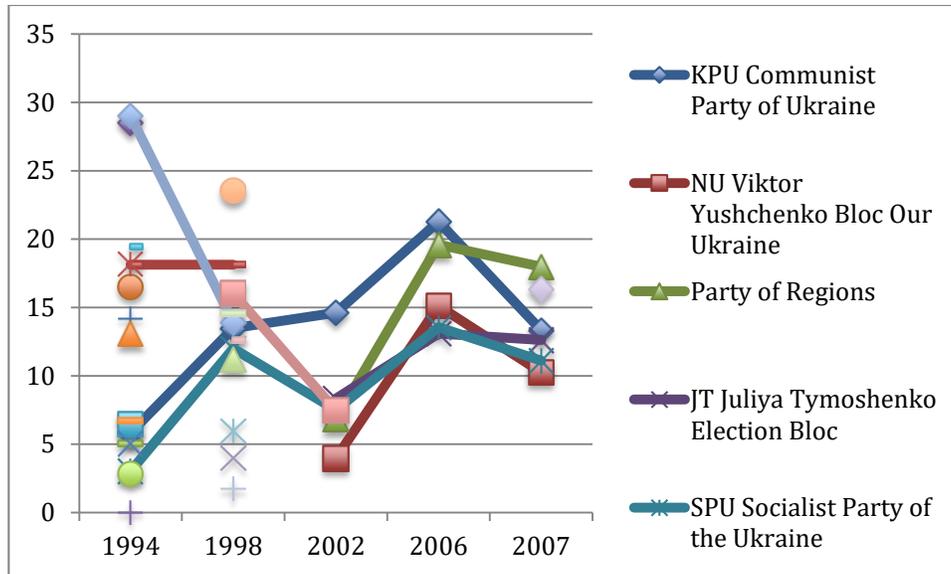
Moldova



Russia



Ukraine



The final two types of issues utilized in the subsequent analysis are valence issues, strong state appeals and appeals for democracy. To create measures of these dependent variables, I also combine multiple indicators from the CMP. The indicators used are presented the Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Appeals for Democracy, Valence Appeals and Strong State Appeals Indicators

Support for Democracy	From CMP data: <i>per201</i> (Support for freedom and human rights), <i>per202</i> (Support for Democracy)
Valence issues	From CMP data: <i>per106</i> (Support for policies of peace), <i>per304</i> (Supportive of efforts to reduce corruption), <i>per605</i> (Support for law and order), <i>per6013</i> (Support for national security)
Strong State Appeals	From CMP data: <i>per302</i> , (Support for political centralization) <i>per303</i> (Support for government and administrative efficiency), <i>per305</i> (Support for political authority), <i>per109</i> (Support for national sovereignty)

Multivariate Analysis

To analyze the relationship between these various indicators and issue appeals, I estimate cross-sectional time series regression with fixed effects and clustered standard errors. A multilevel analysis is needed as it contains two levels of data, country-level and party-level. Thus

estimating a conventional ordinary least squares regression with such data would lead to data analysis issues including underestimated standard errors and clustering (Steenburgen & Jones 2002).

Table 4.5 displays the first set of results from this analysis on the emphasis of interest-based appeals by political parties in their official programs. As I have stated earlier, I am not interested in whether the party adheres to a particular ideological dimension of economic interests along the conventional left-right spectrum. Instead, this analysis simply seeks to test whether and in what direction electoral contestation is associated with increases in the emphasis on economic interests in party programs generally. The first column consists of a baseline model that includes all the control variables but does not include either of the primary explanatory variables, electoral contestation and whether the state is a hegemonic authoritarian regime at the time of the election. This model finds that three variables have a statistically significant association with the percentage of a program devoted to economic interests, the state's experience with elections, not being a pro-government party, and the age of the party. Consistent with findings about democracies, greater experience with elections is associated with an increase in emphasis put on economic interests in a party's program. However, somewhat counter intuitively, the age of a party is negatively related to the amount of attention given to economic interests. Furthermore, that the coefficient for pro-governmental parties is negative demonstrates that being an opposition party is associated with an increase of 3 % in the attention put on economic issues in a party program.

Table 4.5: Interest-Based Appeals

Baseline Model	Contestation Only	Incumbent Dominance Only	Full Model
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Contestation	-	-2.246+	-	-2.28+
		(0.946)		(1.063)
Competitive Authoritarian Regime	-	-	8.144+	6.899+
			(4.167)	(2.93)
Mixed System	3.996	6.156+	4.275	5.304+
	(4.738)	(3.106)	(3.9)	(2.398)
PR System	4.602	3.816	4.693	3.376
	(8.624)	(4.747)	(6.305)	(3.48)
GDP per capita	0.001	0.001	0.004	0.003
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Economic Inequality	0.644+	0.804*	0.737*	0.899**
	(0.299)	(0.234)	(0.272)	(0.222)
Experience with Elections	2.714*	2.979**	2.601**	2.884**
	(0.779)	(0.722)	(0.707)	(0.574)
Pro- Government	-3.476*	-3.085**	-3.449*	-3.153*
	(1.103)	(0.979)	(1.108)	(0.966)
Age of Party	-2.282*	-2.495*	-2.063*	-2.286*
	(0.817)	(0.853)	(0.844)	(0.879)
Constant	-6.612	-10.065	-14.087	-15.981
	(10.062)	(12.047)	(9.08)	(9.763)
N (observations)	187	169	187	169
N(groups)	7	7	7	7
R-squared	0.1088	0.096	0.1219	0.1132

*Standard Errors in Parentheses, p-value + <0.10, *<0.05, **<0.01, ***<0.001*

The next three models include the variables hypothesized to have a relationship with the attention paid to economic interests by parties; the second and third models include the variables individually, and the fourth contains the full model. In both the second and fourth models, elections with higher contestation are statistically significant at the .10 level and are negatively associated with emphasis on economic issues. This result is revealing. Parties are more likely to emphasize economic interests in less contested elections. This shows support for the second hypothesis, but not the first. I have stated that economic interest appeals could be costly during highly contested elections by limiting the candidate or party in terms of potential voters. These findings suggest that economic issue appeals are less useful during highly contested elections.

Given this, it is possible that emphasizing such issues does not contribute to the goal of winning elections when faced with high contestation. This could be because such issues narrow the potential voters willing to support a party. Turning to the other explanatory variable, incumbent dominance in the state, the results demonstrate that parties in hegemonic authoritarian regimes are less likely to emphasize economic issues than parties in competitive authoritarian states, as this coefficient is statistically significant at the .10 level. In these models, the coefficient for pro-government parties remains negative and statistically significant, suggesting that economic issues are more likely to be emphasized by an opposition party. Moreover, the longer a state has conducted elections is consistently related to increased coverage on economic interests, while older parties are less likely to focus on economic issues than younger ones. Finally, the final three models also find that a state's level of inequality, measured by a GINI coefficient, is positively associated with a higher amount of coverage on economic interests in party programs, which makes intuitive sense.

Next, I turn to value-and identity-based appeals. As discussed in the previous chapter, I theorize that higher electoral contestation might make parties more likely to focus on values or identity-based appeals as a method of criticizing their opponents in a strategy to win the election. Table 7 displays the results from these analyses. The second and fourth models provide support for these hypotheses. In both models, the coefficient for electoral contestation in an election is statistically significant and positive. Specifically, this shows that a one-level increase in the amount of uncertainty in the election is associated with an increase a 1.2 percent increase in the amount of a party's program that emphasizes values or identity issues. I have theorized that emphasis on value and identity issues may serve the goal of winning the election by convincing voters to turn against other parties. A focus on value and identity issues can polarize the

electorate and sway more voters to both support and avoid particular parties, thus fulfilling this goal. The final model also reveals a statistically significant and negative relationship between incumbent dominance and value and identity appeals. When the party operates in a competitive authoritarian state, this is associated with a 2.37 percent increase in the focus on values or identity issues in an election program. I have theorized the goals for incumbent and opposition actors within hegemonic authoritarian regimes are to demonstrate strength and preserve their electorate, respectively. I posit that identity and value appeals in particular would not demonstrate strength for pro-government parties, which may partly explain this negative relationship. Furthermore, it does not appear to matter whether a party is in the opposition or supports the governing regime, as this variable does not reach statistical significance. This follows the theory developed earlier, as I have argued that both sides should be likely to utilize this strategy when they are interested in winning the election.

Table 4.6: Values/ Identity-Based Appeals

	Baseline Model	Contestation Only	Incumbent Dominance Only	Full Model
Contestation	-	1.233* (0.340)	-	1.239** (0.289)
Competitive Authoritarian Regime	-	-	1.585 (1.224)	2.366*** (0.404)
Mixed System	-0.038 (1.565)	-0.623 (2.135)	0.016 (1.713)	-0.915 (2.133)
PR System	2.94+ (1.129)	3.642 (1.952)	2.958+ (1.419)	3.491+ (1.69)
GDP per capita	-0.00007 (0.001)	-0.00009 (0.001)	0.0004 (0.001)	0.0005 (0.001)
Economic Inequality	0.105 (0.108)	0.01 (1.315)	0.123 (0.98)	0.042 (0.153)
Experience with Elections	0.056 (0.499)	-0.087 (0.593)	0.034 (0.479)	-0.12 (0.589)
Pro-government	0.33 (1.281)	0.167 (1.315)	0.335 (1.289)	0.144 (1.309)

Age of Party	0.268 (0.817)	0.371 (0.866)	0.311 (0.783)	0.443 (0.828)
Constant	6.949+ (3.288)	8.843* (2.985)	5.494 (2.977)	6.814 (2.815)
	187 7	169 7	187 7	169 7
R-squared	0.0002	0.0018	0.0001	0.000

*Standard Errors in Parentheses, p-value + <0.10, *<0.05, **<0.01, ***<0.001*

I next turn to party emphasis on valence issues. As discussed in the previous chapter, I hypothesize that incumbent or pro-governmental political actors may be more motivated to highlight valence issues during elections with low amounts of electoral uncertainty. I argue this as valence issues may serve the incumbent's goal of increasing voter turnout, so the regime can claim a sizable victory. Table 8 displays the results from these analyses. Unfortunately, I do not find evidence supportive of this hypothesis in these multivariate results. Electoral contestation is not statistically significant in its association with the percentage of valence issues. The presences of either a mixed electoral system and a proportional representative electoral system is statistically significant and positive with the percentage of a party's program devoted to valence issues. However, of the 187 total observations in my data, 145 are of either mixed or proportional representation electoral systems, so this finding may simply reflect that many of the parties in my sample highlight valence issues often. Economic inequality is also consistently associated with the emphasis on valence issues, but negatively. An increase in the amount of economic inequality in a state is related to a decrease in the emphasis on valence issues; this could be evidence that parties may shift focus toward more positional issues given the economic inequality including welfare spending.

Table 4.7 Valence Issue Appeals

	Baseline Model	Contestation Only	Incumbent Dominance	Full Model
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	Only			
Contestation	-	-0.079 (0.488)	-	-0.081 (0.473)
Hegemonic Authoritarian Regime	-	-	0.511 (2.268)	1.086 (2.251)
Mixed System	4.159* (1.529)	5.957** (1.429)	4.141* (1.531)	6.091** (1.304)
PR System	6.945*** (1.26)	7.761*** (1.649)	6.939*** (1.128)	7.831*** (1.446)
GDP per capita	-0.001 (0.0008)	-0.0007 (0.0008)	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)
Economic Inequality	-0.167* (0.061)	-0.189** (0.05)	-0.173* (0.051)	-0.204** (0.051)
Experience with Elections	-0.09 (0.178)	-0.085 (0.17)	-0.083 (0.175)	-0.07 (0.152)
Pro-government	0.692 (0.943)	0.846 (1.069)	0.69 (0.95)	0.856 (1.076)
Age of Party	-0.467+ (0.234)	-0.51+ (0.256)	-0.481* (0.194)	-0.543 (0.217)
Constant	11.061** (2.944)	9.943* (2.038)	11.53** (2.31)	10.875*** (1.317)
	187 7	169 7	187 7	169 7
R-squared	0.0131	0.397	0.0111	0.0320

Next, I turn to appeals in support of democracy and democratic principles. As hypothesis 5 stated, I expect opposition parties to be more likely to emphasize democratic issue appeals with low contestation. Highlighting the value and importance of democracy can contribute to the goal of signaling dissatisfaction with the incumbent regime. Table 4.8 displays these results. The baseline model reveals that income inequality is negatively associated with democratic appeals. This means that as income inequality in the state rises, parties are less likely to focus on democracy, which aligns with the previous finding in table 4.5. Rising income inequality is related to an increased focus on economic issues, so parties may in turn neglect democracy as an issue appeal. This result holds in all the subsequent models. Experience with elections is also

negatively associated at the .10 level with democratic issues. In other words, as states have held elections for a longer period of time, parties are less likely to emphasize democratic issues and concerns. While this might make sense within full democratic states, this sample of hybrid regimes does not meet those criteria. When I add contestation to the analysis, this indicator fails to gain statistical significance in this model. The presence of both mixed and proportional electoral systems are associated with decreases in the support for democratic issue appeals in many subsequent estimations. Incumbent dominance also fails to yield a statistically significant relationship when introduced on its own. A positive relationship is found between GDP per capita and democratic issue appeals, meaning that as GDP per capita rises, parties are more likely to emphasize appeals supporting democracy.

Table 4.8: Democratic Issue Appeals

	Baseline Model	Contestation Only	Incumbent Dominance Only	Full Model	Interaction Model
Contestation	-	-0.404 (0.238)	-	-0.397+ (0.169)	1.815** (0.404)
Competitive Authoritarian Regime	-	-	2.025 (1.303)	2.559+ (1.273)	6.268*** (1.081)
Contestation *Competitive Authoritarian	-	-	-	-	-2.355** (0.429)
Mixed System	-1.336 (1.73)	-3.479* (1.237)	-1.267 (1.871)	-3.795** (1.000)	-4.11**
PR System	-2.238 (1.761)	-3.61* (1.42)	-2.215 (1.902)	-3.773* (1.312)	-4.054* (1.198)
GDP per capita	0.001 (0.0007)	0.0008 (0.0008)	0.002* (0.0007)	0.001+ (0.0007)	0.001+ (0.0006)
Economic Inequality	-0.387*** (0.066)	-0.318** (0.068)	-0.364** (0.082)	-0.283** (0.075)	-0.255* (0.072)
Experience with Elections	-0.329+ (0.156)	-0.277+ (0.121)	-0.357 (0.186)	-0.312+ (0.137)	-0.27 (0.144)
Pro-government	-1.184 (1.229)	-1.321 (1.242)	-1.178 (1.239)	-1.346 (1.256)	-1.372 (1.258)

Age of Party	-0.446 (0.258)	-0.433 (0.265)	-0.392 (0.244)	-0.355 (0.253)	-0.394 (0.257)
Constant	21.551*** (1.684)	22.099*** (1.222)	17.669** (4.046)	17.345** (3.766)	13.143
	187 7	169 7	187 7	169 7	169 7
R-squared	0.0989	0.1188	0.0476	0.0608	0.0501

*Standard Errors in Parentheses, p-value + <0.10, *<0.05, **<0.01, ***<0.001*

The full model introduces statistically significant relationships for both electoral contestation and incumbent dominance. Since these two indicators gained significance only when being included together in the analysis, it suggests an interactive effect between the two. To address this, I create an interactive variable between contestation and incumbent dominance by multiplying the two indicators together. The final model containing this variable finds that it is statistically significant and negative in relation to democratic issue appeals. This means that parties are likely to emphasize support for democracy during elections with low contestation and low incumbent dominance. Moreover, while I had hypothesized that opposition parties would be more likely to highlight support for democracy with low contestation, the variable for pro-government parties is not statistically significant. In other words, there is no association between whether the party supports the incumbent regime and also emphasizes support for democracy. While the goals for opposition parties is to signal dissatisfaction with the regime, for incumbents it is to preserve the status quo. While I had expected valence issues to be a useful strategy under such conditions, it is possible general support for democracy could do this as well. Thus it may serve the goals of both opposition and pro-government parties to emphasize support for democracy under these conditions.

Finally, the previous chapter theorized that for incumbent and pro-government political actors, the goal in elections in hegemonic authoritarian regimes is to demonstrate strength.

Given this, I can evaluate this relationship by examining the amount of emphasis put on issues of political strength and centralization in the final analysis. These results are reported in Table 9.

As hypothesized, the association between parties in hegemonic authoritarian states and emphasis on a strong state is statistically significant and positive. Parties in these states are likely to increase the emphasis on a strong state in their election program by about 7 %. This provides support for the argument that for incumbents in hegemonic authoritarian states, the goal in elections is to demonstrate strength to the electorate as well as fellow elites and rivals. However, the results in the Table 9 show that the coefficient for pro-government parties is not statistically significant in its association with strong state appeals. It appears that all parties are likely to include references to a strong state in their election programs. These results also show that such issues are likely to receive greater focus in states that maintain either a mixed or a proportional representation electoral system, as well as in states with more experience with elections. Yet a higher GDP per capita is negatively related to such appeals.

Table 4.9: Strong State Appeals

	Baseline Model	Contestation Only	Incumbent Dominance Only	Full Model
Contestation	-	0.748 (0.582)	-	0.73 (0.7)
Competitive Authoritarian Regime	-	-	-6.135* (2.046)	-7.024* (2.212)
Mixed System	0.906 (2.982)	4.138+ (1.983)	0.696 (3.607)	5.006* (1.372)
PR System	5.756* (2.302)	7.937*** (1.354)	5.688 (3.314)	8.385** (2.121)
GDP per capita	-0.005** (0.001)	-0.005** (0.0008)	-0.007** (0.001)	-0.006*** (0.001)
Economic Inequality	0.00002 (0.131)	-0.115 (0.11)	-0.069 (0.13)	-0.211 (0.12)
Experience with Elections	1.663+ (0.763)	-1.568* (0.591)	1.748+ (0.881)	1.664+ (0.69)

Pro-government	2.651 (2.061)	2.844 (2.007)	2.631 (2.038)	2.914 (1.997)
Age of Party	0.355 (0.278)	0.345 (0.326)	0.19 (0.374)	0.132 (0.463)
Constant	13.073** (2.65)	12.591* (2.617)	18.704*** (2.587)	18.614** (4.229)
	187 7	169 7	187 7	169 7
R-squared	0.0005	0.0034	0.0004	0.0002

*Standard Errors in Parentheses, p-value + <0.10, *<0.05, **<0.01, ***<0.001*

Discussion

Collectively, these results have demonstrated support for some — but not all — of the hypotheses posed in the previous chapter. First, the results supported hypothesis 2, that high contestation makes parties less likely to emphasize economic interest issues, but not reverse hypothesis. Parties may avoid such issue appeals when trying to win as they require long-term commitments and can limit the pool of available voters. Within this post-communist context that has typically featured turbulent transitions to a market economy, it may be that parties worry greater scrutiny of their economic policies and previous records might in fact be detrimental when trying to win an election. This is especially telling as I found that pro-government parties are less likely to emphasize economic interests. Another factor that may have influenced this outcome is the nature of the elections. All the political party appeals considered in this chapter are from legislative elections in the seven post-Soviet states. Yet, six of these seven states maintain presidential or semi-presidential systems, meaning the legislature is not the seat of significant power.²⁵ It is possible that, because of this, parties take less initiative when it comes to economic interest appeals when the election is highly contested. Given this, I explore the role

²⁵ Moldova is the only state in this sample that maintains a parliamentary system of government.

of economic interest appeals in executive elections in the case study chapters further in this dissertation.

I found support for the hypothesis that the higher the degree of contestation in an election, the more likely parties are to emphasize value or identity-based issues, meaning that parties are more likely include more statements regarding values or identities when the election is highly contested. I argue that this is related to the shared (and more obvious) goal for both opposition and pro-regime parties: to win the election outright. Since parties are more likely to raise such issues during elections that are more contested, I contend that this provides some basic evidence that the parties operate strategically and consider the intended outcomes of such actions. As such appeals are related to the electoral factors of contestation and incumbent dominance, and are likely to be utilized by any party, this supports the notion that such appeals can serve as polarizing devices.

Yet other types of non-economic interest appeals are more likely to emerge during elections with low contestation. While I found no relationship between contestation and valence appeals, the analysis did find an increase in appeals supporting democracy during low contestation elections in competitive authoritarian regimes. This finding suggests that emphasizing democratic principles could serve the goals of both opposition and incumbent parties under these circumstances. Finally, I also found that all parties are more likely to emphasize strong state issues within hegemonic authoritarian regimes. This fits with the theorized expectations of incumbent actors, who I argue are likely to seek to demonstrate strength under such conditions. That this relationship has been found for all parties, though, could indicate that other parties are influenced by such appeals and may feel the need to respond or also address such issues, given the significant incumbent dominance in the state. This chapter

has analyzed political party behavior within the post-Soviet context, where presidents are almost universally more powerful. Thus this relationship could be a product of the focus on parties, who may be especially influenced by dominant executives within hegemonic authoritarian states.

Conclusion

These results suggest that parties do alter their programs depending on the conditions of the election. While some of the coefficients are small, meaning that the substantive impact is less noticeable, the statistical results still demonstrate the relationship between strategies of voter persuasion and incumbent dominance and electoral contestation. This supports the broader thrust of this dissertation, that parties and candidates behave strategically even within hybrid regimes. Just as parties and candidates may have various electoral goals within democratic states, so too are there differing goals for incumbent and opposition actors within non-democratic hybrid regimes. I argue that the results presented in this chapter demonstrate the strategic concerns held by all political actors regardless of their position. While low contestation elections may have predictable outcomes, pro-government and opposition parties highlight differing issues than they would with high contestation. I contend that the existence of these varying electoral goals suggests that these elections continue to deserve attention. Opposition and incumbent parties continue to participate in them, alter their party platforms, and take these events seriously given their capacity to serve an informational role.

Chapter 5: Quantitative Analysis of Incumbent Strategies at Electoral Interference

While the previous chapter focused solely on the issues emphasized by opposition and pro-regime parties during elections, I also have posed hypotheses on incumbent strategies of electoral interference. This section therefore seeks to investigate how electoral contestation as well as incumbent dominance may be related to both the overall interference of elections, but

also to usage of specific types of interference. Therefore the hypotheses tested in this chapter are presented in Table 5.1. Table 5.2 presents the coding for each of the four types of state resource abuse. The results presented in this chapter show that the abuse of institutional resources is associated with high incumbent dominance in hegemonic authoritarian states, but not with electoral contestation, which is counterintuitive, but fits the theory of this dissertation. Moreover, increased electoral contestation is associated with the increased and combined usage of financial, regulatory, and enforcement state resource abuse strategies; yet contestation is not related to these three types of state resource abuse on their own. Finally, when considering the total abuse of state resources, neither incumbent dominance nor electoral contestation is statistically significant in their relationships with total state resource abuse. These results demonstrate that the types of electoral interference may serve differing goals, making it important to take the contextual factors of the election into consideration in our broader understanding of incumbent electoral interference in hybrid regimes.

Table 5.1: Hypotheses on Electoral Interference

<i>Hypothesis 4</i>	<i>The higher the contestation of the election, the more likely incumbent parties and candidates are to abuse financial, regulatory and/or enforcement state resources, all else being equal.</i>
<i>Hypothesis 7</i>	<i>With high incumbent dominance, incumbent parties and candidates are more likely to abuse institutional state resources during elections, all else being equal.</i>

Table 5.2: Coding of Electoral Interference Variables

Institutional State Resource Abuse	From OSCE election observation reports: mentions of 1. Use of state employees at official campaign events, 2. Use of state/government property, buildings or organizations for campaign activities, 3. Campaigning by officials during official state
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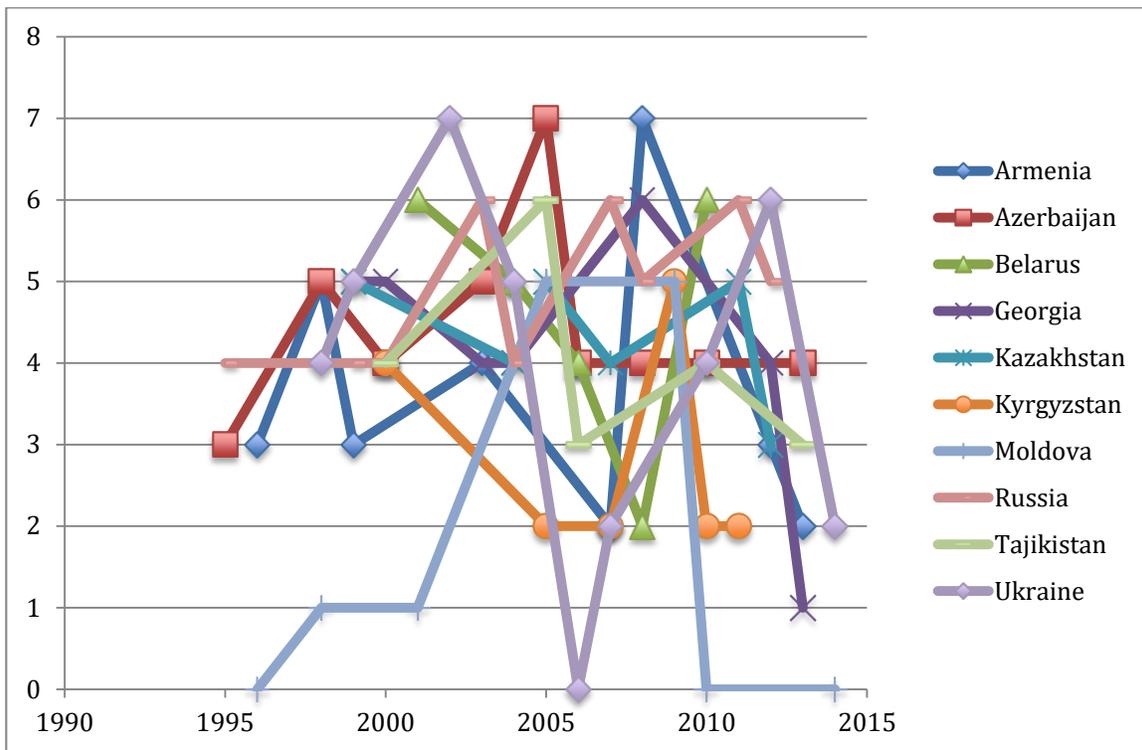
	activities, 4. Abuse of state-owned media
Financial State Resource Abuse	From OSCE election reports: mentions of 1. Direct allocation of goods or financial support to voters, 2. State financial activity beneficial to incumbent candidates, 3. Announcements of unplanned increases in state spending on welfare and social services
Regulatory State Resource Abuse	From OSCE election reports: mentions of 1. New regulations seen to hinder or obstruct opposition activities, 2. Politicized or biased activities by electoral commissions, 3. New campaign or political finance rules seen to benefit incumbents
Enforcement State Resource Abuse	From OSCE election reports: mentions of 1. Security or police interference into activities of opposition, 2. Unbalanced usage of security details to candidates

I utilized the same measures of electoral contestation and incumbent dominance introduced in Chapter 3. I also include most of the same controls, including experience with elections, economic inequality in the state and GDP per capita as well as a dummy variable for whether or not it was an executive election.²⁶ I do not include the two party-level variables from the previous analysis, as the data in this section are not party-specific. Before getting into the multivariate analysis, I first present some descriptive statistics of the dependent variables. Figure 5.1 displays the variation over time of total electoral interference in all ten states. This includes a sum of the four types of state resource abuse coded, institutional, regulatory, financial, and enforcement, with the maximum value being 12. As this figure shows, there is indeed widespread variation in the occurrence of electoral interference within each state over time. As it

²⁶ While I included a control variable for economic inequality in the initial baseline (a GINI coefficient), this variable was not significant, and was missing seven observations, so its inclusion lowered the N from 78 to 71. Therefore, I decided to drop this variable given its insignificance and its lower N. For all subsequent analyses with the more specific dependent variables of state resource abuse, I have done the same when this variable was again found to be insignificant in the baseline model.

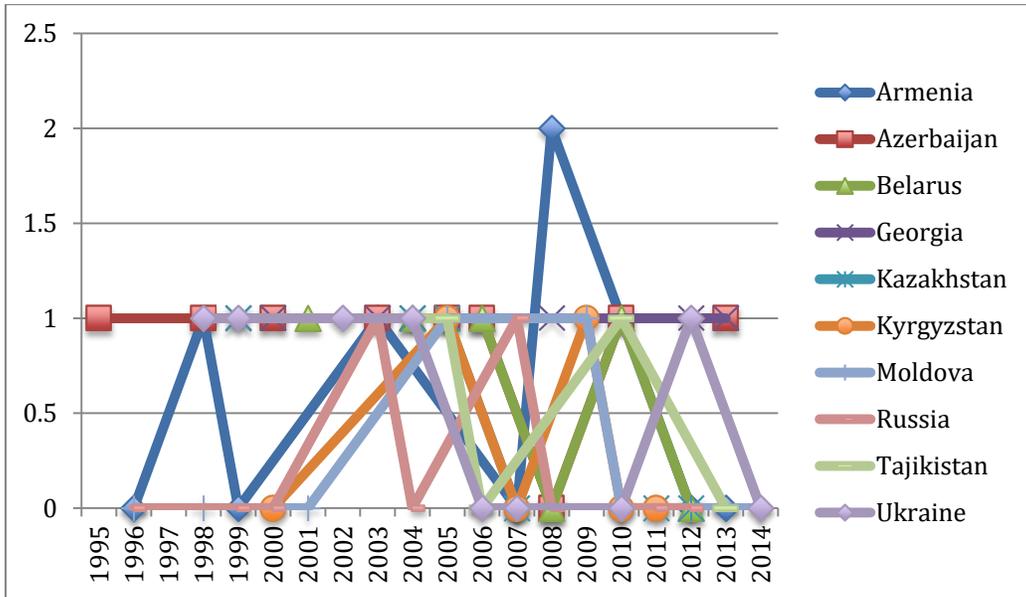
is clear that all the states have engaged in the abuse of state resources to varying degrees over the last twenty years, this confirms my suspicion that such behavior likely differs depending on the circumstances of the election.

Figure 5.1: Total Abuse of State Resources

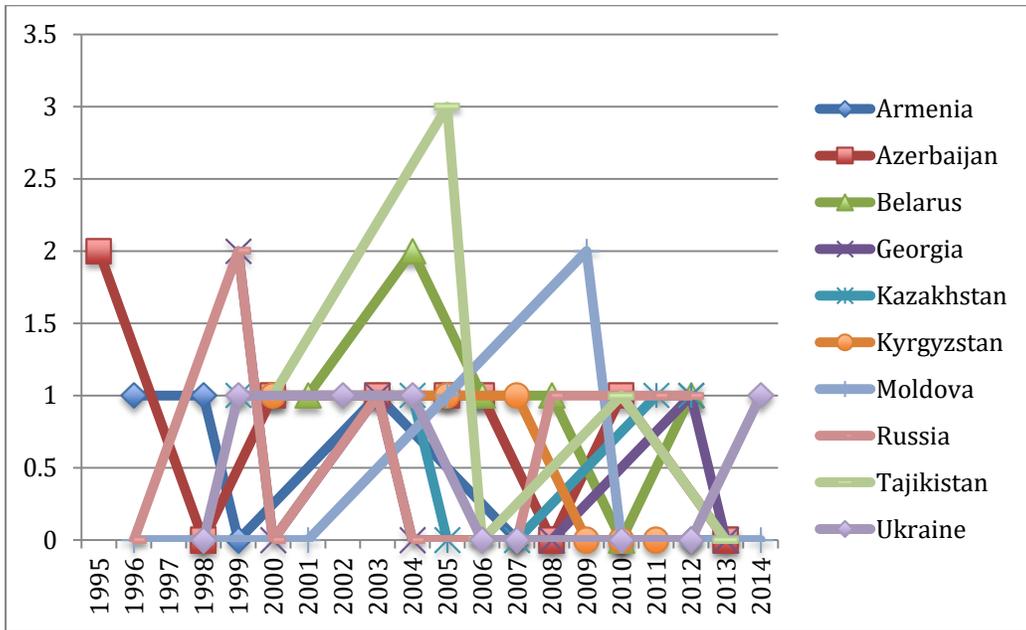


This section is especially interested in the different types of state resource abuse and how they may be strategically employed to meet certain goals depending on the circumstances of the election. Therefore, in figure 5.2, I present the four types of state resource abuse (institutional, financial, regulatory, and enforcement) for each state over time. These figures also demonstrate the variation visible in the usage of these differing types of electoral interference within states over time. This variation fits my suspicions that incumbents may see these strategies of electoral interference as serving different purposes depending on the election. These figures reveal that, depending on the election in question, different packages of strategies appear to be used. I

Abuse of Enforcement Resources



Abuse of Regulatory Resources



Next, I briefly present some descriptive statistics on the relationships of the primary independent variables and the abuse of state resources. Figures 5.3 and 5.4 shows these relationships with incumbent dominance, or whether the state is a hegemonic or competitive

authoritarian regime, and electoral contestation, respectively. As these two figures show, there does not appear to be a clear association between contestation, or whether the state is competitive or hegemonic, and the usage of electoral manipulation. The abuse of state resources, as well as the lack of abuse, is visible at all levels of electoral contestation. Yet, within hegemonic authoritarian regimes, electoral interference is always present; not one case is scored as a zero. In other words, despite high incumbent dominance, incumbents in hegemonic authoritarian regimes always abuse at least some type of state resource. This is similar to Simpser’s (2013) findings that the most power regimes also engage in the most blatant types of electoral interference. Nonetheless we see high electoral interference in both competitive and hegemonic authoritarian regimes

Figure 5.3: Incumbent Dominance and Total Electoral Interference

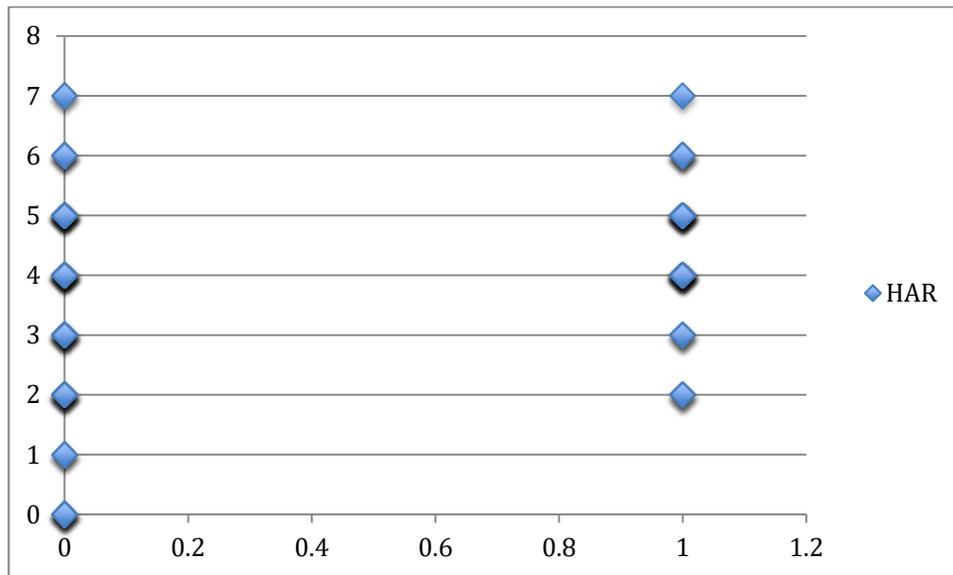
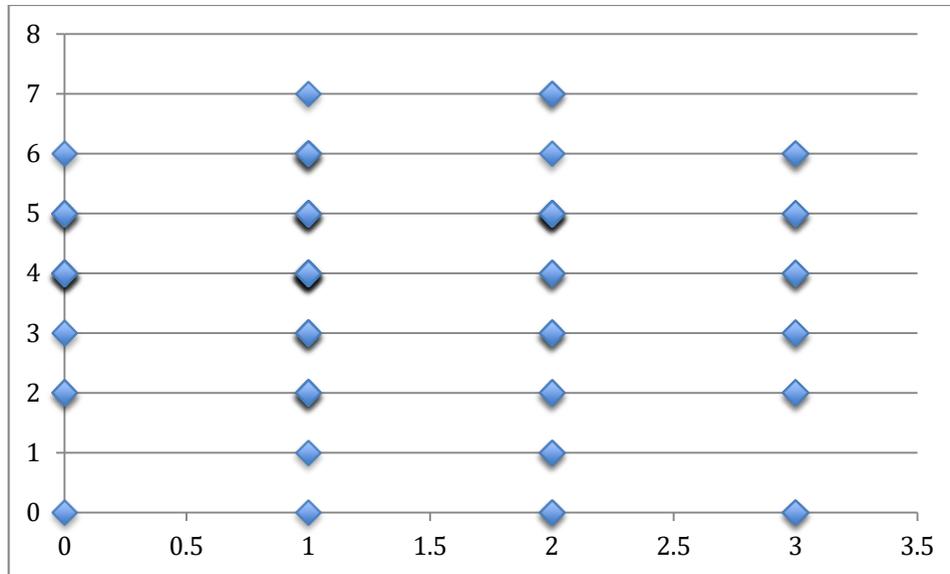


Figure 5.4: Electoral Contestation and Total Electoral Interference



Having examined some of the descriptive statistics, I now turn to the multivariate analysis. The dependent variables have all been coded as count variables, with some types showing a greater range than others, seen in the final descriptive statistics presented in Table 5.3. Yet to ease in the analysis of the results, I have converted the four types into dichotomous variables. For institutional resources, the distribution is fairly equal, so I focus only on high levels of abuse, dichotomizing the indicator at whether the election witnessed the abuse of two, three or four different types of institutional resource abuse, as this signifies a high level of abuse of this resource. For the other three types of resources, I dichotomize the indicators for whether at least one type of abuse was reported, given the distribution. Thus, to explore the associations between the conditions of the election and the abuse of state resources, I estimate a cross-sectional logistic regression.

Table 5.3: Distribution of Types of State Resource Abuse

Types of Abuses cited	Institutional Resources	Financial Resources	Enforcement Resources	Regulatory Resources
0	9	58	39	41
1	12	19	41	34

2	23	4	1	5
3	17	0	n/a	1
4	20	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total	81	81	81	81

Table 4 displays the coefficients from this estimation using only the indicator for the abuse of institutional resources. Coefficients in logistic regression estimations reveal whether there is a positive or negative relationship, but are not useful in understanding the substantive effect of an independent variable on the dependent variable. Given this, while the table reports the coefficients, I will discuss the results in terms of odds ratios, as this provides more substantive information. The first column displays the baseline model including only the control variables. This model finds the coefficients for executive elections and gross domestic product per capita statistically significant and positive, meaning that presidential elections and a higher GDP per capita are associated with high levels of the abuse of institutional resources.

Next, the second model includes the electoral contestation, one of the primary independent variables. The theory developed in this dissertation has argued that the degree of contestation in an election may not be linked to the abuse of institutional resources, as this type of abuse may be less effective in persuading voters to support incumbents over the opposition. Moreover, it requires significant incumbent assets to carry out. Instead, I have theorized that such resources instead may serve the goal of demonstrating incumbents' strength in hegemonic authoritarian regimes. In congruence with these expectations, the coefficient for electoral contestation is not statistically significant in relation to the abuse of institutional resources. This suggests that the degree of contestation is not related to the strategy of abusing institutional

resources. While much of the literature has suggested that competition or contestation in an election is likely to influence the decision to interfere with elections, this instead shows that at least for institutional resources, this is not the case. As Simpson (2013) argues, and as the results show, incumbents abuse these resources *even when* they feel confident of victory.

This leads to the other explanatory variable, the degree of incumbent dominance in the state. I have theorized that incumbents in hegemonic authoritarian states, or states where the incumbent is highly dominant, may be more likely to abuse institutional resources, as this type may suit the goal of demonstrating serious power and strength under these conditions. As institutional resources include compelling state employees to attend campaign rallies and the lack of separation between the duties of an elected office and campaign activity, I have argued that such resources could serve this goal. The third model includes the indicator for whether a state is hegemonic, and finds that this coefficient is statistically significant at the .10 level and is positive, providing support for the theory advanced in this dissertation. This means that when the incumbent is operating in a hegemonic authoritarian state, this produces an increase of 13.092 in the odds that institutional resources will be highly abused. Such a result may be counterintuitive, as it means that in states where the incumbent already dominant, electoral interference nonetheless occurs. This fits with the theory that incumbents may have varying goals depending on the conditions of the election, and that, regardless of how contested the election is, incumbents in hegemonic authoritarian states hope to signal power to their fellow elites, the opposition, and the public at large. The fourth model includes both variables, and finds that these relationships persist. This full model also displays the continued relationship between executive elections and institutional resource abuse. When an election is held for an executive, instead of a legislative, post, the odds that institutional resources will be abuse are

4.802. Finally, a mixed electoral system is also associated with the abuse of institutional resources in this full model of analysis.

Table 5.4: Abuse of Institutional State Resources

	Baseline Model	Contestation Only	Incumbent Dominance Only	Full Model
Contestation	-	0.368 (0.372)	-	0.451 (0.386)
Hegemonic Authoritarian Regime	-	-	2.567+ (1.363)	2.572+ (1.316)
Executive Election	1.22+ (0.66)	1.345* (0.685)	1.392* (0.698)	1.569* (0.628)
Mixed System	1.315 (0.808)	1.191 (0.823)	2.893* (1.319)	2.674* (0.871)
PR System	-0.072 (0.838)	-0.191 (0.848)	1.447 (1.278)	1.258 (1.268)
GDP per capita	0.0004+ (0.0002)	0.0005* (0.0003)	0.0001 (0.0002)	0.0002 (0.0003)
Experience with Elections	-0.077 (0.142)	-0.135 (0.158)	-0.02 (0.143)	-0.088 (0.159)
Constant	-0.318 (0.952)	-0.707 (1.048)	-1.953 (1.374)	-2.430+ (1.457)
N(States)	10	10	10	10
N(Total)	78	78	78	78
Wald Chi squared	11.2	11.31	12.49	13.22

*Standard Errors in Parentheses, p-value + <0.10, *<0.05, **<0.01, ***<0.001*

Next, I turn to the abuse of financial state resources, which includes basic clientelism as well as broader spending on communities by a campaigning incumbent. As discussed in the theory chapter, I argue that financial resources likely serve the goals of winning an election with high contestation. Much of the literature on clientelism and vote-buying suggests that this activity is akin to voter persuasion, and thus likely to be used when the election is contested. Table 5.5 displays these results. The baseline model finds that the coefficient for executive

elections is negatively associated with the abuse of financial resources, and this relationship hold throughout all four models. In the final model, an executive election produces an increase of 0.29 in the odds that financial resources will be abused. In other words, financial resource abuse is much more likely to be used during legislative elections. When the indicator for electoral contestation is included, I find that while an increase in contestation is positively associated with the abuse of financial resources, this coefficient is not statistically significant. Moreover, the next model shows that incumbents in hegemonic states are no more likely to abuse financial resources than those in competitive authoritarian states.

Table 5.5: Abuse of Financial Resources

	Baseline Model	Contestation Only	Incumbent Dominance Only	Full Model
Contestation	-	0.573 (0.349)	-	0.493 (0.353)
Hegemonic Authoritarian Regime	-	-	-0.848 (0.704)	-0.678 (0.767)
Executive Election	-1.362* (0.613)	-1.312* (0.624)	-1.31* (0.586)	-1.242* (0.628)
Mixed System	0.22 (0.794)	0.009 (0.834)	-0.209 (0.842)	-0.31 (0.871)
PR System	-0.542 (0.925)	-0.811 (1.013)	-0.839 (0.888)	-0.962 (0.94)
GDP per capita	-0.00002 (0.0002)	0.0001 (0.0002)	0.00007 (0.0002)	0.0002 (0.0002)
Experience with Elections	0.231+ (0.132)	0.162 (0.142)	0.206 (0.128)	0.148 (0.136)
Constant	1.389 (0.956)	-2.08 (1.082)	-0.815 (1.015)	-1.499 (1.204)
N(States)	10	10	10	10
N(Total)	78	78	78	78
Wald Chi squared	6.9	8.34	8.27	8.87

*Standard Errors in Parentheses, p-value + <0.10, *<0.05, **<0.01, ***<0.001*

Thirdly, I examine the relationship between contestation, incumbent dominance and the abuse of enforcement state resources. I have hypothesized that enforcement resources could be used to hinder the opposition. Thus incumbents may be more motivated to abuse them when faced with a highly contested election. Table 5.6 displays these results. The baseline model only finds the coefficient for a proportional representation electoral system is statistically significant. This negative coefficient means that a PR system is associated with a decrease in the abuse of enforcement resources, and that this relationship continues in all four models. In the final model, a state maintaining a proportional representation electoral system produces an increase of 0.382 in the odds of the abuse of enforcement resources. The second model reveals that electoral contestation's relationship with the abuse of enforcement resources is not statistically significant, meaning that the incumbent decision to engage in this type of manipulation is not related to their confidence regarding victory. The same is found of the association between a hegemonic authoritarian regime, and the abuse of enforcement resources, as that coefficient is also not statistically significant. Once the additive model is considered, the coefficient for a PR system is the only indicator that reaches a statistically significant level.

Table 5.6: Abuse of Enforcement State Resources

	Baseline Model	Contestation Only	Incumbent Dominance Only	Full Model
Contestation	-	-0.065 (0.298)	-	-0.01 (0.303)
Hegemonic Authoritarian Regime	-	-	0.778 (0.647)	0.775 (0.653)
Executive Election	-0.397 (0.515)	-0.411 (0.52)	-0.46 (0.525)	-0.462 (0.529)
Mixed System	-0.71 (0.713)	-0.69 (0.72)	-0.292 (0.79)	-0.29 (0.793)
PR System	-2.305** (0.853)	-2.294** (0.855)	-1.961* (0.886)	-1.96* (0.886)

GDP per capita	-0.0003 (0.0002)	-0.0003 (0.0002)	-0.0004 (0.0002)	-0.0004+ (0.0002)
Experience with Elections	-0.032 (0.113)	-0.023 (0.12)	-0.017 (0.115)	-0.016 (0.121)
Constant	2.061* (0.919)	2.143* (0.997)	1.55 (0.992)	1.564 (1.081)
N(States)	10	10	10	10
N(Total)	78	78	78	78
Wald Chi squared	10.97	10.97	12.23	12.23

*Standard Errors in Parentheses, p-value + <0.10, *<0.05, **<0.01, ***<0.001*

Regulatory resources are the final category of state resources considered in this analysis. As with enforcement resources, I theorize that the abuse of regulatory resources would likely serve the goal of electoral victory over the opposition when the outcome of the election is uncertain, as these resources include regulations and legal limitations put on opposition candidates during campaign registration and activities. Table 5.7 displays these results. The baseline model for regulatory resource abuse finds the coefficients for an executive election and for experience with elections are statistically significant and negative. Turning to the second model, which includes electoral certainty, the coefficient is positive, not statistically significant.

Table 5.7: Abuse of Regulatory State Resources

	Baseline Model	Contestation Only	Incumbent Dominance Only	Full Model
Contestation	-	0.492 (0.328)	-	0.5 (0.333)
Hegemonic Authoritarian Regime	-	-	-0.063 (0.635)	0.096 (0.645)
Executive Election	-1.796*** (0.565)	-1.758** (0.575)	-1.794** (0.566)	-1.761** (0.576)
Mixed System	-1.226 (0.764)	-1.458+ (0.812)	-1.256 (0.821)	-1.417+ (0.859)
PR System	-1.432+ (0.851)	-1.56+ (0.881)	-1.461 (0.9)	-1.518 (0.925)

GDP per capita	0.0003+ (0.0002)	0.0005* (0.0002)	0.0003+ (0.0002)	0.0005+ (0.0002)
Experience with Elections	-0.292* (0.129)	-0.383** (0.148)	-0.294* (0.129)	-0.383** (0.149)
Constant	2.507** (0.954)	2.07* (1.032)	2.547* (1.034)	2.000+ (1.133)
N(States)	10	10	10	10
N(Total)	78	78	78	78
R-squared	14.92	15.55	14.91	15.56

*Standard Errors in Parentheses, p-value + <0.10, *<0.05, **<0.01, ***<0.001*

The previous four analyses of the individual types of state resource abuse have yielded support for some of the theoretical expectations proposed in this dissertation, but not others. In particular, the finding that odds institutional resources being abused rise in hegemonic authoritarian regimes during executive elections is counter-intuitive, but supports the notion that under some circumstances, the goal of the election is to demonstrate strength. However, it is entirely possible that incumbents may be likely to combine strategies of electoral interference given the circumstances of the election. The hypothesized expectations with financial and regulatory resources overlap, and both exhibited relationships in the same direction with electoral contestation, as well as similar results in terms of the control variables. With this in mind, I next estimate a model using a combined dependent variable of instances of financial and regulatory resource abuse. This variable is again dichotomized to equal 1 when incumbents abuse at least one type of both financial and regulatory resources during the election. Table 5.8 displays these results. The first model shows that legislative, not executive, elections are strongly associated with an increase in the abuse of financial and regulatory resources. The final model finds that an executive election produces an increase of .01 in the odds that financial and regulatory resources will be abused. In the subsequent model, the coefficient for electoral contestation is statistically significant and positive, showing the same relationship from the

individual analyses but with statistical significance. This association holds in the final model, revealing that greater electoral uncertainty produces an increase of 2.66 in the odds that incumbents will abuse financial and regulatory state resources. This analysis provides more profound support for the theorized relationships put forward in this dissertation. When the goal for incumbents is winning the election, which I argue is likely to be the case under conditions of high electoral contestation, they are more willing to engage in electoral interference that will help convince voters to support them over the opposition. I argue that the abuse of financial and regulatory resources serve this goal, as financial resources allow for clientelistic behavior in seeking voter support, while regulatory resources serve to put obstacles on the electoral behavior of the opposition.

Table 5.8: Abuse of Financial and Regulatory State Resources

	Baseline Model	Contestation Only	Incumbent Dominance Only	Full Model
Contestation	-	1.087* (0.425)	-	0.978* (0.427)
Hegemonic Authoritarian Regime	-	-	-1.888+ (1.016)	-1.767 (1.192)
Executive Election	-2.305** (0.808)	-2.361** (0.849)	-2.388** (0.836)	-2.309** (0.849)
Mixed System	-0.748 (0.813)	-1.338 (0.914)	-1.846+ (1.071)	-2.354+ (1.231)
PR System	-0.732 (0.901)	-1.196 (1.009)	-1.73 (1.113)	-2.084+ (1.243)
GDP per capita	-0.0003 (0.0002)	-4.25e-06 (0.0003)	-0.00003 (0.0003)	0.0002 (0.0003)
Experience with Elections	0.007 (0.144)	-0.159 (0.162)	-0.025 (0.144)	-0.17 (0.166)
Constant	0.529 (0.987)	-0.5 (1.1)	1.742 (1.214)	0.709 (1.365)
N(States)	10	10	10	10
N(Total)	78	78	78	78
Wald Chi-	9.65	13.47	11.60	14.79

squared

*Standard Errors in Parentheses, p-value + <0.10, *<0.05, **<0.01, ***<0.001*

Finally, I also estimate models including the abuse of financial, regulatory, and enforcement state resources. The results of this analysis are displayed in table 5.9. I hypothesized that enforcement resources could serve the same purpose as the other two types, so this analysis seeks to find whether this is indeed the case. As was found in the previous analyses, executive elections are negatively associated with the abuse of financial, regulatory, and enforcement resources. Yet in terms of electoral contestation, higher contestation is related to the abuse of all three types at a statistical significance level of .10. This still provides some support for the theory that the goal for incumbents in a contested election is to hinder the opposition to try and win the election. As the relationship was stronger in the previous analysis, this suggests incumbents are more likely to abuse just financial and regulatory resources rather than the combination of all three.

Table 5.9: Abuse of Financial, Regulatory, and Enforcement State Resources

	Baseline Model	Contestation Only	Incumbent Dominance Only	Full Model
Contestation	-	0.594+ (0.126)	-	0.583+ (0.128)
Hegemonic Authoritarian Regime	-	-	-0.319 (0.262)	-0.176 (0.259)
Executive Election	-1.854*** (0.22)	-1.807*** (0.216)	-1.843*** (0.221)	-1.804*** (0.218)
Mixed System	-0.05 (0.299)	-0.25 (0.294)	-0.204 (0.328)	-0.33 (0.321)
PR System	-1.387+ (0.337)	-1.572+ (0.329)	-1.528** (0.357)	-1.647+ (0.349)
GDP per capita	-0.00001 (0.00007)	0.0001 (0.00008)	0.00002 (0.00008)	0.0002 (0.00008)
Experience with Elections	-0.104 (0.051)	-0.187 (0.052)	-0.112 (0.051)	-0.189 (0.053)

Constant	1.79* (0.361)	1.129* (0.380)	1.996* (0.403)	1.26 (0.431)
N(States)	10	10	10	10
N(Total)	78	78	78	78
Wald Chi-squared	13.63	15.40	13.81	15.43

*Standard Errors in Parentheses, p-value + <0.10, *<0.05, **<0.01, ***<0.001*

Finally, Table 5.10 displays the results for the total abuse of state resources. To estimate these models, I utilized an ordinary least squares regression with the inclusion of all types of resource abuse. The first column presents a baseline model that excludes the two primary independent variables. This baseline model finds that the only control variable with a statistical significant relationship to total state resource abuse is gross domestic product per capita, finding that as a state's GDP per capita increases, so too does the likelihood of overall abuse of state resources. This makes intuitive sense, implying that improvements to a state's economic performance is positively related to the government's ability to abuse state resources during an election. The subsequent two models include electoral contestation and whether the state is a hegemonic authoritarian regime, respectively. In these models, neither explanatory variable reaches statistical significance, although both are positive. Finally, the last column presents the full model, which still finds both whether a state is hegemonic or competitive as well as electoral contestation statistically insignificant in their associations with the total abuse of state resources. The inclusion of these variables does increase the r-squared value from about 14 % in the baseline to about 21%, showing that they do contribute explanatory power to this estimation.

Table 5.10: Abuse of all State Resources

	Baseline Model	Contestation Only	Incumbent Dominance Only	Full Model
Contestation	-	-0.365 (0.215)	-	-0.692 (0.432)

Hegemonic Authoritarian Regime	-	-	0.563 (0.435)	0.418 (0.215)
Executive Election	-0.018 (0.369)	0.063 (0.367)	-0.045 (0.368)	0.042 (0.364)
Mixed System	0.039 (0.502)	-0.088 (0.501)	0.322 (0.545)	0.241 (0.536)
PR System	-0.946 (0.565)	-1.025 (0.56)	-0.698 (0.594)	-0.732 (0.583)
GDP per capita	0.0003** (0.0001)	0.0004*** (0.0001)	0.0003* (0.0001)	0.0004** (0.0001)
Experience with Elections	-0.085 (0.085)	-0.136 (0.089)	-0.072 (0.085)	-0.127 (0.088)
Constant	3.844*** (0.605)	3.42*** (0.647)	3.464*** (0.67)	2.891*** (0.72)
N(States)	10	10	10	10
N(Total)	78	78	78	78
R-squared	0.1478	0.1812	0.1675	0.2102

*Standard Errors in Parentheses, p-value + <0.10, *<0.05, **<0.01, ***<0.001*

Discussion

The results presented here suggest that electoral factors are important considerations in understanding why incumbents interfere with elections. This extends much of the research that has focused primarily on international and domestic explanatory factors for the occurrence of electoral interference. Moreover, these results demonstrate that the type of interference varies depending on electoral factors; incumbents are more likely to select certain strategies of interference depending on election-level conditions. While incumbent dominance was clearly associated with the abuse of institutional resources, it was never statistically significant in the estimations with financial, regulatory, and enforcement resources. Conversely, electoral contestation was or approached statistical significant in the models combining financial and regulatory resources, as well as together with enforcement resources, but it was not in the estimations with institutional resources. These findings all suggest that institutional and

collectively financial, regulatory and enforcement resources serve different purposes to incumbents depending on the context of the election.

This also supports the theory proposed in this dissertation that incumbents likely have various goals depending on these electoral factors. Given that the odds that incumbents would abuse institutional resources are quite high within a hegemonic authoritarian regime, this suggests that the goal for incumbents may be to demonstrate strength. Institutional resources can very visibly show incumbent power through biased state media coverage or the usage of state property for campaign purposes. This finding is also counterintuitive, because it shows that incumbents will significantly abuse institutional resources no matter how contested the election is. Electoral contestation was not associated with this type of abuse, which suggests that it may not serve the goal of winning a contested election. Moreover, it illustrates that, despite the resource assets available to incumbents in hegemonic authoritarian regimes, incumbents do not abuse all the state resources at their disposal. It seems plausible, particularly given Simper's (2013) argument that the most powerful regimes interfere in elections blatantly and substantially, that such incumbents could engage in every type of state resource abuse, simply because they can. The analysis examining total resource abuse indeed demonstrates that this is not the case. Thus even for the most powerful of incumbents, electoral interference remains a strategic decision.

Conversely, the results in this chapter have found that when the outcome of an election is more uncertain, the odds that incumbents will substantially abuse the combination of financial and regulatory resources, as well as these two with enforcement resources, rise. These resources all have been theorized to assist incumbents during seriously contested elections, both to influence voters but more importantly to hinder the opposition's chances at victory. Under these

circumstances, it suggests that incumbents are seeking strategies that help them win, as their goal with an uncertain electoral outcome is to simply win the election. This also adds evidence to the notion that electoral interference represents a strategic decision made by incumbents. More blatant or visible strategies of interference, like institutional resource abuse, are avoided when the outcome of the election is uncertain. I contend that this suggests that incumbents weigh the costs and benefits of such interference, and may deem more publically obvious acts of interference as worth the risk during highly contested elections, as they could contribute to popular protests or demonstrations after the election.

Conclusion

The analysis in this chapter aims to contribute to the growing literature on hybrid regimes as well as electoral interference. The findings suggest that elections still hold considerable value for incumbents in hybrid regimes, both in an informational capacity by demonstrating strength or in a purely instrumental way to help them defeat the opposition and remain in power. With these varying goals in mind, I argue that we can better understand the logic under which many incumbents in hybrid regimes are operating. Particularly important is that these elections clearly matter, and that incumbents take them seriously. Elections put incumbents and their regimes in the spotlight and send clear signals to the public. But the goals of incumbents in hybrid regimes are, as this paper has demonstrated, likely to be different from those in full democracies as well as in fully autocratic states. A better understanding of these varying goals can contribute to a clearer picture regarding the regime dynamics and political constraints within these states.

The clarification of the types of electoral interference also contributes to growing attention on electoral interference. This chapter has shown the value in differentiating between the various types of interference strategies. If we focus solely on the scope of total electoral

interference, then we are likely to miss important distinctions in the types of abuses committed by incumbents. As this paper has argued, these distinctions matter, as they not only provide a more complete understanding of the types of interference used, but they also suggest that incumbents have various goals during elections. Thus, incumbents likely think not about the utility of overall electoral interference, but instead are interested in selecting the strategy that best serves their goals given the conditions of the election.

Chapter 6: Low and High Incumbent Dominance Amid Low Electoral Contestation: Case Study Comparison of Russia's 2004 and 2008 Presidential Elections

This chapter presents case study comparisons of specific elections within the former Soviet Union. The previous chapters quantitatively analyzed the importance of various explanatory factors in relation to the strategies of voter persuasion and electoral interference by opposition and incumbent political actors. Those chapters established some empirical relationships from these analyses, including that both incumbent and opposition parties are likely to utilize value and identity appeals during an election with high electoral contestation as well as within competitive authoritarian states. Yet what these chapters have been unable to do is 1) uncover any strategic interaction by incumbents regarding their strategies of voter persuasion and electoral interference, 2) explore voter persuasion strategies during executive elections, 3) evaluate the relative and joint importance of incumbent dominance and electoral contestation, 4) consider the hypotheses related to negative and critical electoral appeals and 5) provide case-specific details that support or refute these empirical findings. This chapter, in combination with the subsequent chapter, aims to compare two similarly situated presidential elections within the same states to expand on the findings from the previous two chapters. I begin in this chapter with a case comparison of Russia's 2004 and 2008 presidential elections.

In gathering evidence for this chapter, I relied on academic accounts of these elections, publicly available election-monitoring reports, and domestic news coverage. For newspaper coverage, I relied mainly on the newspapers *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, *Kommersant* and *The Moscow Times*. All three sources are privately-owned papers that are seen as relatively independent, have detailed coverage of national politics, and maintain searchable online archives. While the first two are Russian language publications, *The Moscow Times* prints its stories in English. I searched each source for election coverage during the three months between the parliamentary and presidential elections, held in December and March, respectively.

Low Incumbent Dominance, Low Electoral Contestation: 2004 Russian Presidential Election

The 2004 presidential election marked a contest between the incumbent Vladimir Putin, candidates from the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, and the short-lived Rebirth-Party of Life, and two independent candidates. Going into this election, Putin also ran without a party, but was explicitly supported by the newly formed political party United Russia that represented a merger of multiple relatively new and underdeveloped parties. The election was held on the heels of the December 2003 parliamentary elections that saw the recently formed United Russia win the largest share of seats from both the proportional results, taking 37% of these seats, and the single member districts, while the main opposition party, the Communist Party, lost seats in both of these contests. The parliamentary election was held a little over three months before the 2004 presidential election, providing the backdrop for the election.

According to the operationalization of incumbent dominance used in this dissertation, Russia prior to the 2004 presidential election was a competitive authoritarian state, meaning that it had low incumbent dominance. The conventional operationalization has been to consider

states hegemonic authoritarian regimes if the incumbent executive is reelected with at least 70% of the vote, signifying incumbent dominance; otherwise states are classified as competitive authoritarian regimes. The incumbent president Putin was first elected in 2000, winning 52.9% of the vote. Given that this was his first election to the presidency, and that the vote share was under the 70% threshold, Russia can be classified as having low incumbent dominance.

Of course other indicators of incumbent dominance have also been postulated elsewhere in the literature as well as earlier within this dissertation. One such indicator is the presence of a dominant political party. Such parties consistently win large majorities in elections and maintain significant, imbalanced party infrastructure and resources. In the months before the 2004 presidential election, Russia did not yet have a dominant political party. Of course United Russia, the party that officially supported Putin, was well on its way to becoming a dominant party. But in late 2003 and early 2004, it was still a relative newcomer on the political landscape. Its first iteration, the Unity bloc, appeared in the 1999 parliamentary election as an organized, savvy pro-Kremlin party, and won 23% of the proportional vote. Roberts (2012) notes that its electoral introduction in the 1999 election was highly strategized and managed by top elites with the purpose in mind of creating a party of power. Unity later merged with the Fatherland-All Russia bloc in 2001 to become United Russia, beginning its transformation into genuine dominant party or party of power (Roberts 2012). While its vote share would surge in 2007 to 64.3%, it was not yet universally embraced by the Kremlin, a feature necessary for it to be a true dominant party. It had benefited from its perceived ties to the popular president, but Putin had not yet officially joined the party nor had he yet campaigned on their behalf in 2003. The Kremlin did not yet seem devoted to the party, nor did it view the party as a loyal partner (Reuter and Remington 2009). Roberts (2012:65) points out that much of their growth and

appeal came from the understood connection to Putin, noting that “it is the change in popular attitudes toward the president, not parties, that has been a key driver in a party of power development.” This indicates that while the party made significant inroads, it remained dependent on Putin’s implicit support. Thus, while the party sought to build support from its ties to the Kremlin, this relationship had not yet been entirely reciprocated. This is connected to the fact that in Russian electoral law, candidates for the presidency can self-nominate themselves, which institutionalized the inferior position of parties (Roberts 2012).²⁷

This trend holds true within regional politics as well. Reuter’s (2010:297) account of United Russia’s path to becoming a dominant party indeed notes that “(i)n 2001, 2002 and early 2003, the Kremlin often failed to support United Russia candidates in gubernatorial elections and when the Kremlin did seek to extend the party’s influence into a region it was more often as a way of undermining the strength of the sitting governor”. Therefore, regionally United Russia was not yet an overtly Kremlin-supported dominant political party. Thus I maintain that, while United Russia was a burgeoning dominant party in early 2004, its development was still underway and not fully realized. This demonstrates that the presence of a dominant political party cannot be considered among the assets of incumbent dominance in Russia prior to the 2004 presidential election.

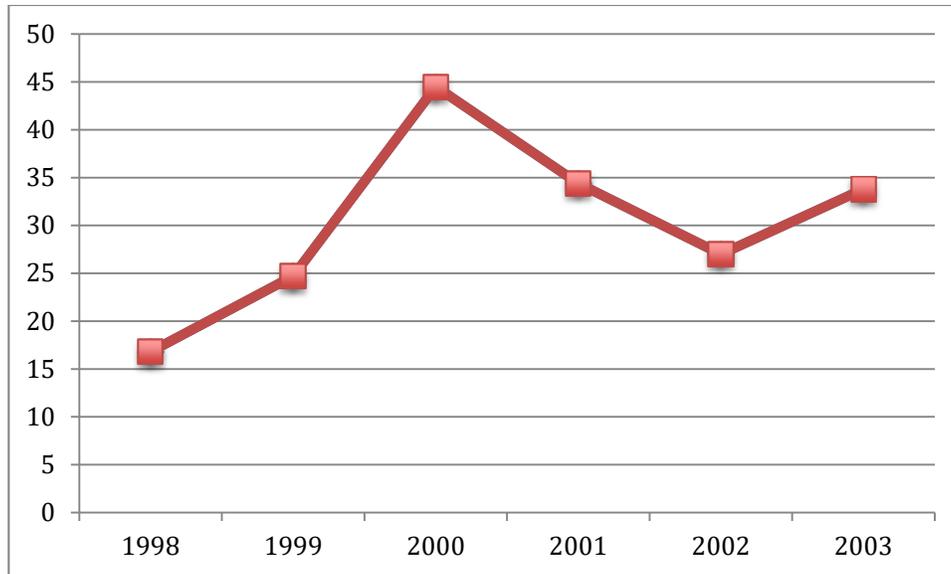
Another common indicator of incumbent dominance is state revenue from oil and natural gas exports as a percentage of total state GDP. To examine whether natural resource exports can provide the Putin government going in to the 2004 presidential election with an additional tool that can contribute to incumbent dominance, I display Russian natural resource exports as a

²⁷ In fact it was not until the 2012 reelection of Putin that a party officially nominated the winner. Boris Yeltsin had never officially been put forward by a party, nor had Putin in 2000 and 2004 or Medvedev in 2008, although all three had maintained implicit support from parties.

percentage of total GDP from 1998 to 2003 in Table 6.1. This table shows that at its highest point during this time span, the export of natural resources comprised about 44% of Russia's total GDP in 2000. Just prior to the March 2004 presidential election, these exports represented about 34 % of the total GDP. While these figures include all natural resource exports, including both oil and natural gas, they do represent a sizable portion of the Russian total GDP during this five-year period. This rise in the proportion of natural resource exports coincides with the increase of the price of a barrel of oil on the international market from a low point of less than \$20 in mid-1998 to just above \$40 in December of 2003,²⁸ which partly explains this relationship. Nonetheless, it is clear that the exports of natural resources presented the Putin government with potential additional resources to be used either to distribute patronage, suppress opposition activity and ignore international expectations surrounding elections and democratic governance. Given this, while Russia can still be considered a competitive authoritarian regime and without a dominant party heading in to the 2004 presidential election, it is clear that natural resource exports could bolster incumbent dominance. Nonetheless, on its own, I do not consider it enough to signal high incumbent dominance.

Figure 6.1: Percentage of Natural Resource Exports of Russia's Total GDP 1998-2003

²⁸Oil prices from the Energy Information Administration, United States Bureau of Labor and Statistics.



Source: World Development Indicators, The World Bank

While incumbent dominance was not high, the degree of contestation in the 2004 presidential election was extremely low. This is clear from the operationalization of contestation used in the previous quantitative analyses chapters. This election is scored as a zero according to the four indicators used in this dissertation: incumbent confidence of victory, public perceptions of the economic situation, public perceptions of an economic crisis, and the existence of an opposition pre-electoral bloc. According to Hyde and Martinov's (2011) data, the incumbent, in this case, Putin, was publically confident of victory prior to and during the electoral campaign. Similarly, the public perceptions of the economy were good and there had not been a perceived economic crisis in the year before the election, as coded by the NELDA data used in the previous two chapters. Russian survey data from 2003 and 2004 support these characterizations. Table 6.1 displays various indicators on public economic perceptions from the New Russian Barometer surveys. When asking respondents about their perceptions of the current economic situation, 59% reported positive feelings in December of 2003, supporting the notion that public perceptions about the economy were good. This figure climbed to almost 66% in the month of

the actual election. As public perceptions of the economy can contribute to voters deciding to vote against an incumbent, especially within hybrid regimes, these figures show that economic perceptions were unlikely to do so prior to the 2004 presidential election. Interestingly, perceptions on respondents' personal economic situation reveal much more dissatisfaction. But as Hyde and Martinov (2011) and Case (2006) suggest, perceptions about the overall economy often override more personal circumstances.

Table 6.1: Survey Results on Perceptions of Economy Prior to 2004 Presidential Election

	Perceptions of the Current Economy			Perceptions of Current Family Economic Situation	
	December 2003 (1552)	March 2004 (1421)		June 2003 (1601)	March 2004 (1602)
<i>(Number of Respondents)</i>					
Positive	59.21% (919)	65.94% (937)	Very Good	1.19% (19)	1.75% (28)
Negative	31.38% (487)	24.42% (347)	Rather Good	22.17% (355)	25.28% (405)
Neutral	9.41% (146)	9.64 (137)	Rather Bad	59.59% (954)	57.62% (923)
			Very Bad	0.37% (6)	14.54% (233)
			N/A	16.68% (267)	0.81% (13)

Source: New Russian Barometer Survey Data

Public opinion also revealed widespread approval for incumbent Putin going into the 2004 presidential electoral cycle. Table 6.2 presents survey indicators on public perceptions of the regime, of Putin himself, and for whom the respondents intended to vote. In the nine months prior to the election, respondents maintained favorable opinions toward the overall regime, with this figure remaining above 60%. Approval of Putin's performance as president was even higher, standing at 85% among survey respondents just three months before the election. Finally, when directly asking respondents to identify for whom they intended to vote in the

upcoming election, almost 65% named Putin in June of 2003; this figure rose to almost 75% in December. Thus public opinion only solidifies the certainty of the expected outcome of the presidential election.

Table 6.2: Survey Results on Perceptions of Putin and the 2004 Election

	Perceptions of the Current Regime		Approve of Vladimir Putin's Performance	Candidates	Intend to vote for	
	June 2003 (1523)	Dec. 2003 (1557)	December 2003 (1601)		June 2003 (1601)	Dec. 2003 (1601)
<i>(Number of Respondents)</i>						
Positive	61.26% (933)	65.13% (1014)	Approve: 85.51% (1369)	Vladimir Putin	64.96% (1040)	74.7% (1196)
Negative	29.22% (445)	25.43% (396)	Disapprove: 12.8% (205)	Gennady Zyuganov	7.87 % (126)	4.12% (66)
Neutral	9.52% (145)	9.44% (147)	N/A: 1.69% (27)	Vladimir Zhirinovskiy	3.69% (59)	3.56% (57)
				Rutskoi	6.75% (108)	3.62 (78)
				Other/ Don't Know/ No Answer	16.74% (268)	13.99 (224)

Source: New Russian Barometer Survey Data

Finally, there was no opposition electoral bloc in the 2004 presidential election. The most successful opposition party in Russia since its independence has remained the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF), although its vote share had declined since the mid 1990's, when it actually won a plurality of seats in the State Duma. Thus the CPRF, along with the Liberal Democratic Party of the Russian Federation (LDPR), remained the two parties that typically received the second and third most vote share in elections, respectively. This had indeed been the case in the 2000 presidential election. It is nonetheless unsurprising that these parties, with radically opposed ideological platforms and long-standing party leaders would not

seek to form a pre-electoral bloc and stand behind one candidate. The only other candidate nominated officially by a party came from a new party and was basically unknown before the election.

These factors all support the notion that there was very low contestation in this election. Under these conditions of relatively low incumbent dominance and low electoral contestation, I argue that incumbent and opposition actors are likely to maintain particular goals for the election. For incumbents, I posit that when faced with low contestation amid low incumbent dominance, they are interested in preserving the status quo. To do this, they are likely to select strategies that avoid public scrutiny and build legitimacy. For opposition actors, I argue that the goal is to signal dissatisfaction with the incumbent regime. To do this, I expect that they will select strategies to criticize the incumbent and demonstrate their frustration with the status quo. With this being considered, I now turn to an exploration of opposition and incumbent electoral strategies during the 2004 Russian Presidential Election.

Opposition Behavior

I begin with the opposition. This dissertation argues that the goal for opposition actors under these circumstances is to signal dissatisfaction with the status quo. They are not likely to view victory as an option and thus are unlikely to maintain a goal of winning the election. Yet due to the current lack of overall incumbent dominance, I also do not expect them to refrain from explicitly criticizing the incumbent or the broader regime. Under these conditions, opposition actors may not worry about retaliation or suppression from the regime. They may also see future contests as offering greater opportunities for turnover in power, even if the current one does not. Opposition actors are theoretically interested in remaining relevant beyond the immediate election with very low contestation. Thus I expect that they would display their dissatisfaction,

hoping that such behavior has long-term benefits in subsequent elections that may be more contested.

The first area that opposition electoral strategies can be seen in Russia's 2004 presidential election is in the selection of candidates. Of the two prominent opposition parties that participated, neither the CPRF nor the LDPR put forward their well-known party leaders as candidates. Instead, both parties selected relatively unknown figures to represent the parties in the election. Gennady Zyuganov and Vladimir Zhirinovskiy had been the leaders of the CPRF and LDPR, respectively, since each party's founding in the early 1990s and had run as the presidential candidates in the last two elections in 1996 and 2000. Yet despite their name recognition and association with the brands of their respective parties, they both chose not to run in 2004. Instead, the candidates presented were actually fairly unknown figures associated with the parties (Clark 2005). The Communist candidate, Nikolai Kharitonov, was at the time not officially a member of the CPRF,²⁹ yet had just been elected to the State Duma in the December 2003 election on the CPRF party list. The LDPR candidate, Oleg Malyshev, had had no previous experience with elected office.³⁰ The similar actions were taken by other opposition political parties, including, Yabloko, a pro-Western, liberal political party. Yabloko's leader, Grigory Yavlinsky, chose not to run for president as he had in the previous contests, and the party decided not to participate in the election at all. They ultimately advised voters to boycott or vote "against all" in the election as a protest vote.³¹ The leader of the other prominent liberal opposition party, Boris Nemtsov, of the Union of Right Forces, also did not participate, deciding

²⁹ Kharitonov had, until 2003, been a member of another party, the Agrarian Party.

³⁰ He had in fact served as Zhirinovskiy's bodyguard before this election.

³¹ Khamraev, Viktor. 2004. "Take your vote back: Yabloko advises not to vote for president" (Забери свой голос обратно: Яблоко призывает не голосовать за президента) *Kommersant*. February 21, 2004. <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/451925>.

instead to boycott the contest as well. A boycott was also proposed by an independent opposition organization named “2008: Free Choice,” who publicly urged Russians not to cast any votes in the 2004 election.³² The name of this group references the subsequent presidential elections to be held in 2008, which suggests that while in the short-term, they advised a total boycott, they saw greater long-term opportunities.

In addition to the candidates from the CPRF and LDPR, the party Russian Party of Life nominated Sergei Mironov. Mironov’s candidacy was not considered a genuine opposition to Putin, as he publicly noted that he joined to show his support for the president (Shevtsova 2005; Clark 2005). The election included three additional candidates that were independently nominated. Irina Khakamada had served in the State Duma with the party Union of Right Forces from 1993-2003, but ran in 2004 as a self-nominated candidate. Similarly, Sergei Glazyev had been a member of the Rodina political party, but submitted himself as a self-nominated candidate in this election. Finally, Ivan Rybkin participated as an independent candidate and was explicitly supported by the notorious oligarch Boris Berezovsky, who had just sought exile in London the previous year. However, he withdrew from the race before the actual election day.

Observers have suggested that the decisions by multiple parties to either submit secondary candidates or refrain from participation entirely were likely very intentional. These actions were seen as attempts to turn the election into a farce with no genuine opposition so as to detract away from Putin’s unavoidable victory (Shevtsova 2005). Similarly, the inclusion of little-known candidates demonstrated a clear protest against Putin’s assumed victory. These actions could show the failure of the Russian political system, from the perspective of the

³² Romancheva, Irina. 2004. “Free Choice- it is a complete boycott” («Свободный выбор»- это полный бойкот). *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*. March 3, 2004. http://www.ng.ru/politics/2004-03-03/3_boykot.html.

opposition parties, to allow for genuine competition.³³ And it had the potential to inform the international community that Putin's assumed victory was not a triumph of democracy or the will of the people given the weak competition (Clark 2005). The choice of multiple, separate, and far from allied, political parties to behave in such a way provides support for the theoretical expectations of the opposition. Some had distinguished Zhirinovsky from the rest of the opposition due to his party's typical support for Putin's policies within the State Duma. Zhirinovsky himself had run president twice before, and maintains a populist, charismatic and ultra-nationalistic persona that has typically made him appealing to certain disaffected voters (Clark 2005). Yet some observers have noted that he may not have wanted to be the only well-known candidate opposing Putin in the 2004 election.³⁴ His candidacy could have threatened his standing with Putin.³⁵ Yet Zhirinovsky still sought the spotlight during the election, often appearing alongside Malyshkin³⁶ and even attempted to stand in for his party's nominee at a televised debate.³⁷ So if his motivation was to avoid being seen as in direct opposition to Putin, this was not entirely clear.

³³ Piontkovskii, Andrei, Vyachislav Igrunov, Sergei Markov, Igor Bunin. 2004 "The Country Expects an Election without Choices (Страну ожидают «выборы без выбора»)". *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*. January 12, 2004. http://www.ng.ru/politics/2004-01-12/2_elections.html. Boris Kagarlitsky. 2004. "Who Wants to be President". *The Moscow Times*. January 15, 2004. <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/opinion/article/who-wants-to-be-president/233604.html>.

³⁴ Mereu, Francesca. 2004. "10 candidates in a One-Horse Race". *The Moscow Times*. January 9, 2004. <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/10-candidates-in-a-one-horse-race/233722.html>.

³⁵ Piontkovskii et al. 2004. "The Country Expects an Election without Choices".

³⁶ Medetsky, Anatoly. 2004. "LDPR's Malyshkin Pulls No Punches". *The Moscow Times*. February 18, 2004. <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/ldprs-malyshkin-pulls-no-punches/232799.html>.

³⁷ Nagornikh, Irina. 2004. "Higher court delivers verdict to Zhirinovsky" (Верховный суд послал Владимира Жириновского). *Kommersant*. February 25, 2004. <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/452521>.

Moreover, the decision by the party leaders to not participate as candidates cannot be attributed, at least solely, to their prior election results witnessed in the December 2003 parliamentary elections.³⁸ While the CPRF, Union of Right Forces, and Yabloko did indeed see notable vote losses in that contest, the LDPR saw its vote share almost double from 6% in 1999 to 11% in 2003 (Clark 2005). Nonetheless, its leader, Zhirinovskiy, chose not to run for president after such a comeback. Thus I argue that this electoral strategy supports the notion that the goal of various opposition actors during this election was to signal their dissatisfaction with the status quo, the regime more broadly, and the incumbent president Vladimir Putin.

These decisions to either boycott or submit unfamiliar candidates dominated much of the media attention devoted to opposition candidates in the election. In other words, little coverage was provided about the actual issues and policy positions in place. Instead, the focus was on explaining such behavior. Even the timing of the announcements of candidates seemingly reduced any visibility of the parties' platforms. Both the LDPR and CPRF selected and announced their candidates at party meetings held just before the Russian New Years holidays, when newspapers and the media typically suspend regular printing and coverage until after Orthodox Christmas on January 7th.³⁹ So it was not until January 9th, almost two weeks after these announcements, that Russian newspapers began reporting on these events.⁴⁰ Party

³⁸ Zyuganov himself explained his decision to not stand as a candidate by noting the party's vote losses and suggesting that the party should give an opportunity to other members. Of course, Kharitonov remained a puzzling choice to potentially reinvigorate the party, given his limited history with the Communists as well as his lack of name recognition even among their typical voting base.

³⁹ The party meetings for the LDPR and CPRF were held on December 26th and 28th, respectively. December 26, 2003 marked the last day that full, regular newspaper issues were published by both *Kommersant* and *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, until January 9, 2004.

⁴⁰ Kamyshev, Dmitri. 2004. "The president is one of ten candidates" (Президент попал в десятку). *Kommersant*. January 9, 2004. <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/439410>; Anastasia

meetings often translate into free campaign press for the parties, as journalists typically report on the speeches of the nominated candidates. This was not the case for this election.

Yet the candidates made no secret of their frustration with the incumbent Putin during the campaign. The 2004 presidential campaign featured multiple televised debates between the candidates. However, Putin chose not to participate in any of them, as did Mironov, who, as I mentioned earlier, had explicitly voiced his support for Putin anyway. When the remaining candidates gathered for the first debate, they collectively decided not to debate or criticize one another. They argued that since Putin was obviously their main competitor, his absence rendered the debate pointless. In particular, Kharitonov accused Putin of unfair, undemocratic behavior during the debate.⁴¹ In another instance, Kharitonov explicitly criticized Putin's tenure as president by emphasizing the occurrence of suicide bombings in Moscow and the Chechen War in Putin's Russia.⁴² Khakamada was also not shy in criticizing Putin. She decried his anti-democratic behavior and suggested that his rule was based on fear and government terrorism.⁴³ Kharitonov and Khakamada also separately filed complaints with the Central Election Commission regarding unfair airtime given to a Putin campaign rally; the CEC ultimately ruled against both of them.⁴⁴

Kornia. "Candidate's Minimum". (Кандидатский минимум). *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*. January 12, 2004. http://www.ng.ru/politics/2004-01-12/1_cik.html.

⁴¹ Yablokova, Oksana. "Challengers Refuse to debate". *The Moscow Times*. February 13, 2004. <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/challengers-refuse-to-debate/232911.html>.

⁴² Mereu, Francesca. 2004. "Krasnodar Farmers Want Stability, not Kharitonov". *The Moscow Times*. March 2, 2004.

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/krasnodar-farmers-want-stability-not-kharitonov/232610.html>.

⁴³ Tiramasti, Maria-Louisa. "Vladimir Putin is no man" (Владимир Путин - это не человек). *Kommersant*. January 15, 2004. <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/440862>.

⁴⁴ Tiramasti, Maria-Louisa. 2004. "Vladimir Putin's competitors defend the airwaves." (Соперников Владимира Путина травят эфиром) *Kommersant*. February 24, 2004. <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/452137>.

I have theorized that opposition actors may be less likely to develop savvy, sophisticated campaigns in the face of a lowly contested election. This appears to have been the case during this election. The OSCE notes in its election monitoring report that campaign activity was overall very limited and that “in many parts of the country where other elections were taking place, ...the visibility of the campaign for those local contests far surpassed that for the Presidential Election.”⁴⁵ Kharitonov was observed making noticeable efforts at campaigning around Russia, making speeches in multiple cities. These speeches often combined a focus on issues typical of the party (pro-worker, greater state involvement in the economy and pro-agrarian reforms) with ample complaints and criticisms of Putin and his government.⁴⁶ Yet observers noted the often lackluster and dull environment at these events and the disinterest among those present, feeling their interests were not being addressed.⁴⁷ The independent candidates, Khakamada and Glazyev, also made notable efforts at traveling the country and making campaign speeches. During these events, Glazyev voiced his frustration with the regime, accusing it of obstructing his ability to hold rallies in multiple cities. Despite these complaints he never filed any official complaints with the CEC about the alleged interference.⁴⁸ As the election day grew near, Khakamada increasingly used such campaign appearances to discuss her plans at creating a new liberal political party. This suggests that her goal in this election was in building more long-term support while admitting that short-term victory was unattainable.

⁴⁵ “Russian Federation: Presidential Election. 14 March 2004”. *OSCE/ ODHIR Election Observation Mission Report*. Warsaw. 2 June 2004.

⁴⁶ Staff. 2004. “Newslines”. *Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty*. March 5, 2004. <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1143111.html>.

⁴⁷ Mereu, Francesca. 2004. “Krasnodar Farmers Want Stability, not Kharitonov”. *The Moscow Times*. March 2, 2004.

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/krasnodar-farmers-want-stability-not-kharitonov/232610.html>.

⁴⁸ “Russian Federation: Presidential Election. 14 March 2004”.

Khakamada was not the only candidate to have made reference to future ambitions beyond the immediate election. While Malyshkin was one of the less active candidates in this election, his party's leader Zhirinovskiy continued to make appearances as the charismatic, personalistic leader of the LDPR. Early on in the election, Zhirinovskiy admitted that they hoped to win at least ten percent of the vote, and maybe even second place in the election. But he continued to say that this could lead to future increases in their vote share until they achieve "victory eventually."⁴⁹ This continued during the campaign, with Zhirinovskiy defending his support for Malyshkin and noting that he will help the party evolve as it hopefully becomes more successful.⁵⁰ This was also the case for the CPRF. Media coverage throughout the campaign focused on in-fighting and rivalries within the Communist camp.⁵¹ These issues eclipsed most substantial coverage on policy position and issues. This power struggle instead emphasized divisions within the party between strident pro-Soviet Communists, ethnic nationalists, and pro-European social democrats. Given this divide, the party did not take clear positions in any of those areas, and instead prioritized future party reorganizations. Finally, in their mutual decisions to boycott the 2004 election, both Yabloko and Union of Right Forces continued to field candidates in the many concurrent regional elections. They stated their intentions of making in-roads regionally, with the aim of building greater future prospects.⁵² This suggests

⁴⁹ Tirmasti, Maria-Louisa and Yuri Chernega. 2004. "LDPR shakes an authoritarian fist" (ЛДПР размахивает авторитарной рукой). *Kommersant*. January 15, 2004. <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/440822>.

⁵⁰ Glinkin, Maksim. "Peter's Messenger" (Предтеча питерских). *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*. February 17, 2004. http://www.ng.ru/ideas/2004-02-17/1_zhirinovski.html.

⁵¹ Merue, Francesca. 2004. "Power Struggle Splits Communists". *The Moscow Times*. February 20, 2004. <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/power-struggle-splits-communists/232744.html>.

⁵² Farizova, Suzanna. "It is unclear why SPS and 'Yabloko' are working together". (СПС и «Яблоко» объединились непонятно зачем). *Kommersant*. December 24, 2003. <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/438447>.

that while resigned to defeat in this contest, the opposition candidates saw the importance of working toward long-term goals.

This discussion of opposition electoral behavior has highlighted the strategies and goals of opposition actors during an election with low incumbent dominance and very low contestation. I argue that this case presented ample evidence that the goal for opposition actors was to signal dissatisfaction with the status quo and to focus on long-term instead of short-term prospects. Multiple parties either chose to nominate lesser-known candidates or to forego participation in the election altogether. This demonstrated that the parties knew victory was unattainable, but moreover suggested a deep frustration with the political situation. Genuine opposition candidates did not refrain from publically criticizing Putin and his government. Such criticisms were often aimed at his overall dynamic and influence on the politics, instead of specific policies and positions. I argue that this suggests a more pronounced opposition to the incumbent meant to extend beyond mere policymaking. Finally, candidates explicitly made reference to future elections and future ambitions beyond the election at hand. This demonstrates their determination to focus on long-term prospects given the lack of contestation in the election. It also reveals the optimism for a future reversal in their political prospects, which I contend is due to the lack of incumbent dominance at the time.

Incumbent Behavior

Next, I turn to incumbent electoral behavior. During an election with low contestation and low incumbent dominance, I have theorized that the likely goal for incumbent actors is to preserve the status quo of incumbent and build legitimacy. Given this, I expect incumbent actors to pursue strategies that avoid any unwanted public scrutiny. In terms of voter persuasion, I expect incumbents will put more attention on their past accomplishments over future policy

positions. Specific policy statements could potentially alienate voters. I also expect incumbents to be wary of blatant attempts at electoral interference. They are certain to win the election, and thus likely to avoid interference strategies meant to explicitly hinder opposition activity. Within this dissertation, such interference strategies include the abuse of regulatory and enforce state resources. Yet they also have not achieved high incumbent dominance. This suggests that they likely lack the resources and motivation to severely abuse institutional state resources.

Therefore, I expect electoral interference to be minimal under these conditions.

The incumbent candidate in the 2004 presidential election was, as stated earlier, Vladimir Putin. Putin participated without a party nomination as a self-nominated candidate. His overall candidate presence during the election was limited.⁵³ During the officially designated campaign period from January to March, Putin continued to perform his tasks as president but made few references to his position as a candidate for reelection. He mostly refrained from traveling around Russia to give campaign speeches and meet with potential voters (Shevtsova 2005). Instead, the political party United Russia held meetings and rallies to drive up support for Putin, even though they were technically unaffiliated with him.⁵⁴ Putin released his first candidate program when he officially registered as a candidate on December 25, 2003. This program was brief and focused mostly on his achievements over the last four years. He emphasized his victory over the oligarchs, reforms in government and administration, increases in state pensions and tax revenue. He also pushed for increased state assistance to small and mid-sized business.⁵⁵

⁵³ “Russian Federation: Presidential Election. 14 March 2004”.

⁵⁴ Farizova, Suzanna. 2004. “‘United Russia’ comes to the aid of Vladimir Putin’s candidacy”. (“Единая Россия” встала на защиту достоинства Владимира Путина). *Kommersant*. February 18, 2004. <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/450838>.

⁵⁵ Kornia, Anastasia. 2003. “December Theses of Vladimir Putin” (Декабрьские тезисы Владимира Путина). *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*. December 25, 2003. http://www.ng.ru/politics/2003-12-25/1_tezis.html.

Putin also refrained from actively engaging in the process of collecting the two million signatures needed to make his candidacy official. Instead, this task was carried out by United Russia.⁵⁶

One notable exception to Putin's mostly nonexistent campaign was a thirty minute-long speech Putin delivered at a campaign meeting at Moscow State University on February 12th. As the sole explicitly campaign-oriented activity performed by Putin, this speech featured an elaboration on his official candidate program. This took place over a month after Putin officially registered as a candidate in this election, and about a month before the election day on March 15th. He devoted much of the speech to chronicling his past achievements, while also noting, "it would be inappropriate for an incumbent leader to advertise himself. That should have been done in the last four years".⁵⁷ His program mostly dealt with broad social and economic issues,⁵⁸ while it was notably silent on the ongoing conflict in Chechnya.⁵⁹ His speech was also significant for declaring that he intended to later select a candidate to succeed him in the next presidential election in 2008.⁶⁰ The audience was estimated to be comprised of about 400 campaign supporters and about 600 journalists and members of the media.⁶¹ This suggests that

⁵⁶ Melikova, Natalia. 2004. "The election is conducted in the style of a referendum". (Выборы пройдут в стиле референдума). *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*. January 13, 2004. http://www.ng.ru/politics/2004-01-13/1_elections.html.

⁵⁷ Putin, Vladimir. 2004. *Appearance of Vladimir Putin with supporters: Full Text*. (Выступление Владимира Путина перед доверенными лицами). February 12, 2004. Moscow, Russia. <http://archive.kremlin.ru/text/appears/2004/02/62215.shtml>.

⁵⁸ Kolesnikov, Andrei. 2004. "Instrument of massive respect". (Орудие массового уважения). *Kommersant*. February 13, 2004. <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/449531>; McGregor, Caroline. 2004. "Putin Kicks Off Re-election Drive". *The Moscow Times*. February 13, 2004.

⁵⁹ Melikova, Natalia. 2004. "February Theses". (Февральские тезисы). *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*. February 13, 2004. http://www.ng.ru/politics/2004-02-13/1_tezis.html.

⁶⁰ Babayeva, Svetlana and Yekaterina Grigoryeva. 2004. "'Seven Years is enough to go crazy'" ("Семь лет – это ж с ума сойти"). *Izvestia*. February 13, 2004. <http://izvestia.ru/news/286939>.

⁶¹ Kolesnikov, Andrei. 2004.

the event was designed to disseminate the message to an external audience rather than to persuade and energize those voters present.

Three weeks before the election, Putin announced that he had unexpectedly dismissed the current prime minister, Mikhail Kasyanov. Putin explained this dismissal by stating he was beginning constructing a new government to serve him after his reelection.⁶² This meant that by law Putin had to submit a new nomination for prime minister within two weeks, thus prior to the actual election. This unexpected move dominated much of the electoral discussion surrounding Putin for the remainder of the campaign (Shevtsova 2005). In many ways, this action prompted more debate and questions within the election than the actual policy positions of Putin or any of the other opposition candidates. Its timing suggests that Putin may have viewed the campaign period as a highly visible opportunity to make changes to his administration and signal his priorities moving forward.

All these discussions of efforts at voter persuasion provide support for the theorized expectations. Putin was not active as a candidate during the electoral campaign. When he did present his electoral program to the public, he was rather vague and unspecific in his discussion of the issues. In text form, the speech comprises about six typed pages, but for the first four, Putin emphasizes his past accomplishments during the first four years of his presidency. He also makes many references to the difficulties experienced before he became president in 2000. It is not until the fifth page that he turns his focus to future issues, and these statements are also quite broad. As expected, the incumbent Putin maintained a campaign void of many specifics that could attract voter scrutiny.

⁶² Smirnov, Konstanin. 2004. "Prime Minister without a portfolio". (Премьер-министр без портфеля). *Kommersant*. February 26, 2004. <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/452971>.

Next, I turn to any efforts at electoral interference. According to the OSCE election-monitoring mission, Putin and the government did not abuse any financial, regulatory or enforcement state resources. However, the observers note that it did abuse two of the four subtypes of institutional resources. First, they observed government functions being used for campaign purposes. This was seen principally in a get-out-the-vote campaign mounted by the electoral administration, a nonpartisan entity, in the final weeks before election day. The OSCE note numerous cases where such materials included the same signals and imagery associated with the political party United Russia. These materials included commercials run on state-TV with some of the identical images that had been used by United Russia in the December 2003 parliamentary elections. Elected leaders also contributed to this pseudo pro-Putin get-out-the-vote efforts. Yuri Luzhkov, the mayor of Moscow at the time, made statements urging Muscovites to vote that indirectly promoted Putin as a candidate.⁶³

Observers also noted a clear abuse of the state-controlled media. The OSCE noted that “as recipients of state resources, state-controlled media have an enhanced duty to ensure balanced and fair treatment between candidates. However, the state-controlled media comprehensively failed to meet its obligation to provide equal treatment to all candidates, displaying clear favoritism towards Mr. Putin” (Final Report 2004:15). One clear example of this was seen in the coverage of Putin’s February 12th campaign meeting. The meeting was covered live on the two prominent state-run television channels for the duration of Putin’s speech⁶⁴. This treatment was considered by many to be an abuse of state resources since the same had not been done for other candidates. It was this speech that led two other candidates,

⁶³ “Russian Federation: Presidential Election. 14 March 2004”.

⁶⁴ Viktoria Arutyunova, Irina Nagornikh, and Maria-Louisa Tirmasti. 2004. “Direct Airtime” (Прямой как эфир). *Kommersant*. February 13, 2004. <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/449579>.

Nikolai Kharitonov and Irina Khakamada, to allege that state TV was unfairly devoting too much coverage to a campaign rally. As noted earlier, they both separately filed complaints with the CEC regarding the airtime given to this speech. While the commission noted that it was abnormal for a television station to include live coverage of a candidate's campaign event, they still ruled against Kharitonov and Khakamada.

Thus, two types of institutional resources were abused during the 2004 presidential election. Yet the electoral interference witnessed was minimal and none of the state resource abuse explicitly sought to limit opposition candidate activities. This will be especially evident when compared with the 2008 election.

Russia's 2008 Presidential Election: High Incumbent Dominance, Low Contestation

Next, I turn to the Russian presidential election in 2008. This election falls into the category of high incumbent dominance, and low electoral contestation. With this case, I can evaluate the importance of incumbent dominance, as all the other factors are mostly held constant between this election and the 2004 Russian presidential election. Coming into this election, incumbent president Vladimir Putin was not constitutionally allowed to seek a third consecutive term. Given this reality, Putin announced in 2007 that he endorsed his deputy first prime minister Dmitri Medvedev to run for the presidency. Aside from Medvedev, three additional candidates participated, one from the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF), one the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia and one independent candidate. This election was held on March 2, 2008, and like the preceding election, its timing was just three months after the 2007 parliamentary elections. Those parliamentary elections, held on December 2, 2007, witnessed a significant victory for the ruling, pro-Kremlin, pro-Putin party, United

Russia. It won 64% of the vote in the first election to use a fully proportional representation electoral system.

During this election, Russia can be classified as a hegemonic authoritarian state, meaning it has high incumbent dominance. In the previous presidential election, Putin was reelected with over 70% of the vote, which meets the criteria for this classification. Thus, since the 2004 election, Russia is considered a state with high incumbent dominance. In addition to this primary indicator, the other indicators of incumbent dominance also reveal greater dominance. One of these is the existence of a dominant political party. As discussed in the previous case study, in 2004 United Russia was still a recent addition to the electoral landscape. Yet despite its nascent development, it had managed to build a significant share of voter support from 1999 to 2003. This trend continued after Putin's reelection in 2004, with it almost doubling its seats in the State Duma between the 2003 and 2007 parliamentary elections (White 2009). This pattern was witnessed regionally as well. By the end of the decade, United Russia held 78 of the 83 regional governor positions (Reuter 2010) and put an increased focus on dominating local elections as well (Ross 2007).

During this period, United Russia stood out by its massive resource assets as well. In terms of membership fees and private donations, United Russia's revenue far exceeded the other political parties. Its recorded membership dues between 2004 and 2007 were twice that of the CPRF, the party with the second largest revenue from members. And this distinction is only starker when examining private donations, with United Russia's revenue equaling more than four times that of the party with the second highest amount of donations, the LDPR (Roberts 2012). During these next four years, it became increasingly clear that United Russia also received tangible advantages from its support for the Kremlin and Putin. Roberts (2012) details how in a

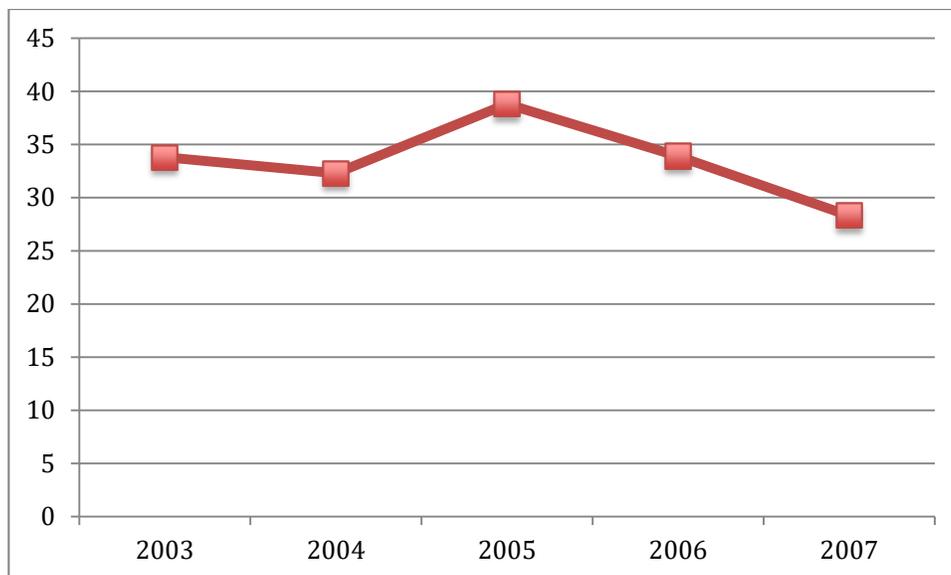
regional case study of the Moscow municipal elections, there were overt connections between United Russia and government administrations. Like most other states that hold elections, Russian law forbids state workers and civil servants from outwardly engaging in political and campaign activities. Yet such behavior was noticeably present in this case, with city government resources used to support United Russia candidates and city workers engaging in pro-United Russia and anti-opposition candidate behavior like put up signs for some candidates and tearing down signs for others (Roberts 2012).

Finally, its expansion coincided with increased explicit endorsements and support from Putin and the Kremlin. In 2004, Putin announced changes to the regional executive governor positions, shifting from direct elections to a presidential appointment. This shift provided an institutional avenue for the Kremlin to appoint United Russia members and demonstrate explicit support for the party (Reuter and Remington 2009). Candidate recruitment offered another opportunity for Kremlin- United Russia cooperation. Hale (2006) noted the cooperation between the presidential administration and candidate selection for the party and the sharing of resources between the two sides. In 2006, Putin spoke before United Russia Duma deputies and designated that he trusted the party to handle his National Priority Projects. He also gave them access to the state funds necessary to carry out these projects (Reuter 2010). These examples all demonstrate that by late 2007 and early 2008, there was no denying the explicit relationship between United Russia and Putin's administration. Thus United Russia provided an additional asset to incumbent dominance in the form of a dominant political party.

Natural resource exports also support the classification of Russia as having high incumbent dominance. Natural resource exports can allow the regime to withstand domestic criticism and short-term crises, as well as provide the means for building support through

patronage and suppressing opposition activity. As discussed in the 2004 case, scholars have argued that when energy exports exceed at least a third of total GDP, this can provide incumbents with necessary resource assets to secure dominance. Figure 6.2 displays Russian energy exports as a percentage of total GDP for the five years preceding the 2008 election. As this figure shows, energy exports as a percentage of GDP exceed at least 30% from 2003 to 2006, and only in 2007 do they drop just below that threshold. This is a much more constant trend than the one seen prior to the 2004 election, which saw more dramatic increases and decreases over a five-year time period. This trend reveals that energy exports have exceeded 30% of Russian GDP for six of the eight years of Putin's presidency. I argue that this provides additional merit to the classification of Russia as a state with high incumbent dominance going in to the 2008 presidential election.

Figure 6.2: Russian Energy Exports as a Percentage of Total GDP 2003-2007



(Source: World Bank World Development Indicators)

The 2008 Russian presidential election experienced extremely low electoral contestation. This election receives a zero out of four based on the operationalization of electoral contestation

used in this dissertation. As discussed earlier, this index is based on incumbent confidence of victory, public perceptions of the economy, public perceptions of an economic crisis, and the presence of an opposition pre-electoral bloc. According to Hyde and Martinov (2011), Medvedev, as the officially endorsed candidate by the incumbent president, and as a member of the incumbent administration himself, was virtually assured of victory in this election. This confidence can be attributed to multiple factors. First, even before Putin's announcement, opinion polls conducted just days before showed Medvedev as the favorite among the potential successors that Putin could endorse. When considered with all the other potential Putin-backed and opposition candidates, 35% of respondents said they would vote for Medvedev. When the other potential Kremlin candidates were removed, 63 % of respondents said they would support Medvedev.⁶⁵

Second, Putin maintained notably high approval ratings heading in to the election, which at the time of his official endorsement on December 10, 2007, hovered around 88%.⁶⁶ Third, United Russia, along with four other small political parties, officially endorsed Medvedev just days after their landslide parliamentary victory. Their victory would provide support for Medvedev's candidacy, and their endorsement meant that their considerable resources could be deployed on his behalf. Finally, just two days after Putin's announcement that Medvedev was his preferred candidate, Medvedev stated that he would appoint Putin as his prime minister once elected.⁶⁷ These factors all contribute to Medvedev's confidence in this election.

⁶⁵ Levada Opinion Poll. December 13, 2007. "Presidential Election". *Levada Center Press Release*. <http://www.levada.ru/13-12-2007/vybory-prezidenta>.

⁶⁶ New Russian Barometer. December, 2007.: 88% approve of Putin, 10 % disapprove, 1 % unsure. Sample size: 1601 observations.

⁶⁷ Rodin, Ivan, Natalia Kostenko, and Vladimir Razuvaev Jr. 2007. "Reciprocal Post". (ОТВЕТНЫЙ ПОСТ). *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*. December 12, 2007. http://www.ng.ru/politics/2007-12-12/1_post.html.

Public perceptions of the economy were also good prior to this election. Table 6.3 displays survey results demonstrating this trend. In the year preceding the March 2nd election, public perceptions of the economy were positive. In April of 2007, 66% of respondents reported having positive perceptions of the current economic situation. Just seven months later, that figure climbed to almost 77% of respondents in December of 2007. Thus, like Hyde and Martinov's (2011) classification, the economic situation in Russia prior to the presidential election was perceived to be good. This also removes the possibility that Russian respondents perceived the existence of an economic crisis. These factors both contribute to the very low contestation present within this election.

Table 6.3: Economic Perceptions in Russia Prior to 2008 Election

	Economic Perceptions (April 2007)	Economic Perceptions (December 2007)
Positive	66.19% (973)	76.85% (1079)
Negative	27.01% (397)	15.95% (224)
Neutral	6.8% (100)	7.19% (101)
Total	1470	1404

(Source: New Russian Barometer)

Finally, there was no opposition electoral bloc or coalition in this election. As I will explain in greater detail in the next section, none of the three opposition candidates that ran in the 2008 election had formed an electoral alliance. The two largest opposition parties, the CPRF and the LDPR, have often received the second and third largest vote shares, respectively, both in past presidential and parliamentary elections. Yet their stark ideological differences, seen in their party platforms and their voting behavior within the Duma, make them unlikely contenders for an electoral coalition. The CPRF, as a successor party to the Communist Party of the Soviet

Union, typically focuses on state intervention in the economy and the expansion of welfare state programs. They are often willing to vote against Kremlin-supported legislation. The LDPR, in contrast, is a right-wing personalistic party based around Vladimir Zhirinovsky's charisma as well as his nationalistic and populist rhetoric. Within the State Duma, LDPR members often vote in favor of the Kremlin. Thus it would be very unlikely for these two parties to ever join forces. Two other opposition parties, Yabloko and Union of Right Forces, have often been urged to unite given their pro-Western, pro-liberal worldviews and similar voter bases. A union between the two could have helped them achieve representation within the Duma given the 7% threshold in place from 2003-2016. Indeed, Boris Nemstov, leader of the Union of Right Forces, voiced his support for a unified liberal opposition, and attributed the liberal wing's inability to field a sole candidate as his reason for not running in 2008.⁶⁸ Instead, Nemstov supported the candidacy of Mikhail Kasyanov, not wanting to detract from his support. Thus these two parties have never followed through on any discussion of unity, and did not participate in the 2008 presidential election.

Given the low contestation and high incumbent dominance, I expect that the goals for both opposition and incumbent actors will have shifted in this election. For opposition candidates, I have theorized that they are likely to focus on the short-term goal of maintaining their voter base in this election. Given the high incumbent dominance, they are likely to want to preserve their existing support so that they can continue to have an active role within the hegemonic authoritarian state. With this goal in mind, I expect opposition candidates to focus on appealing to their base and to avoid antagonizing the regime through explicit criticisms. They

⁶⁸ Abdullaev, Nabi. 2007. "Nemstov Ditches Bid for Kremlin". *The Moscow Times*. December 27, 2007. <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/nemstov-ditches-bid-for-kremlin/192090.html>.

are likely to worry about the atrophy of their voter base given the dominant incumbent, so they will select strategies aimed at maintaining their existing support, instead of aiming to expand their voter base. For incumbent (and incumbent-supported) candidates, I expect that their goal is to demonstrate strength in the election. Having achieved dominance in the short-term, I argue that they are likely to focus on the long-term goal of building and displaying strength within the state. The show of strength can inform elites within their administration, as well as those in the opposition and even voters and the public more broadly that the regime is fully in control and is invincible. Such a display can potentially discourage any potential challengers within the regime from mounting a confrontation. It can also dishearten and dissuade any opposition candidates from engaging in any public displays of dissatisfaction. Finally, it can show voters that there is no viable alternative and even suggest that the incumbent regime is inherently connected with stability and prosperity.

Opposition Behavior

I begin with the opposition electoral strategies and behavior during the 2008 presidential election. In contrast to the 2004 election, the well-known leaders of the CPRF and LDPR opted to run in the 2008 election. Zhirinovskiy was the only candidate even considered by the LDPR at their nominating conference held just days after Putin's announcement of his support for Medvedev.⁶⁹ Similarly, Zyuganov stated his intention of running and faced no opposition at the CPRF Congress. The party delegates unanimously approved his candidacy.⁷⁰ Andrei Bogdanov, who while the leader of a minor political party, the Democratic Party of Russia, which had no

⁶⁹ von Twickel, Nikolaus. 2007. "Zhirinovskiy Promises to Clean House". *The Moscow Times*. December 14, 2007. <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/zhirinovskiy-promises-to-clean-house/351681.html>.

⁷⁰ Solovyov, Dmitry. 2007. "Zyuganov Promises to Fight Medvedev". *The Moscow Times*. December 17, 2007. <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/zyuganov-promises-to-fight-medvedev/192276.html>.

representation in the Duma, was officially registered as an independent candidate after producing the required two million signatures (Clark 2009).

Two additional candidates sought to register as independents, but were denied registration by the Central Election Commission (CEC). Mikhail Kasyanov, the former prime minister that Putin had dismissed during his 2004 reelection campaign, attempted to register and produced just over two million signatures. However, his candidacy was rejected by the CEC, which claimed that more than 15% of his signatures were forged or contained technical errors, which exceeded the 5% limit for invalid signatures.⁷¹ This was noted with speculation, as Bogdanov's signatures were accepted, despite maintaining much less name recognition and coming from a minor party that had received about 90,000 votes total nationwide in the December 2007 parliamentary election. This fueled speculation that he had received support from the Kremlin in fulfilling this obligation, an accusation that his campaign denied.⁷² A third independent candidate, Vladimir Bukovsky, a former Soviet dissident and human rights advocate, sought to officially register with the CEC, but was also denied. This decision was attributed to Bukovsky's official residency in the United Kingdom, as well as the fact that he had not lived in Russia for the previous ten years.⁷³ While an independent, the liberal party Yabloko supported Bukovsky's participation.⁷⁴

⁷¹ GOLOS. 2008. *Statement No. 1 of "GOLOS" Association on findings of long-term observation of the 2008 Presidential campaign*. Moscow. February 5, 2008.

⁷² Osipovich, Alexander. 2008. "Kasyanov's supporters Chasing Signatures". *The Moscow Times*. January 11, 2008. <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/kasyanovs-supporters-chasing-signatures/191988.html>.

⁷³ GOLOS. 2008.

⁷⁴ Bespalova, Natalia, Maria Louisa Tirmasti, and Viktor Khamaev. 2007. "'No Unity in the Democratic Camp'" («Некоторое единство в лагере демократов»). *Kommersant*. December 17, 2007. <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/836989>.

Efforts at voter persuasion, including campaign behavior and candidate platforms, differed for both Zyuganov and Zhirinovskiy in comparison to their parties' candidates in 2004. In accepting his nomination at the CPRF Congress, Zyuganov emphasized many typical communist and socialist policy positions, including higher pensions and the nationalization of major industries. He stated his goal of pushing the election into a second round, a feat that had not been seen since the contest between Zyuganov and Yeltsin in 1996. Yet despite these intentions, observers note that these positions are virtually the same as those put forward by his party in the December 2007 parliamentary elections. Moreover, while he admitted that his party had made mistakes in the past, Zyuganov was not shy in connecting his party to the former Soviet Union. He stressed that the Soviet Union under communism was a global superpower, it brought great pride to the Russian people, and had great accomplishments including sending the first person into space.⁷⁵ Zyuganov continued to decry the decline in social spending, the rise in corruption, and the move toward privatization during the campaign (Clark 2009). Such overt references to the Soviet Union were less visible in the 2004 election, particularly since the candidate, Kharitonov, was only a recent member of the Communist Party.

During the campaign, Zyuganov acknowledged the minimal amount of contestation within the election. Yet such admissions usually did not explicitly criticize Medvedev or Putin, in contrast to his party's candidate in 2004, Nikolai Kharitonov. In one instance, he emphasized his ideological opposition to Russia's trajectory over the last two decades, rather than making any blatant criticisms against the Putin regime. Zyuganov suggested that the privatization of the 1990s in effect stole property and goods from the Russian people. Thus the entire Russian state

⁷⁵ Khamaev, Viktor. 2007. "Gennadii Zyuganov aims to make it to the second round". (Геннадий Зюганов выдвинулся во второй тур). *Kommersant*. December 17, 2007. <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/836961>; Solovyov. 2007.

was built by thieves, who inherently prevent the potential for democratic elections.⁷⁶ He maintained that the Communist Party was the only genuine opposition party in Russia and that the CPRF needed to stand in the elections to fight for and defend democracy.⁷⁷ Even when it came to the televised debates, Zyuganov emphasized that they were essential in ensuring he received airtime on the major TV networks, even though Medvedev had announced that he would not take part in them.⁷⁸ Thus, unlike 2004, where Kharitonov and the CPRF attributed declines in democracy to Putin himself, during this election this was connected to broader societal and economic trends.

Zhirinovskiy emphasized his nationalistic, populist and anti-Western rhetoric regularly during the campaign period. During his acceptance speech at the LDPR nomination conference, he stood in front of a banner that read, “Let’s clean the nation” and demonized corrupt bureaucrats. He further argued that corruption in Russia is a relic of the Mongol-Tatar rule of the 13th-15th centuries.⁷⁹ He also stated that if elected, he would eliminate the eleven ethnic republics within Russia as well as the Federation Council.⁸⁰ Later in the campaign season, he staged a public demonstration in front of the British embassy, accusing the nation for being responsible

⁷⁶ Abdullaev, Nabi. Zyuganov Says Vote Won’t be Fair. *The Moscow Times*. February 5, 2008. <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/zyuganov-says-vote-wont-be-fair/302611.html>.

⁷⁷ Romanov, Igor. 2008. “Zyuganov is fighting for democracy”. (Зюганов поборется за демократию). *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*. February 5, 2008. http://www.ng.ru/politics/2008-02-05/3_zuganov.html.

⁷⁸ Nagornikh, Irina. 2008. “Candidates for president receive air time”. (Кандидаты в президенты получили эфир). *Kommersant*. January 30, 2008. <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/847062>.

⁷⁹ Razuvayev Jr., Vladimir. “First political party candidate nominated”. (Определен первый партийный кандидат). *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*. December 14, 2007. http://www.ng.ru/politics/2007-12-14/1_ldpr.html.

⁸⁰ von Twickel. 2007.

for much of the world's problems over the last few centuries.⁸¹ While these types of nationalist and populist rhetoric dominated Zhirinovskiy's 2008 campaign, the same was not true of his party's bid in 2004. The 2004 contest saw far less explicit campaigning from the LDPR candidate Oleg Malyshev, and also featured a more subdued, less outrageous Zhirinovskiy.

The final registered candidate, Bogdanov, led a puzzling and mostly nonexistent campaign. He received virtually no attention from the media, aside from his initial registration and his debate appearances. Moreover, his campaign maintained a budget of 4.8 million rubles, which was about twelve percent of the Zyuganov's 39 million ruble budget, the next highest.⁸² He campaigned visibly with family members, including his elderly grandmother, which emphasized the low-scale of his operation. His campaign was quite vague on his issue positions. Bogdanov did repeatedly acknowledge his active participation in Free Masonry, stating that he sought to bring more positive attention to the organization. He also stated that he supported increased ties with the West and the reduction of state involvement in the economy.⁸³

These candidate strategies and behaviors fit with the theoretical expectations proposed in this dissertation. With high incumbent dominance and low contestation, I expect opposition candidates to prioritize maintaining their voter bases against atrophy. To accomplish this, I have hypothesized that candidates would emphasize more extreme or niche issue positions to target their voter base. They are likely not interested in attracting moderate or mainstream voters at

⁸¹ Staff Writer. 2008. "Zhirinovskiy Engages in Street Theater". *The Moscow Times*. January 24, 2008. <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/zhirinovskiy-engages-in-street-theater/303202.html>.

⁸² Romanov, Igor. "Agitation is languishing." (Агитация перестает быть томной). *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*. February 14, 2008. http://www.ng.ru/politics/2008-02-14/1_agitation.html.

⁸³ Abdullaev, Nabi. 2008. "Bogdanov Campaigns with Grandmother". *The Moscow Times*. February 26, 2008. <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/bogdanov-campaigns-with-grandmother/356025.html>.

this point. The continued incumbent dominance could threaten their entire existence, so I expect that opposition actors would want to appeal to and energize their base. They are not likely to overtly criticize the incumbent regime so as to avoid any additional blowback. I argue that both Zhirinovskiy's and Zyuganov's strategies of voter persuasion provide evidence of this. Zyuganov appealed stridently to the orthodox communists and patriotic nationalists within his party by emphasizing the achievements and glory of the former Soviet Union. Yet he typically refrained from overtly criticizing Putin or Medvedev, instead disparaging Russia's general trajectory since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the behavior of the oligarchs in the 1990s. Zhirinovskiy also emphasized his trademark ethnic nationalism and Russian chauvinism throughout the campaign. These displays were far more apparent than during the 2004 election, when Zhirinovskiy mostly tried to remind voters who his party's candidate, Oleg Malyshkin, was.

I argue that these expectations also fit the behavior of the liberal, pro-Western parties as well. While neither Yabloko nor the Union of Right Forces nominated their own candidates, they did each endorse independent candidates. Yabloko publicly supported the Soviet dissident Bukovsky, while Union of Right Forces leader Nemstov stated that his party supported former prime minister Mikhail Kasyanov. While neither of these candidates was ultimately successful in registering to run for president, they both represent staunch support for the core principles of the parties. Bukovsky stated that he prioritized human rights and the freedom of speech, two key platforms of Yabloko. Kasyanov was blatantly anti-Kremlin and voiced his dismay over the demise of democracy in Russia, which fit the principles of the Union of Right Forces. This allowed both parties to align themselves with candidates critical of the Kremlin without having to campaign on it themselves. Endorsing outside candidates was also logistically easier for both parties. As neither currently held any seats in the State Duma, they would have had to collect

two million signatures to register a candidate. Thus they avoided having to expend party resources on such ventures, knowing that such signatures would have likely attracted serious scrutiny anyway. Finally, neither party, at least initially, endorsed a boycott. In 2004, both parties supported boycotts early on, deciding not to field or support any candidates before registration had even begun. Yet in 2008, both parties decided to put their support behind other candidates in lieu of an official boycott.

Incumbent Behavior

Dmitri Medvedev was the incumbent-supported candidate in this election, and a current member of the president's administration, as the deputy vice prime minister. As stated earlier, he solidified his connection to incumbent president by stating his intention to nominate Putin to the position of prime minister when elected. This announcement arrived just two days after Putin officially designated him as his appointed successor.

Unlike Putin's reelection bid in 2004, Medvedev was visible on the campaign trail, and his official duties in Putin's administration received substantial media coverage as well. Medvedev's campaign promoted mainly focused on social issues, in addition to promoting the successes of Putin's last eight years. As the first deputy prime minister under Putin, Medvedev had overseen Putin's national priority projects, which were emphasized during the campaign. Many of his campaign visits highlighted these social issues, yet were also noticeably vague and unspecific on policy positions. He visited a Moscow family that had just given birth to their third child, which was also considered the 100,000th birth in Moscow of 2007, highlighting Russia's demographic problems.⁸⁴ He suggested higher pensions while visiting far north city of

⁸⁴ Abdullaev, Nabi and Svetlana Osadchuk. 2008. "Blanket Baby Coverage for Medvedev". *The Moscow Times*. January 10, 2008. <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/blanket-baby-coverage-for-medvedev/192013.html>.

Murmansk.⁸⁵ He stressed the government's role in ensuring the availability of housing while in the Siberian city of Tyumen. And in the Ural city of Chelyabinsk, he visited a metallurgical factory and praised it for reducing its emissions of harmful pollutants.⁸⁶ While he drew attention to many social issues on these campaign visits, these statements typically lacked any specific policy positions. In particular, Medvedev had remained silent on economic policies. Putin, on the other hand, did explicitly advocate specific policies for the future. With less than a month before the vote, Putin gave a 50-minute-long economic speech where he outlined new economic policies that he argued should last through the year 2020. Medvedev was in attendance but did not speak.⁸⁷

Yet, similar to Putin in 2004, Medvedev failed to engage directly or indirectly with any of his opponents. He opted not to participate in the numerous free televised debates organized for the election. A party spokesperson said that this was due to Medvedev's busy work schedule and travels around Russia, leaving him with no time to attend.⁸⁸ Moreover, he barely acknowledged the presence of other candidates during the election.

Despite the low contestation in this election, electoral interference was observed and linked to Medvedev's campaign. According to the Russian election monitoring organization

⁸⁵ Busvine, Douglas. 2008. "Welfare the Big National Idea for Medvedev". *The Moscow Times*. January 18, 2008. <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/welfare-the-big-national-idea-for-medvedev/303453.html>.

⁸⁶ Farizova, Suzanna. 2008. "Candidate casts aside the government view" (Кандидат бросил государственный взгляд). *Kommersant*. January 18, 2008. <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/842985>.

⁸⁷ Staff. 2008. "Putin's Working Plan" (Рабочий план Путина). *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*. February 11, 2008. http://www.ng.ru/editorial/2008-02-11/2_red.html.

⁸⁸ Nagornikh, Irina. 2008. "Candidates for president receive air time". (Кандидаты в президенты получили эфир). *Kommersant*. January 30, 2008. <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/847062>.

“GOLOS,” the abuse of state or administrative resources was excessive in this election.⁸⁹ This dissertation has categorized the abuse of state resources into four categories, each with particular subtypes: institutional, financial, regulatory and enforcement resource abuse. Based on the election monitoring reports produced, the 2008 Russian presidential election witnessed all four subtypes of institutional resource abuse and one out of three subtypes of regulatory resource abuse. First, GOLOS noted the widespread usage of government properties for campaign operations. In particular, such campaign offices in favor of Medvedev were present in multiple administrative buildings throughout Russia. GOLOS noted that, of their entire deployment of observers around Russia in 38 different regions, about 20% noted seeing such campaign operations take place in state buildings.⁹⁰

Second, state employees, who while not officially campaign workers, were observed working on campaign duties for Medvedev’s team. GOLOS observed that within the administrative buildings that often housed such campaign offices, state workers actively contributed to campaign obligations during official business hours. Such activities were reported in 15% of the observed areas.⁹¹ Bureaucrats and state workers were also observed participating in campaign gatherings. Moreover, GOLOS and media observers reported that regional governors felt compelled to use their staff to ensure significant voter turnout. Regional bureaucrats and governors reported feeling that they must generate voter turnout above 60% to

⁸⁹ The OSCE decided not to send international monitors to this election, citing restrictions put on the quantity and duration of visas offered to its observers (Clark 2009). Therefore, I have relied on three reports issued during and after the campaign by GOLOS, a domestic election monitoring organization, for evidence of electoral interference.

⁹⁰ GOLOS. 2008. *Statement No. 2 from Organization GOLOS concerning the results of the long-term observation of the voter campaign for President of the Russian Federation on March 2, 2008. (Заявление № 2 Ассоциации «ГОЛОС» по результатам долгосрочного наблюдения хода избирательной кампании Президента РФ 2 марта 2008 года.)* February 28, 2008. <http://archive.golos.org/asset/75>.

⁹¹ Ibid.

demonstrate their loyalty to Medvedev, as the president maintained the authority to appoint regional governors.⁹²

Next, GOLOS observed that in principle there was no differentiation between Medvedev the candidate and Medvedev the deputy first prime minister. This lack of distinction was visible through the advertisements found throughout the country, which typically featured Medvedev pictured with president Putin. It also was observed through the travels and visits made by Medvedev, who seemed to portray his actions as official duties in combination with campaigning.⁹³ Finally, GOLOS reported a persistent imbalance in the coverage of the election on state TV channels. They stressed the sharp distinctions in coverage for the four candidates. Medvedev received four times as much airtime as the next candidate, Zhirinovskiy, on the three main state TV channels. These disparities were even more pronounced regarding Zyuganov and Bogdanov. GOLOS reports that the media displayed a fundamental bias in favor of the incumbent-supported candidate.⁹⁴

GOLOS also considered the decision by the Central Election Committee regarding Mikhail Kasyanov's candidacy to be political. They cited that the signatures rejected as invalid, most contained minor technical errors and that there was no process through which signatories could prove or correct these errors. Within the segment of flagged signatures, GOLOS reported that less than one percent was deemed fraudulent, with the vast majority merely having technical problems. This same scrutiny was not applied to the same degree to the two million signatures provided for Bogdanov's candidacy. Thus GOLOS deemed the rejection of Kasyanov's

⁹² Ibid. Francesca Mereu. 2008. "Voters Pressured to Choose Medvedev". *The Moscow Times*. February 22, 2008. <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/voters-pressured-to-choose-medvedev/361374.html>.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

signatures as political, due to his vocal opposition of Putin and the Kremlin. This provides evidence of a regulatory state resource abuse in favor of the incumbent.

Of course, as this case made clear initially, contestation was extremely low for this election, like it was for the 2004 presidential election. The main theoretical difference between the 2004 and the 2008 election is the change in incumbent dominance from low to high. Yet this election witnessed twice as many abuses of institutional administrative resource subtypes, with all four subtypes observed versus two subtypes in 2004. Logically, state resource abuse was not necessary in ensuring that Medvedev win this election. I argue that the shift in incumbent dominance helps explain the increase in institutional resource abuse during a lowly contested, predictable election. I have theorized that the goal for incumbents with high dominance during an election with low contestation is to demonstrate strength by selecting strategies that signal such strength and control publicly. I have hypothesized that a dominant incumbent can use institutional resources strategically to demonstrate strength, as their usage is often requires hegemony and dominance and also can signal publicly how powerful the incumbent regime is. This case presents support for this hypothesis by witnessing high levels of institutional resource abuse.

The remainder of Medvedev's campaign behavior also follows these theoretical expectations. He was more visible and active on the campaign trail in comparison with Putin's reelection campaign in 2004, during which he notably made one main campaign speech. Yet the news coverage of Medvedev's speeches noted that they were light on specific policies, instead highlighting the successes of the last eight years. With high incumbent dominance, I expect incumbent (and incumbent-supported) candidates to use electoral strategies to project strength. By emphasizing his National Projects while mostly refraining from asking voters to support him,

Medvedev's campaign appearances suggest strength, control and inevitability. Moreover, the fact that he mostly refrained from referencing his competitors in the election also supports this perspective. Thus I contend that Medvedev's electoral behavior supports the expectation that the goal in this election was to project strength publicly to his fellow elites, the opposition and to voters.

Conclusion

I argue that the 2004 and 2008 Russian presidential elections illustrate support for the theory proposed in this dissertation. Both opposition and incumbent actors have displayed different strategies between these two elections despite the many similarities between the two contests. In both elections, contestation was very low, which was even readily acknowledged by many of the candidates. Both elections took place just months after parliamentary elections that saw gains for the burgeoning pro-Kremlin party of power, United Russia. The years preceding both elections saw increases in GDP per capita and GDP growth.⁹⁵ Income inequality remained mostly stagnant between 2000 and 2008.⁹⁶ Corruption indicators shifted both down and up during this time period.⁹⁷ Finally, restrictions on civil liberties remained constant from 2000 to 2008.⁹⁸ I argue that these differences are due to the different goals held by both incumbent and opposition actors depending on the conditions of the election. While the vast majority of high contestation elections take place within states with low incumbent dominance, low contestation

⁹⁵ GDP per capita continued to rise between 2000 and 2008, from \$3870 to \$6649. GDP growth was at least 5% between 2000 and 2008. Both sets of statistics are according to the World Bank.

⁹⁶ GINI coefficients ranged between 34 and 40 from 2000 to 2008, with increases and decreases during this time period.

⁹⁷Corruption scores showed first an increase, rising to 2.8 in 2004 from 2.1 in 2000, and then a decrease to 2.3 by 2008. The lower the score, according to Transparency International, the higher the levels of corruption, so corruption went down and then up during this time period.

⁹⁸ Freedom House's civil liberties score for Russia remained a '5', in the 'Partly Free' category from 2000-2008.

elections are held in states with both low and high incumbent dominance. Given this, I contend that the shift in incumbent dominance explains these differences. As explained earlier, this shift can be seen in Russia's classification as a hegemonic authoritarian regime after Putin's reelection with more than 70% of the vote in 2004. It is also visible through the consolidation of the pro-Kremlin dominant party United Russia and consistent revenue from the exports of natural resources that comprised at least a third of total GDP for four of the five years preceding the 2008 election.

These case studies suggest that both opposition and incumbent actors have varied goals during low contestation elections depending on incumbent dominance in the state. With low incumbent dominance during the 2004 election, the opposition candidates and parties displayed their frustration with the status quo. This was evident through the decision to submit lesser-known candidates by the Communists and the Liberal Democrats and through the supported boycotts by Yabloko and Union of Right Forces. Multiple candidates explicitly criticized Putin and his regime during this election, yet refrained from detailed policy discussions. They also publicly acknowledged different long-term aims, given the certainty of their loss in this election. Yet this was different during the 2008 election, with high incumbent dominance. The Communists and Liberal Democrats submitted their well-know party leaders as candidates. Yabloko and Union of Right Forces both endorsed candidates that closely aligned with their parties' principles. During the election, the opposition candidates emphasized niche issues that addressed their core voter base. Finally, overt criticisms of Putin, Medvedev and the Kremlin by opposition candidates were minimal during this election. I argue that these differences can be attributed to the shift from low to high incumbent dominance, which altered the goals for opposition actors. Faced with low incumbent dominance, I argue that the opposition is interested

in signaling dissatisfaction in the short-term so that they can rebuild and make advances in the long term. However, high incumbent dominance shifts the focus to the short-term, I posit. The incumbent apparatus could threaten the continued existence of opposition parties and actors, so they are more likely to try and maintain their core support. They want to avoid voter atrophy while also avoiding antagonizing the incumbent.

Incumbent actors are also expected to have different goals depending on incumbent dominance. The incumbent Putin and the incumbent-supported Medvedev displayed different electoral strategies during the 2004 and 2008 elections. In the face of certainly being reelected, Putin did very little actual campaigning. He gave one prominent campaign speech that received considerable attention by the Russian media. Thus attempts at voter persuasions were extremely limited. Electoral interference was also low during this election. Out of twelve possible subtypes of state resource abuse, his campaign was observed committing two types of institutional resource abuse. Yet in 2008, Putin's endorsed successor, Medvedev, displayed different electoral strategies. While his campaign was still minimal, he traveled to multiple cities prior to the election, highlighting both his and Putin's accomplishments. His attempts at voter persuasion emphasized social issues that enjoy wide support from the population, as well as stability and strength. Electoral interference increased from the 2004 election. Observers noted that all four types of institutional resources were abused during the 2008 election. I have argued that institutional resources specifically are likely to promote strength and power. Given this I argue that these changes are due to a shift in the goals for incumbent candidates. Faced with low contestation and thus assured victory, incumbents with low dominance are likely interested in preserving the status quo. To do so, I argue that they are likely to select strategies that avoid public scrutiny but that can build legitimacy. I argued that minimal attempts at both voter

persuasion and electoral interference can achieve this goal. Conversely, high incumbent dominance likely shifts the goal for incumbents toward demonstrating strength. I suggest that they likely will select strategies to signal publicly and visibly the strength and control maintained by the regime. High institutional resource abuse, combined with voter persuasion efforts that emphasize stability, align with this goal.

In summation, these contrasting case studies are meant to illustrate how, despite common conditions across two elections, a shift in incumbent dominance likely alters the goals of both incumbent and opposition actors. I contend that these case studies provide additional support for the relationships observed in the previous two empirical chapters.

Chapter 7: Medium and High Contestation Amid Low Incumbent Dominance: Case Study Comparisons of Ukraine's 2004 and 2010 Presidential Elections.

In this chapter, I focus on two cases both with low incumbent dominance but a shift in contestation from medium to high. Ukraine's 2004 and 2010 presidential elections fit these criteria and allow me to examine incumbent and opposition candidate electoral strategies. In particular, these two cases provide the opportunity to see if an increase in contestation amid a constant low incumbent dominance results in the increase of the types of voter persuasion and electoral interference strategies. Moreover, similar to the previous chapter, it allows me to examine strategies of voter persuasion in executive elections.

These elections also allow me to explore one of the theoretical issues discussed in Chapter 2. I argue that when faced with contested elections, incumbents are likely to weigh the risks and benefits of electoral interference. I consider public demonstrations against the regime to be one clear manifestation of these potential costs. Ukraine's 2004 presidential election witnessed just such demonstrations, which ultimately resulted in the creation of an

unprecedented third round of voting, and victory for the opposition candidate. These events allow me to consider the strategies used before and after such an event, and how it potentially shaped incumbent strategies in subsequent elections. I expect that incumbents seek to establish a balance of strategies that both help ensure victory but also avoid serious public scrutiny and election protests. Ukraine's 2004 election marks an example where this balance may have been miscalculated. Thus such a case is valuable to the theory of this dissertation in two ways. First, it allows me to observe what strategies were used and how these strategies potentially affected subsequent protests. Second, it establishes a setting where such protests represent a real and tangible threat to incumbents in future contests.

To gather data for this chapter, I rely on similar sets of sources used in Chapter 6. Academic treatments of the election, election monitoring reports and domestic news coverage provide evidence of the electoral strategies utilized by opposition and incumbent candidates. For news coverage, I rely mainly on four sources: *Ukrainskaya Pravda*, *The Kyiv Post* and the reports from the news agency *UNIAN*. While the first is a Ukrainian-language newspaper with Russian-language translations,⁹⁹ *The Kyiv Post* is a Ukrainian-run English-language publication. The *UNIAN* is an independent press service in Ukraine that released daily Ukrainian press summaries during the election with some English-language translations.

Ukraine's 2004 Presidential Election: Medium Contestation and Low Incumbent Dominance

In 2004, the incumbent president of Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma, was constrained by a two-term limit from running for reelection. After a court ruling that legally allowed Kuchma to run for a third term, he ultimately decided to support his prime minister Victor Yanukoych for the presidency. Thus the election was primarily a contest between Yanukoych, the incumbent-

⁹⁹ In reading these articles, I relied on the Russian-online archives of these newspapers, which were comprehensive.

supported candidate and current prime minister, and Victor Yushchenko, a former prime minister under Kuchma who left the regime for the opposition in 2001. The election also contained serious candidates from two other political parties, the Communist Party of Ukraine, the Socialist Party of Ukraine, in addition to 20 other registered candidates.

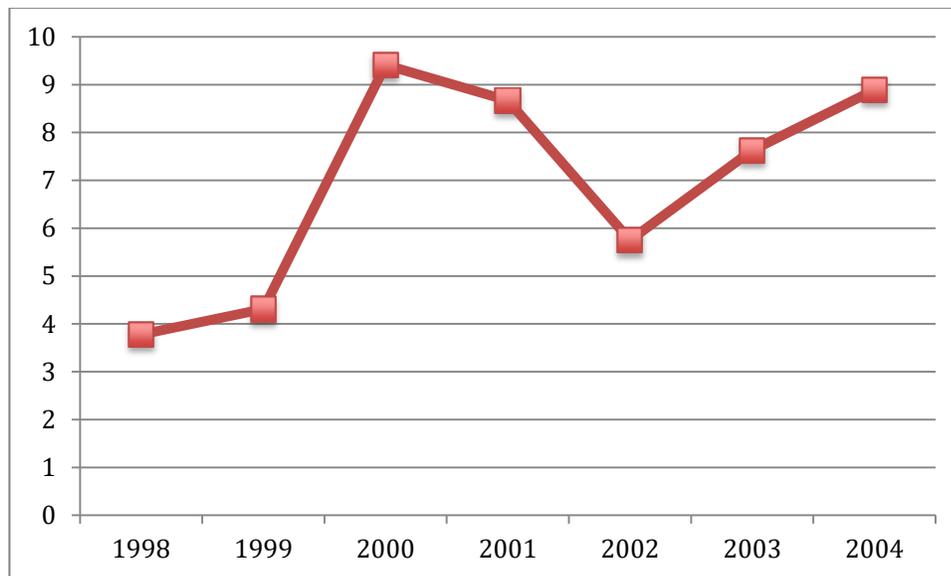
According to the operationalization of this dissertation, Ukraine had low incumbent dominance heading in to the 2004 election. The incumbent president Kuchma had been reelected in 1999 with 56 % of the vote. Kuchma failed to receive at least 50% of the vote in the first round, so this victory was not achieved until the second round. Given that this electoral result fails to see the incumbent reelected with at least 70% in the first round, it is clear that incumbent dominance was low. As this case represents a contested election, this makes sense. As I demonstrated in Chapter 3, almost all of the cases of medium or high contestation in executive elections were within low incumbent dominance or competitive authoritarian regimes.

There also was no dominant political party to provide additional support to the incumbent regime. As Kuzio (2005b) argues, Ukraine has lacked a united and coherent 'party of power' in its post-Soviet political landscape. Instead, multiple political parties existed in Ukraine that supported the Kuchma regime. Yet such pro-regime parties had been unable to coalesce due to regional and ethnic divides within the elite of these parties (Roeder 2002), putting these parties at contentious odds with one another (Kuzio 2005b). Kuchma seemed to prefer this arrangement, and never made any attempts to build his own 'party of power. (Way 2005). In this election, Yanukovich was nominated by one of these pro-Kuchma parties, the Party of Regions. This party evolved from the party For A United Ukraine, which in the 2002 parliamentary election for the Verkhovna Rada won the third largest percentage of seats, 11%, in the proportional contests and the largest number of SMD seats, 16% (Birch 2003). These electoral results demonstrate the

lack of a decisive victory by this party, revealing that it could not serve to provide the Kuchma regime with additional assets for incumbent dominance.

Ukraine also does not rely on the export of natural resources. As Figure 7.1 shows, energy exports as a percentage of total GDP approach ten percent as a high point. I have discussed earlier that energy exports are considered substantial enough to insulate incumbent regimes from external pressure or to provide incumbents with assets of incumbent dominance when they comprise at least a third of total GDP. Ukrainian energy exports were nowhere near this threshold in the years preceding the 2004 presidential election, so natural resources cannot serve as incumbent assets.

Figure 7.1 Ukrainian Energy Exports as a Percentage of GDP 1998-2004



(Source: The World Bank World Development Indicators)

Ukraine's 2004 presidential election witnessed a medium-level of electoral contestation. According to the operationalization established earlier, this election was coded as having 2 out of 4 factors present for contestation. One of these factors is incumbent confidence of victory. As the election grew nearer, fear and uncertainty clearly overshadowed incumbent president

Kuchma and the parties that supported him within the Rada. While Kuchma had appealed to, and won the right to, run for a third term, his negative approval ratings seemed to convince him to not run again. More than half of Ukrainians did not support his actions in March and April before the October 31st presidential election.¹⁰⁰ His supporters unanimously announced their support for the ruling prime minister, Victor Yanukovich on April 15, 2004. Yet just one week before this announcement, parties supportive to Kuchma in the Rada introduced a law that would eliminate the direct election of the president. This law, which was narrowly defeated, would have allowed Kuchma to appoint the next president, and would have transferred much of the president's power to the prime ministers.¹⁰¹ After this vote, one of Kuchma's supporters noted that, "The struggle for the president's post is going to be very acute", revealing the anticipation of a fraught election.¹⁰² Thus his camp was clearly not confident of victory even before the campaign season began.

This lack of confidence can also be confirmed in opinion polls conducted in the months before the election. According to the Razumkov Center, a sociological survey organization in Ukraine, when given the option of all the possible candidates, 15.3% reported supporting Yanukovich while 22.6% declared support for Yushchenko. When given the option to choose between just these two candidates, Yushchenko's lead remained, with 31.7% supporting him compared with 23% supporting Yanukovich.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Poll conducted by Razumkov Center. http://www.razumkov.org.ua/eng/poll.php?poll_id=67.

¹⁰¹ OSCE. Ukraine Presidential Election: 31 October, 21 November and 26 December 2004. *OSCE/ ODHIR Election Observation Mission Final Report*.

¹⁰² Baker, Peter. 2004. "Factions Slug it Out in Battle to See Who Will Lead Ukraine". *The Washington Post*. April 17, 2004. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2004/04/16/factions-slug-it-out-in-battle-to-see-who-will-lead-ukraine/4550d95c-6e5e-4928-bffd-bad715385843/>.

¹⁰³ These surveys were conducted in April 2004, and reported in the UNIAN April 17, 2004 Political Press release No. 004(4).

The second and third factors consider public perceptions about the economy. According to NELDA, the economy had seen growth over the last few years, and public perceptions had improved. Indeed, GDP growth was at least 5% between 2000 and 2004, and was actually 12% in 2004.¹⁰⁴ And public opinion data does show that public perceptions about the economy had improved during this time period, although this improvement was extremely minimal. A survey conducted by IFES showed that the percentage of Ukrainians who thought that the economic situation was somewhat good rose from 7% in 2002 to 9% in 2003. Yet negative assessments were constant: the percentage that answered that it was bad or very bad remained at 86% from 2002 to 2003 (Sharma and Van Dusen 2004). Ukrainians reported some improvements in their personal living situations prior to the election. A quarter of respondents stated in October 2004, the same month as the first round of the election, that their economic situations had improved over the last year. Similarly, a quarter are stated that their situations had gotten worse over the last year, and the remaining half stated that things had stayed the same.¹⁰⁵ While NELDA considered this election to have taken place amid a good economic situation, these findings make this less clear. While I agree that there was no economic crisis in Ukraine, public perceptions about the economy appear to have been mostly negative, which is theorized to add contestation to the election.

Finally, an opposition electoral coalition formed in this election. Two opposition parties, the Our Ukraine Bloc headed by Victor Yushchenko, and the Bloc of Yulia Tymoshenko, headed by Tymoshenko, agreed to form a temporary electoral coalition for the presidential election. Their coalition, named “Force of the People”, selected Yushchenko to stand as the candidate

¹⁰⁴ According to World Bank World Development Indicators GDP growth annual percentages.

¹⁰⁵ IFES. “Public Opinion in Ukraine: Findings from Survey and Focus Group Research”. November 2004. http://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/ukraine_survey_3_14_06_full_2.pdf.

(Bunce and Wolchik 2011). Both parties had seen promising results in the 2002 parliamentary elections, the first electoral bid for both parties (Birch 2003). As they opposed both the incumbent regime as well as the political left dominated by the Communists, this mutual position allowed them to agree to work together in this election. Together their two parties controlled 92 out of the 225 seats in the parliament, or about 40%, which allows them to realistically challenge the incumbent-supported candidate. As Yushchenko and Tymoshenko were the personal fronts of their respective parties, they brought significant name recognition to the election. Thus the presence of this opposition electoral bloc added contestation to the 2004 presidential election.

Given the conditions of this election, I expect that the goal for both opposition and incumbent candidates is to win the election. Thus, they are all likely to select strategies of voter persuasion, and in the case of incumbents, electoral interference, that aim to convince the electorate to vote for them and against their competition. For voter persuasion, this includes an increased emphasis on identity and value issues to potentially polarized the electorate against a candidate. It may also include an increased emphasis on economic interests. While Chapter 4 did not find support for this hypothesis, I can nonetheless look for evidence of it here. In terms of electoral interference, I hypothesize that financial, regulatory and enforcement strategies are more likely to be present in such elections. Conversely, I argue that while institutional strategies may be effective in addressing the incumbent's goal in this election, they likely carry more immediate costs. Because they are the most visible and can potentially attract serious public scrutiny, they could spark mass public demonstrations and protests, which could detract from the incumbent's ability to win the election. With this in mind, I now turn to electoral strategies utilized in this election.

Opposition Strategies

The main opposition candidate in this election was Victor Yushchenko, a former premier minister and head of the political party Our Ukraine. Yushchenko stated his intention to run for president in early June, 2004, and announced the formation of his electoral opposition bloc with Yulia Tymoshenko and her party on July 2, 2004.

Yushchenko and Tymoshenko's parties both maintained the majority of their support in the capital as well as western regions of Ukraine, where the majority of the population is ethnic Ukrainian. However, they aimed to keep the election from taking a nationalist hue by adopting the color orange as a symbol. Throughout the campaign, Yushchenko travelled to all parts of the country, including the eastern cities like Kharkiv and southern cities in Crimea where Yanukovych enjoyed a vast majority of the support. As noted by Bunce and Wolchik (2011), Yushchenko's campaign was active and savvy. He engaged his campaign to set up personalized tents to meet with potential voters while seeking signatures for his campaign registration, which was unusual for high-level politicians at the time.¹⁰⁶ He regularly gave speeches to thousands of people throughout the campaign. One especially notable speech came on September 18, 2004, just two weeks after Yushchenko had fallen ill after being poisoned. While no conclusions have been drawn on the perpetrators of this attack, an investigation subsequently revealed that he was poisoned with dioxin, which left visible scarring on his face. Speaking to this crowd of thousands just weeks after the attack on September 6th, he defiantly proclaimed, "They can't poison us."¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ UNIAN Statement No. 027. *UNIAN Elections 2004* (УНІАН Вибори -2004). August 18, 2004.

¹⁰⁷ "Yushchenko says to the powers: 'You can't poison us'. And then went to Zhitomir" (Ющенко сказав влади «Вы нас не отравите!» И поехал в Житомир). *Ukrainskaya Pravda*. September 18, 2004. <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2004/09/18/4381201/>

On the campaign trail, Yushchenko often emphasized economic development and fighting corruption in Ukraine. He put the fight against corruption as his number one concern in his candidate program that highlighted his ten priorities for the presidency.¹⁰⁸ Throughout the campaign, he also introduced various economic policies that varied in specificity. Yushchenko proposed easing visa restrictions for foreigners to increase travel to Ukraine, which could create more jobs in the tourism industry. He favored lowering taxes to spur entrepreneurship and small business activity.¹⁰⁹ He also recommended increasing both the minimum wage and pensions nationwide.¹¹⁰ And he told an audience of university students that his administration would create 5 million new jobs to help with their transition to the workplace.¹¹¹

Yet Yushchenko also focused on the broader state of politics in Ukraine. He regularly emphasized the perceived different perspectives on democracy between himself and Yanukovich. One of his first campaign actions was to publicize a proclamation of electoral honesty that he specifically asked Yanukovich to sign.¹¹² He discussed his focus on human rights and freedom, accountability and transparency in his candidate program.¹¹³ In an op-ed that was published in the Wall Street Journal in August of 2004, Yushchenko likened his worldview

¹⁰⁸ “Yuschenko wrote in his 10 points how to build a new government” (Ющенко написав в 10 пунктах, як постоит друге государство). *Ukrainskaya Pravda*. July 8, 2004.

<http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2004/07/8/4379723/>

¹⁰⁹ Victor Yushchenko. “Ukraine’s Choice”. *The Wall Street Journal*. August 24, 2004.

¹¹⁰ UNIAN Statement No. 059. *UNIAN Elections 2004* (УНІАН Вибори -2004). October 12, 2004.

¹¹¹ UNIAN Statement No. 063. *UNIAN Elections 2004* (УНІАН Вибори -2004). October 18, 2004.

¹¹² UNIAN Statement No. 027. *UNIAN Elections 2004* (УНІАН Вибори -2004). July 6-12, 2004.

¹¹³ “Yuschenko wrote in his 10 points how to build a new government” *Ukrainskaya Pravda*.

to a protector of “democratic European values” and stated that he represented the best candidate to address Ukraine’s struggles as an independent state.¹¹⁴

Yushchenko and his team also regularly portrayed the Kuchma regime, and by association Yanukovych, as undemocratic and unfit for rule. These characterizations were often very charged and divisive. Even before the campaign season began, Tymoshenko stated that it was, “not an election, but a war”.¹¹⁵ Yushchenko noted that while Kuchma had decided not to run for reelection, the possibility of a Kuchma-led coup remained.¹¹⁶ Moreover, in his first campaign speech to tens of thousands of supporters announcing his coalition with the Bloc of Yulia Tymoshenko, Yushchenko argued that Ukrainians needed to take power back from the bandits who have been in power.¹¹⁷ Yushchenko and his campaign regularly emphasized their perceived morality in contrast with Yanukovych, who had been found guilty of illegal behavior as a young man. During a televised debate, Yushchenko agreed with Yanukovych’s characterization of him as a prosecutor (Pavlyuk 2007). The characterization of the regime as bandits continued to be used by Yushchenko throughout the campaign as well. The phrase “Bandits will be put in jail!” ultimately became a campaign slogan for Yushchenko (Fournier 2010). Speaking to thousands upon his return to the public eye after his poisoning, Yushchenko again reiterated that the regime of bandits feared the power of the people.¹¹⁸ Yushchenko also sought to portray Yanukovych as allied with the economic oligarchs, as well as with Russia (Pavlyuk 2007). And on national television on the eve of the first round of voting, Yushchenko

¹¹⁴ Victor Yushchenko. “Ukraine’s Choice”. *The Wall Street Journal*. August 24, 2004.

¹¹⁵ Baker. “Factions slug it out to see who will lead Ukraine”.

¹¹⁶ UNIAN Statement No. 013. *UNIAN Elections 2004* (УНІАН Вибори -2004). June 14-19, 2004.

¹¹⁷ “Opposition on its Feet”. *The Kyiv Post*. July 8, 2004.

<http://www.kyivpost.com/opinion/editorial/opposition-on-its-feet-21342.html>.

¹¹⁸ “Yushchenko says to the powers: ‘You can’t poison us’. And then went to Zhitomir” *Ukrainskaya Pravda*.

declared that, “ the greatest divide in Ukraine is not that between East and West, or that between Orthodox and Catholic... It is that between bandits and honest people” (Fournier 2010: 117). Overall, these comments emphasize and separate the values of Yushchenko from those of Kuchma and Yanukovych.

While Yushchenko did emphasize his preference for honest, democratic and Western values in comparison to Yanukovych, he opposed the appeals made by Yanukovych to regional and linguistic divides in Ukraine. Speaking in Kharkiv, a city where a majority of ethnic Russians reside, he suggested that Ukrainians do not need to choose between the Ukrainian and Russian languages, nor between the eastern and western parts of Ukraine.¹¹⁹ He disparaged Yanukovych for focusing so much on the issue of the Russian language, saying it was being used as a political tool.¹²⁰ He also fought accusations of anti-Semitism made by Yanukovych. At one point, he felt compelled to show his tolerance by publicly meeting with an Israeli delegation.¹²¹

Overall, Yushchenko’s electoral strategy focused on economic issue appeals and divisive, polarizing value-based appeals. These latter appeals did not focus on issues of ethnicity or language. Yushchenko carefully avoided being seen as a nationalist or a foe of eastern Ukraine. He accomplished this by adopting the unifying color of orange for his campaign, by regularly visiting eastern and southern regions, and by actively speaking with the Russian press that was heavily consumed in those regions. Nonetheless, he sought to divide Ukraine through

¹¹⁹ “In Kharkiv, Yushchenko suggest that they throw an egg at him in the end” (В Харькове Ющенко предложил бросать в него яйца в конце). *Ukrainskaya Pravda*. October 15, 2004. <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2004/10/15/4381889/>.

¹²⁰ UNIAN Statement No. 076. *UNIAN Elections 2004* (УНІАН Вибори -2004). November 5, 2004.

¹²¹ “Yushchenko has a productive evening”. (Ющенко поїде на творческий вечер). *Ukrainskaya Pravda*. September 27, 2004. <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2004/09/27/4381411/>.

characterizations of widespread corruption and authoritarian behavior. Such divisive comments suggested a moral and value-laden superiority for Yushchnko and his supporters when compared to those of the incumbent-supported Yanukovych.

Incumbent Strategies

As the sitting prime minister and with the support of President Kuchma, Victor Yanukovych was the incumbent candidate in the 2004 election. Efforts at voter persuasion by Yanukovych were less overt than those by Victor Yushchenko.. His candidate program detailed a long list of plans and policies he supported, ranging from economic to social and international issues. The program devoted almost no attention to the details of any of this plans, but instead was a long list of priorities.¹²² Yanukovych maintained a busy schedule of foreign and domestic trips, although most were not campaign efforts. He put some attention on economic issues during the campaign. He proposed trade union with Russia, Belarus and Moldova, and the apparent economic benefits that such a union would bring to Ukrainians.¹²³ He also promoted cost-of-living pension increases that took effect in September of 2004, promising to institute more after becoming president.¹²⁴ And he supported the quick creation of medical insurance programs.¹²⁵ Aside from these proposals, Yanukovych and his campaign were largely silent on major economic issues.

¹²² “Pre-electoral program of Yanukovych. Full Text.” (Предвыборная программа Януковича. Полный текст). *Ukrainskaya Pravda*. July 12, 2004.

<http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2004/07/12/4379785/>.

¹²³ UNIAN Statement No. 042. *UNIAN Elections 2004* (УНІАН Вибори -2004). September 17, 2004.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*.

¹²⁵ “Yanukovych makes three promises in a day.”(Янукович раздає по три обещания в день). *Ukrainskaya Pravda*. August 21, 2004.

<http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2004/08/21/4380641/>.

Yanukovich portrayed Yushchenko as a threat to Ukraine and a divisive figure throughout the pre-election period. His campaign program states on the first page that “others” were trying to divide Ukraine into the Eastern and Western regions, referencing Yushchenko.¹²⁶ Throughout the electoral campaign, Yanukovich argued that Yushchenko was a dangerous enemy of eastern and southern Ukraine. The state-run media “constantly depicted Yushchenko as an ardent supporter of hard-core cultural nationalism” (Way 2010). When police broke up a student protest against Yanukovich, his campaign alleged that Yushchenko’s team had manipulated the young and impressionable students to act belligerently.¹²⁷ At a campaign rally in western Ukraine, Yanukovich was hit by a thrown egg. His campaign subsequently put the blame on Yushchenko and his campaign,¹²⁸ and referred to the incident as an act of terrorism.¹²⁹ Moreover, Yushchenko was portrayed as an ‘American agent’ because his wife was born in the United States (Pavlyuk 2007). As Pavlyuk (2007:148) notes, “Yanukovich’s headquarters and local supporters launched an unprecedented ideological campaign based upon exploiting political, language, religious differences and ideological fears on the Russian frontier of Ukrainian identity”.

Yanukovich and his campaign also emphasized perceived connections between the West and the US and Yushchenko. A month before the first round of voting, anti-American posters and t-shirts were found in a state-owned warehouse. The posters featured Yushchenko alongside

¹²⁶ “Pre-electoral program of Yanukovich. Full Text.” *Ukrainskaya Pravda*.

¹²⁷ “Tigipko says that that opposition has the genre of crisis.” (Тигипко сказал, что у оппозиции «Кризис Жанра»). *Ukrainskaya Pravda*. August 5, 2004. <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2004/08/5/4380342/>.

¹²⁸ UNIAN Statement No. 047. *UNIAN Elections 2004* (УНІАН Вибори -2004). September 24, 2004.

¹²⁹ “In Donetsk, a meeting against egg ‘terror-act’ with Yanukovich.” (В Донецке – МИТИНГ против яичного «теракта» с Януковичем). *Ukrainskaya Pravda*. September 24, 2004. <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2004/09/24/4381361/>.

US president Bush, used American imagery, including ‘Uncle Sam’, and suggested that a civil war was imminent.¹³⁰ While these posters were never officially linked Yanukovich, they were taken seriously by the OSCE election monitors as well as the American Embassy in Kyiv as unacceptable negative campaign conduct.¹³¹ Moreover, many of the posters and materials were subsequently delivered to Yanukovich supporters around Ukraine, after police and state officials decided there was no reason to confiscate the materials.¹³² This event represented a broader trend by Yanukovich’s campaign to portray Yushchenko as pro-American, pro-European Union and anti-Russian.¹³³

Despite these divisive appeals to anti-Americanism and to fears of civil unrest, Yanukovich tried to demonstrate his own priorities to unite Ukraine and represent the rights of minorities. His campaign proposed a student exchange project between Donetsk in the East and L’viv in the West to bridge connections and unity.¹³⁴ He also aimed to emphasize his democratic credentials and his commitment to protecting the Russian language and Russian minorities in Ukraine. He stated that referendums should be held on membership in NATO, on making Russian an official language and on the ability for ethnic Russian-Ukrainians to hold dual citizenship. He argued that if such changes were the will of the people, he would gladly

¹³⁰ “Cache of ‘Bushchenko’ materials enrages Yushchenko camp.” *The Kyiv Post*. October 7, 2007. <http://www.kyivpost.com/content/ukraine/cache-of-bushchenko-materials-enrages-yushchenko-c-21641.html>.

¹³¹ “Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions.” *International Election Observation Mission*. Presidential Election, Ukraine. November 1, 2004.

¹³² “Anti-Yushchenko materials to be disseminated.” *The Kyiv Post*. October 14, 2004. <http://www.kyivpost.com/content/ukraine/anti-yushchenko-materials-to-be-disseminated-21670.html>.

¹³³ “Yushchenko makes appeal to law enforcement at Podil rally”. *The Kyiv Post*. October 21, 2004. <http://www.kyivpost.com/content/ukraine/yushchenko-makes-appeal-to-law-enforcement-at-podi-21700.html>

¹³⁴ “Yushchenko will visit Lvov in September, while Yanukovich will bring people from L’viv to Donetsk” (Ющенко приедет во Львов в сентябре, а Янукович повезет львовян в Донецк). *Ukrainskaya Pravda*. August 4, 2004. <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2004/08/4/4380303/>

amend the constitution.¹³⁵ Yet these proposals were widely seen as purely election rhetoric, even by his ally, the incumbent president Kuchma. Kuchma noted that such ideas were “election promises” that candidates make and were unlikely to be carried out.¹³⁶

Just days before the first-round of voting, Russian President Vladimir Putin visited Ukraine, and met publicly with both Kuchma and Yanukovych. State-run television channels aired a live call-in program with Putin, where he stated his support for Yanukovych’s proposals regarding Russian and dual citizenship. Even before this visit, Putin had openly voiced his support for Yanukovych’s candidacy, so his visit was widely seen as an attempt by Yanukovych to demonstrate his pro-Russian positions. The official reason for Putin’s visit was to commemorate the 60th anniversary of Kyiv’s liberation from the Nazis on November 6, 1944. Yet Kuchma’s government decided to hold festivities a week early, just days before the October 31st election day.¹³⁷

During the lead-up to the first-round of voting on October 31st as well as the second round of voting on November 21st, the International Election Observation Mission headed by the OSCE observed many instances of electoral interference committed in support of Yanukovych. All four types of institutional resource abuse were reported prior to the first and second rounds of voting. First of all, state workers were observed using their public positions to support the Yanukovych campaign during work hours. In 22 of 27 regions, state workers and executives

¹³⁵ “Yanukovych, like Kuchma, will change the constitution. But about a different question.”. (Янукович, как и Кучма, будет изменять Конституцию. Но по другим вопросам). *Ukrainskaya Pravda*. October 1, 2004.

<http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2004/10/1/4381544/>

¹³⁶ UNIAN Statement No. 052. *UNIAN Elections 2004* (УНІАН Вибори -2004). October 1, 2004.

¹³⁷ “Putin arrives in Kyiv, goes on air to boost PM.” *The Kyiv Post*. October 28, 2004.

<http://www.kyivpost.com/content/ukraine/putin-arrives-in-kyiv-goes-on-air-to-boost-pm-21726.html>.

publically campaigned in support of Yanukovych. Moreover, monitors received reports that were subsequently confirmed that state employees and students at state universities being compelled to support Yanukovych. Similarly, state employees and students were reportedly threatened when demonstrating public support for Yushchenko.¹³⁸ Second, state buildings and resources were used for the campaign activities of Yanukovych across the country. Campaign materials and advertisements for Yanukovych were observed on state administration buildings in 21 of the 27 regions in Ukraine.¹³⁹

Thirdly, there was a clear lack of distinction between Yanukovych's activities as a candidate and those as the prime minister. He traveled Ukraine extensively in the months prior to the first round of voting in what were characterized as 'working' trips. Yet he appeared with the public during most of these trips, and these visits were extensively covered by the state media, making it appear that he was campaigning while working in an official capacity.¹⁴⁰ Finally, the state-run media outlets routinely displayed a bias in their coverage in favor of Yanukovych. Media monitoring found that over an eight-week period, state television stations devoted 64% of their news coverage to Yanukovych, while Yushchenko received 21% of similar coverage. In terms of the tone of the coverage, the monitors estimated that 97% of Yanukovych's coverage was positive while 59% of Yushchenko's was negative in tone. Observers also noted that a list of content and themes, or *temnyki*, was provided to state television stations throughout the election so as to ensure that preferable topics were covered.¹⁴¹ Moreover, immediately following the airing of a debate between the two candidates, the state-

¹³⁸ "Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions." *International Election Observation Mission*. Presidential Election, Ukraine. November 1, 2004.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ "Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions." *International Election Observation Mission*. Presidential Election (Second Round), Ukraine. November 22, 2004.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

run television station aired a political discussion program deemed completely biased in favor of Yanukovich.¹⁴²

These observations also witnessed one type of enforcement resource abuse. Security officials regularly engaged in activities that obstructed opposition campaign activity. Police officers prevented or disrupted opposition campaign activities in 15 regions throughout Ukraine. State officials also reportedly harassed opposition supporters in many instances.¹⁴³ On six separate occasions, Yushchenko's campaign plane was denied landing privileges at regional airports, often mid-flight. Such suppression continued between the first and second rounds of voting. Moreover, state security officials began conducting searches at the offices of many non-governmental organizations, including some whose work concerned elections and democratic governance. The searches were argued to be due to suspected security threats posed by the groups.¹⁴⁴

Finally, observer reports noted one type of regulatory abuse during the election. Just days before the first round of voting, the electoral commission dismissed many commission members appointed by opposition candidates in 4 regions throughout Ukraine. Many were subsequently reappointed after the vote, but these actions were carried out in a non-transparent and political fashion.¹⁴⁵ Also, prior to the second round of voting, the CEC ruled that Yushchenko's campaign had violated election law by holding a rally before the officially designated campaign

¹⁴² Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions." *International Election Observation Mission*. Presidential Election (Second Round), Ukraine. November 22, 2004.

¹⁴³ Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions." *International Election Observation Mission*. Presidential Election Ukraine. November 1, 2004.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

period for the second round of voting. Yet monitors noted that Yanukovich's campaign held at least one rally during the same time period, but was not indicted.¹⁴⁶

This discussion has revealed that all four types of institutional resources, one out of two types of enforcement resources, and one out of three types of regulatory resources were abused during the campaigns prior to the first and second round of voting. I have hypothesized regulatory, enforcement and financial resources are more likely to be abused in elections with medium or high contestation, while institutional resources are less likely to be abused. Regulatory, financial and enforcement resources are expected to contribute to the goal of winning the election under these circumstances. Yet I argue that institutional resources may be less likely to be used for two reasons. First, these types of resources may require greater incumbent dominance to fully utilize and abuse. And second, these types of resources are very public and more likely to draw the ire of average citizens who oppose the regime. Thus their abuse could produce public demonstrations and protests after the election that can dampen its legitimacy for the incumbent regime. In this election, institutional resources were highly abused, despite the risk that they posed. While the usage of institutional resources in this case does not follow the theoretical expectations of this dissertation, I argue that it presents an example of incumbent miscalculation in selecting electoral strategies. Discussions of the subsequent Orange Revolution have noted that, while protestors were immediately motivated by apparent fraud in the vote tabulations, the fraud represented a final straw for many Ukrainians (Karatnycky 2005; Fournier 2010). The campaign period had served as a months long public abuse of state resources in favor of Yanukovich, as well as an onslaught on opposition activities, which frustrated many Ukrainians. Moreover, those within Kuchma's regime seemed convinced that

¹⁴⁶ Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions". *International Election Observation Mission*. Presidential Election (Second Round), Ukraine. November 22, 2004.

all they needed to guarantee victory were sufficient strategies of voter persuasion and electoral interference. They seemed to fundamentally underestimate the potential for public unrest and anger given Kuchma's lack of popularity and support, which affected Yanukovych as well (D'anieri 2007).

As hypothesized, both the incumbent-supported and opposition candidates relied heavily on divisive, polarizing appeals during this contested election. These appeals focused on different types of divisive, value-based issues. Yushchenko defended his democratic, pro-Western credentials in contrast to the authoritarian Yanukovych. He characterized the regime, Yanukovych and their broader supporters as corrupt bandits who deserved legal repercussions. And he highlighted Yanukovych's perceived ties to the economic 'oligarchs' even though his campaign had received oligarchic funding as well. The divisive appeals used by Yanukovych, conversely, utilized regional, ethnic and linguistic characterizations. His campaign and administration sought to characterize Yushchenko and his supporters as fanatical nationalists who did not support the rights of ethnic minorities in Ukraine. He also alleged that Yushchenko and his supporters were dangerous for Ukraine and could incite violent civil conflict.

I argue that these combined strategies of electoral interference and voter persuasion reveal that the primary goal for both candidates was to win the election. The abuse of state resources was significant, to the detriment of Yanukovych. The institutional resource abuse focused on convincing voters to support Yanukovych while the regulatory and enforcement resource abuse sought to limit the organizing abilities of the opposition. Likewise, the divisive appeals utilized by both Yanukovych and Yushchenko sought to polarize voters against the other. In both cases, such attacks had a resonance with voters with varying political affiliations, helping to sway enough voters either away from one candidate or toward the other. Indeed, voter

turnout increased in this election in comparison with previous contests, with 75% of Ukrainians voting in the first round of the election (Hesli 2006).

Ukraine's 2010 Presidential Election: High Contestation and Low Incumbent Dominance

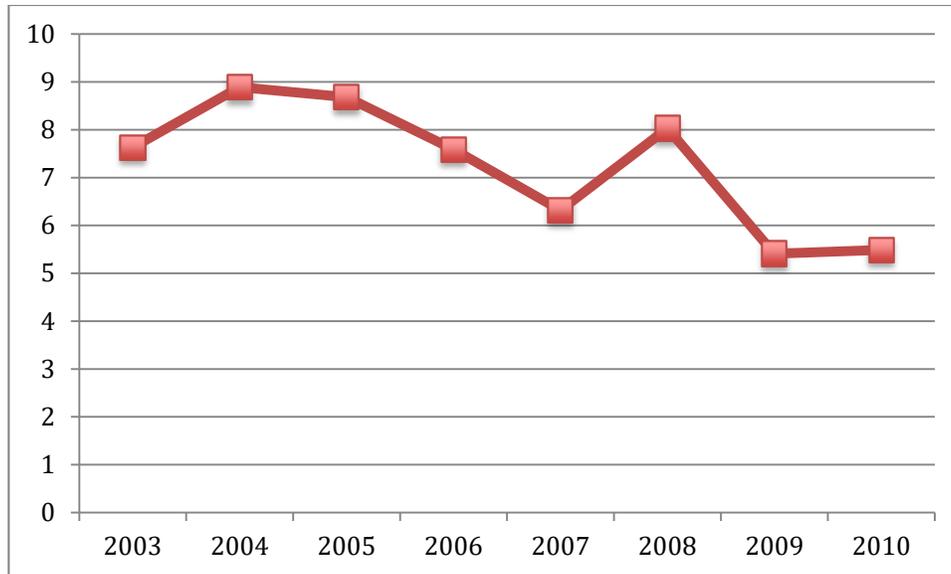
The 2010 presidential election was a mixture of familiar faces from the previous contest. Victor Yushchenko was elected president after the unprecedented third round of voting in 2004, and ran for reelection in 2010. Yet his popularity had plummeted in the five years since the Orange Revolution, so the 2010 contest was primarily between the ruling prime minister and former ally of Yushchenko, Yulia Tymoshenko, and Victor Yanukovich, the unsuccessful incumbent-supported candidate in 2004.

While Tymoshenko and Yushchenko had remained politically aligned following the 2004 presidential election and subsequent Orange Revolution, this alliance was short-lived. Yushchenko appointed Tymoshenko prime minister in January of 2005, but by September of the same year, their cooperation had ended, and she was dismissed from the post. Following the 2006 parliamentary elections, Yanukovich's Party of Regions won a plurality of votes and was able to form a coalition that appointed him to the post of prime minister (Hesli 2007). However, this arrangement only lasted for a year, as President Yushchenko dissolved parliament in April, 2007, and called for new elections held in September of the same year. The result of this contest saw Party of Regions again win the most votes, but still not a majority. They failed to propose a coalition, leading the Bloc of Yulia Tymoshenko to align once again with Yushchenko's bloc, Our Ukraine- People's Self Defense. With a small majority, this coalition appointed Tymoshenko prime minister (Herron 2008), a position in which she remained until the 2010 presidential elections.

Prior to this election, Ukraine maintained low incumbent dominance. Yushchenko had just been elected to the presidency in the previous election with 52% of the voter. While initially he benefited from the pre-electoral coalition between his political party, Our Ukraine, and the Bloc of Yulia Tymoshenko, this unity was short-lived. In subsequent parliamentary elections held in 2006 Yushchenko's Our Ukraine saw its vote share drop from about 24% to 13.9% of the vote in the proportional representation contest (Hesli 2007). While his party saw a slight improvement in the parliamentary elections held just the next year, receiving 14.2 % of the vote, this election still reduced the number of seats held by Our Ukraine-People's Self Defense in the Rada (Herron 2008). Thus it is clear that Ukraine maintained low incumbent dominance as it lacked a reelected president receiving at least 70% of the vote. Moreover, based on these parliamentary elections, Yushchenko did not have the support of a dominant political party that could have given him increased dominance.

Finally, revenue from natural resource exports also did not provide any assets to the incumbent Yushchenko regime. Figure 7.2 displays the percentage of Ukrainian GDP from energy exports. Natural resource exports comprise less than 10% of total GDP during the five years preceding the 2010 election. This is far less than the theorized 30% that can bolster an incumbent regime against internal defections and external pressure. Clearly, Yushchenko did not receive any additional support from these exports. Therefore, it is unquestionable that incumbent dominance remained low prior to the 2010 presidential election in Ukraine.

Figure 7.2 Percentage of Ukraine's GDP from Natural Resource Exports 2003-2010



(Source: World Bank World Development Indicators)

The 2010 presidential election was highly contested. Measured on the contestation index developed in this dissertation, it is scored as a three out of four. According to the NELDA data, the incumbent president, Yushchenko, was not confident of victory. According to polls from the Razumkov Centre, in April of 2009, only about 6 % fully supported Yushchenko, while 22% supported some of his actions. And 67.5% did not support Yushchenko at all; this figure rose to 71.6% before the election.¹⁴⁷ A survey carried out by the Yaremko Ukrainian Institute of Social Studies and the Social Monitoring Center in October of 2009, just months before the January 17, 2010 election, revealed that 83% of Ukrainians were sure that they would not vote for Yushchenko for president. This survey also found that 33.9% of respondents said they would vote for Yanukovych while 21.3% would vote for Tymoshenko.¹⁴⁸ Thus clearly Yushchenko could not be confident of victory in this election.

¹⁴⁷ Razumkov Centre Poll: Do you support the activity of the President of Ukraine? (recurrent 2000-2015). http://www.razumkov.org.ua/eng/poll.php?poll_id=67.

¹⁴⁸ "Poll: Ukraine president's chances of re-election slim". *The Kyiv Post*. October 20, 2009. <http://www.kyivpost.com/content/ukraine/poll-ukraine-presidents-chances-of-re-election-sli-50997.html>.

Perceptions of the economy were not good prior to the 2010 election. Hyde and Martinov (2011) classified public opinion about the economy to have been negative for this election. This holds when considering public opinion. A vast 91% of respondents in a Pew Research Center survey conducted in August and September of 2009 reported that the current economic situation in Ukraine was bad.¹⁴⁹ Moreover, Hyde and Martinov (2009) considered the economy to be in economic crisis prior to the 2010 election. They note that the country received an IMF bailout in 2009 due to the damaging effects of the 2008-2009 global financial crisis. Thus both of these factors contributed to additional contestation in the 2010 presidential election.

However, unlike in 2004, no opposition electoral bloc formed for this election. The Orange coalition between Yushchenko and Tymoshenko had disbanded back in 2005, and as they competed against one another in this election, no coalition formed between their respective parties. Of the other opposition candidates, including Yanukovych as well as Arseniy Yatsenyuk, Serhiy Tihipko and Petro Symonenko, none of these relied on a coalition of forces for support (Herron 2010). Thus this remaining factor was not present in the 2010 presidential election and did not contribute to the contestation. Given this, three out of the four factors indicating contestation are found in this election, which means that contestation was high.

As this election experienced high contestation and low incumbent dominance, the theoretical expectations match those discussed for the 2004 election. I expect the goal for every candidate is to win the election outright. With this goal in mind, I argue that all candidates are likely to select strategies that aim to persuade voters to vote for them and against their opponents. I have hypothesized that such voter persuasion strategies include highlighting

¹⁴⁹ “End of Communism Cheered But Now With More Reservations”. *Pew Research Center*. November 2, 2009. <http://www.pewglobal.org/2009/11/02/chapter-10-rating-country-conditions-and-leaders/>.

economic interest appeals as well as value and identity divisions. Moreover, incumbent candidates are more likely to pursue strategies of electoral interference that can both support the incumbent and potentially hinder opposition activities. I hypothesize that the abuse of financial, regulatory and/ or enforcement resources are more likely to serve these aims. While financial resource abuse can work toward generating support for the candidate through the provision of goods and unplanned social spending, regulatory and enforcement resource abuse can interfere with opposition electoral activities. I have also theorized that institutional resource abuse may carry more risks in contested elections, and thus incumbents may be less likely to abuse them. The 2004 presidential election in Ukraine witnessed high institutional resource abuse but also massive post-election protests and demonstrations. Therefore, I suspect that such resource abuse may be less likely in this election. That this election comes after such protests, but otherwise maintains a high level of contestation and low incumbent dominance, I maintain that I can explore this relationship. In particular, I can compare the occurrence of institutional resource abuse as well as financial, regulatory and enforcement resource abuse between the two elections.

Finally, a note on the consideration of incumbent and opposition candidates: as the governing president, Victor Yushchenko was clearly an incumbent candidate in this election. However, Yulia Tymoshenko was the governing prime minister, giving her a position in the executive branch of Ukraine's government alongside Yushchenko. Her position came from governing coalition within the elected parliament, and thus indirectly from the voters. Given this, I consider both Yushchenko and Tymoshenko to be incumbent candidates in this election. Their positions were both due to voter participation, either directly or indirectly. Moreover, their roles within the current government provided them with the opportunity to engage in state resources.

Opposition Behavior

Victor Yanukovich was the primary opposition candidate in the 2010 presidential election. He positioned himself as the solution to Ukraine's turbulent recent history. His pre-election program emphasized economic and social issues. He promised to increase foreign direct investment, to lower taxes for small businesses and individuals and to raise pensions and social spending.¹⁵⁰ Following the first round of voting, where he received a plurality of about 35%, Yanukovich announced that he was altering his program to reflect issues and concerns supported by other candidates. As no candidate received at least 50% of the vote in the first round, only the top two candidates advanced to the second round, leaving behind sixteen other candidates. It was on the programs of these remaining candidates that Yanukovich focused, demonstrating his attempt to appeal to the largest share of voters.¹⁵¹

Yanukovich attempted to demonstrate both pro-Russian as well as pro-European positions. As in 2004, he again emphasized the theme of adding Russian as a second official language. However, unlike in 2004, he argued that such an accommodation was fully in line with European standards that seek to include minority populations. In announcing his intention to make Russian an official language of Ukraine, Yanukovich cited the European Charter of Regional Languages and Languages of Minority Groups as the impetus for this action.¹⁵² While

¹⁵⁰ "Pre-election Program of Victory Yanukovich". (Передвиборча програма Віктора Януковича). Kyiv: December 3, 2009.

<http://tsn.ua/vybory/programy/peredviborcha-programa-viktora-yanukovicha.html>

¹⁵¹ Interfax-Ukraine. "Updated: Yanukovich ready to include parts of programs of other presidential candidates into his program." *The Kyiv Post*. January 18, 2010. <http://www.kyivpost.com/content/politics/updated-yanukovich-ready-to-include-parts-of-progr-57402.html>.

¹⁵² "Yanukovich: After the election, the Russian language question will be resolved." (Янукович: После выборов вопрос русского языка будет решен). *Ukrainskaya Pravda*. September 5, 2009. <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2009/09/5/4501916/>.

he stated that he considered Ukraine is a European state, he also asserted that Ukraine should remain neutral between Russia and Europe. Yet Yanukovich also said that he was not against cooperation between Ukraine and NATO and the EU, and that such cooperation would be in everyone's interests, including Russia's.¹⁵³ He clarified later in the election that he was against Ukraine ever joining NATO, but that he nonetheless aimed to increase its involvement with Europe.¹⁵⁴ He also maintained that, contrary to the accusations of others, he is a democrat and would strength democracy in Ukraine if elected.¹⁵⁵

In his campaign program, Yanukovich used divisive language toward the current government that questioned their democratic credentials. He argued that, if elected, he would “clean out the populists and political adventurers from the Ukrainian government”. He also notes that the ruling government is incompetent, unprofessional and criminal.¹⁵⁶ Throughout the pre-election period, he was especially critical of Yulia Tymoshenko. These attacks focused on her values for Ukraine as well as her personal life and gender. He publicly speculated that she would do whatever it took to win the election, including attempts at massive voter fraud. Yanukovich suspected that such attempts at electoral fraud would be “radical and aimed at disrupting the election or rigging the vote.”¹⁵⁷ After declining to debate Tymoshenko on national

¹⁵³ “Yanukovich knows why Putin is comfortable with Tymoshenko.” (Янукович знает, почему Путин с Тимошенко комфортно). *Ukrainskaya Pravda*. November 23, 2009. <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2009/11/23/4515773/>.

¹⁵⁴ Reuters. “Election Campaign Heats Up in Ukraine.” *The Moscow Times*. January 11, 2010. <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/election-campaign-heats-up-in-ukraine/397087.html>.

¹⁵⁵ “Yanukovich: I won't turn into a dictator.” (Янукович: “Я не приемлю диктатуру”). *Ukrainskaya Pravda*. January 5, 2010. <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2010/01/5/4588191/>.

¹⁵⁶ “Pre-election Program of Victory Yanukovich”.

¹⁵⁷ Interfax-Ukraine. “Yanukovich expects radical measures from Tymoshenko aimed at disrupting election”. *The Kyiv Post*. January 25, 2010. <http://www.kyivpost.com/content/politics/yanukovich-expects-radical-measures-from-tymoshenk-57953.html>.

television, Yanukovych stated that, as the prime minister, she should accept responsibility for the problems of Ukraine, or “go back to the kitchen.”¹⁵⁸ He defended his decision not to debate Tymoshenko by stating that she had been lying to him for the past five years, so a debate would be futile.¹⁵⁹ Just days before the vote, Yanukovych alleged that Tymoshenko was seeking to prevent coalminers in eastern Ukraine from voting by challenging their identification documents.¹⁶⁰ Therefore, Yanukovych sought to emphasize the differences between himself and Tymoshenko not due to their policy positions, but due to fundamental distinctions in their values and character.

Incumbent Behavior

As the incumbent president, Victor Yushchenko urged voters to give him another five years and finish what he started after the Orange Revolution. In his campaign program, he emphasized his democratic and symbolic accomplishments, including regular and clean elections and greater attention on national issues. He maintained his pro-European stances and favored better visa rules between Ukraine and Europe. Yet he also singled out Tymoshenko and her effect on his achievements, arguing that the lack of a supportive prime minister held him back during his presidency.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸ “Yanukovych sends Tymoshenko to the kitchen”. (Янукович послал Тимошенко на кухню). *Ukrainskaya Pravda*. January 21, 2010.

<http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2010/01/21/4651468/>.

¹⁵⁹ “Ukraine rivals insult each other in final poll push”. *The Kyiv Post*. January 16, 2010.

<http://www.kyivpost.com/content/politics/ukraine-rivals-insult-each-other-in-final-poll-pus-57178.html>.

¹⁶⁰ Interfax-Ukraine. “Yanukovych claims there’s bid to prevent coalminers from voting in Feb.7 election”. *The Kyiv Post*. February 3, 2010.

<http://www.kyivpost.com/content/politics/yanukovych-claims-theres-bid-to-prevent-coalminers-58553.html>.

¹⁶¹ “Yushchenko presented his election program.” (Ющенко представив свою передвиборчу програму). *Voice of America*. November 24, 2009. <http://ukrainian.voanews.com/content/a-49-2009-11-24-voa2-87073067/228083.html>.

Yushchenko blatantly criticized Tymoshenko most visibly in the weeks prior to the first round of voting. Many of these criticisms were related to her apparently productive working relationships with Prime Minister Putin and President Dmitry Medvedev of Russia. Yushchenko stated that if Tymoshenko were elected, she would allow Russia to expand its Black Sea fleet in Crimea. He argued that Russia wanted her to win, and that because of this, she would not represent the interests of Ukraine, but instead those of Russia.¹⁶² He alleged that she, as well as Yanukovich, represented a ‘Good Moscow Coalition’ that threatened to harm Ukraine’s future.¹⁶³ He also alleged that Tymoshenko was corrupt, dishonest and untrustworthy. Yushchenko reported that Tymoshenko maintained an offshore company in Cyprus, run by her husband.¹⁶⁴ Just five days before the first round of voting, Yushchenko publicly accused her of plotting to manipulate the election and urged her to obey the law.¹⁶⁵

Tymoshenko discussed economic issues in her campaign program. This discussion focused primarily on diversifying the economy and providing help for small businesses.¹⁶⁶ As the first and second rounds of voting grew closer, she repeatedly announced newly revised economic policies. During the weeks between the first and second rounds, Tymoshenko announced more

¹⁶² “Yushchenko urges voters to vote against the suggestion of Medvedev.” (Ющенко об’яснил, против кого призывает голосовать Медведев). *Ukrainskaya Pravda*. January 3, 2010. <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2010/01/3/4583945/>.

¹⁶³ “Yushchenko: Yanukovich and Tymoshenko- Candidates from the swampy past.” (Ющенко: Янукович и Тимошенко – кандидаты из болотного прошлого). *Ukrainskaya Pravda*. January 8, 2010. <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2010/01/8/4597163/>.

¹⁶⁴ “Yushchenko: ‘Tymoshenko runs a high-profile offshore company in Cyprus.’” (Ющенко: Тимошенко- владеет крупнейшей оффшорной компанией на Кипре). *Ukrainskaya Pravda*. January 3, 2009. <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2010/01/3/4583692/>.

¹⁶⁵ Interfax-Ukraine. “Yushchenko accuses Tymoshenko of plotting to rig election.” *The Kyiv Post*. January 12, 2010. <http://www.kyivpost.com/content/politics/yushchenko-accuses-tymoshenko-of-plotting-to-rig-e-56836.html>.

¹⁶⁶ “Election Program of the candidate for President of Ukraine Yulia Tymoshenko: Ukraine is victorious, Ukraine is You.” (Передвиборча програма кандидата на посаду Президента України Юлії Тимошенко "УКРАЇНА ПЕРЕМОЖЕ. УКРАЇНА - ЦЕ ТИ!"). October 31, 2009. <http://www.tymoshenko.ua/uk/article/axeawa5s>.

than five new proposals aimed at economic development. These proposals included new mortgage credits¹⁶⁷, greater state regulations of the economy¹⁶⁸, tax credits for hiring recent graduates¹⁶⁹, reducing the grivnya's (Ukraine's currency) exchange rate in international markets¹⁷⁰, and creating incentives for renewable resources.¹⁷¹ This timing suggests that Tymoshenko considered such economic interests appeals as important in convincing the electorate to support her in the highly contested election.

Throughout the campaign, Tymoshenko characterized Ukraine's political situation as standing at a pivotal, value-based crossroads. In her campaign program, she began by emphasizing religion, stating that one of Ukraine's most important tasks is to, "enhance the spirituality of the nation". She argued that she stood for European values and for democracy in general. She prioritized the development of European standards and an eventual membership in the EU in her campaign program.¹⁷² References to Europe and European values continued throughout the election. Just one day after the first round of voting, she argued that if she is elected, she "will act in a single and powerful force to move the country toward European

¹⁶⁷ Interfax-Ukraine. "Tymoshenko promises to make mortgage credits affordable in 2010." *The Kyiv Post*. January 30, 2010. <http://www.kyivpost.com/content/business/tymoshenko-promises-to-make-mortgage-credits-aff-2-58314.html>.

¹⁶⁸ Ukrainian News. "Tymoshenko wants consolidation of state regulation in socially-oriented market economy." *The Kyiv Post*. January 31, 2010. <http://www.kyivpost.com/content/business/tymoshenko-wants-consolidation-of-state-regulation-58350.html>.

¹⁶⁹ "Tymoshenko makes proposals for students and schoolchildren." (Тимошенко оброботала студентів і учених). *Ukrainskaya Pravda*. January 31, 2010. <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2010/01/31/4693076/>.

¹⁷⁰ "Tymoshenko promises to lower the grivnya by 30%." (Тимошенко обіцяє збит гривню на 30%.) *Ukrainskaya Pravda*. February 1, 2010. <http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2010/02/1/4699022/>.

¹⁷¹ "Tymoshenko promises privileges to companies generating electricity from renewable energy sources." *The Kyiv Post*. January 30, 2010. <http://www.kyivpost.com/content/ukraine/tymoshenko-promises-privileges-to-companies-genera-58320.html>.

¹⁷² "Election Program of the candidate for President of Ukraine Yulia Tymoshenko."

civilization.”¹⁷³ Tymoshenko and her team also tried to show a contrast between her pro-European positions, and those of Yanukovich. She speculated that Yanukovich was not qualified to be president, stating, “I really cannot understand how a European country with such an intellectual level...could elect for itself a person who does not know the difference between Austria and Australia.”¹⁷⁴ After Yanukovich declined to debate Tymoshenko, Hryhoriy Nemuria, one of her advisors stated of Yanukovich, “He needs to prove his European values by taking part in a debate. By not debating, Yanukovich shows his weakness. There are no debates in countries that are authoritarian and where there is no free speech.”¹⁷⁵ Like Yanukovich, she directly appealed to the supporters of other candidates after the first round of voting. In western Ukraine, where Yushchenko received relatively more support than in the rest of state, she stated that she would continue what he started, and would focus on issues of national identity as he had. During the same campaign visit, Tymoshenko distributed government land certificates for the local residents (which will be discussed below in the consideration of electoral interference).¹⁷⁶ The combination of these strategies demonstrates that, as the incumbent, she utilized both strategies of voter persuasion and electoral interference in her quest to win this highly contested election.

¹⁷³ Feifer, Gregory. “Surprise Showing for Tymoshenko in Ukraine.” *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty*. January 18, 2010.

http://www.rferl.org/content/Surprise_Showing_For_Tymoshenko_In_Ukraine/1932130.html.

¹⁷⁴ “Ukraine rivals insult each other in final poll push.” *The Kyiv Post*.

¹⁷⁵ Marson, James. “Underdog Tymoshenko goes on attack to close gap.” *The Kyiv Post*. January 21, 2010. <http://www.kyivpost.com/content/ukraine/underdog-tymoshenko-goes-on-attack-to-close-gap-57710.html>.

¹⁷⁶ Interfax-Ukraine. “Tymoshenko vows to follow Yushchenko’s course towards more independent Ukraine.” *The Kyiv Post*. January 25, 2010.

<http://www.kyivpost.com/content/politics/tymoshenko-vows-to-follow-yushchenkos-course-toward-57886.html>.

Tymoshenko continued to polarize the electorate by characterizing Yanukovych as unfit to lead Ukraine. She repeatedly referred to him and his supporters as criminal elements. Her negative and accusatory rhetoric increased as the election day grew nearer. While in December, one of Tymoshenko's advisors dismissed the likelihood of any fraud or misconduct, this changed when the Central Election Commission ruled in January that homebound voters could cast ballots from home. As more homebound voters resided in the eastern and southern regions, Tymoshenko interpreted this ruling as a threat to her chances at victory.¹⁷⁷ Since this ruling, she frequently alleged that voter fraud should be expected and that the electoral institutions were corrupt. Tymoshenko stated that election might not even take place due to the significant fraud to be committed by Yanukovych and his Party of Regions.¹⁷⁸ After the first round of voting, she stated that Yanukovych "represents criminal circles."¹⁷⁹ She asserted in the days before the second round of voting that many major hotels in central Kyiv were at capacity with 'militants' there to protest the election and disrupt the process.¹⁸⁰ She argued that if Yanukovych were elected, the oligarchs would benefit, while the poor would become poorer.¹⁸¹ During a televised 'debate' where Tymoshenko was the only participant, she alleged that his advisors were corrupt

¹⁷⁷ Korduban, Pavel. "Ukrainian Presidential Election: the Fear of Vote-Rigging." *Eurasia Daily Monitor*. Volume: 7 Issue: 8. January 13, 2010.

[http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=35905&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=7&cHash=812c568c08#.Va2APBNViko](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=35905&tx_ttnews[backPid]=7&cHash=812c568c08#.Va2APBNViko).

¹⁷⁸"Тимошенко обвиняет Януковича в срыве выборов). *Ukrainskaya Pravda*. January 13, 2010.

<http://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2010/01/13/4610812/>.

¹⁷⁹ Feifer, Gregory. "Surprise Showing for Tymoshenko in Ukraine".

¹⁸⁰ Interfax-Ukraine. "Tymoshenko: Holiday hotels, vacation retreats around Kyiv filled up with militants." *The Kyiv Post*. February 1, 2010.

<http://www.kyivpost.com/content/ukraine/tymoshenko-holiday-hotels-vacation-retreats-around-58368.html>.

¹⁸¹ Interfax-Ukraine. "Tymoshenko says victory of Yanukovych will mean beginning of Ukraine's losing independence." *The Kyiv Post*. January 20, 2010.

<http://www.kyivpost.com/content/politics/tymoshenko-says-victory-of-yanukovych-will-mean-be-57588.html>.

criminals. She stated that these individuals looted Ukraine's energy wealth and that such activities would resume if Yanukovich were elected president.¹⁸² All of these appeals cast Yanukovich as an unacceptable candidate for the presidency by highlighting his character and values.

Thus it is clear that harsh, polarizing rhetoric was regularly employed by both incumbent candidates. These criticisms clearly sought to emphasize the superior character, values, and loyalties of each incumbent candidate from their competitors. Moreover, such characterizations escalated as the election grew nearer, suggesting that the high level of contestation spurred such comments. Having explored the strategies of voter persuasion employed by both Yushchenko and Tymoshenko, I now turn to strategies of electoral interference utilized in the 2010 presidential election.

OSCE Election monitors noted many instances of electoral interference throughout the campaign period. Overall, six types of state resource abuse were observed before the first and second rounds of voting, which equals the total witnessed in 2004. Two types of institutional resources were abused by either or both of the incumbent candidates, Yushchenko and Tymoshenko. OSCE monitors reported that both Tymoshenko and Yushchenko frequently campaigned during official state visits. This type of behavior clearly blurs the separation between their official duties and their activities as a candidate for the presidency. The Central Election Commission warned both candidates that such behavior was against electoral law.¹⁸³ The second type of institutional resource abuse concerned state media coverage of the election. While not as imbalanced as was observed in the 2004 election, the primary state-run television

¹⁸² Staff reports. "Tymoshenko debates empty space." *The Kyiv Post*. February 1, 2010. <http://www.kyivpost.com/content/ukraine/tymoshenko-debates-empty-space-58427.html>.

¹⁸³ "Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions: Ukraine, Presidential Election". *International Election Observation Mission*. January 17, 2010.

station displayed a clear bias in favor of both incumbent candidates. In its campaign coverage, the state-run channel UT1 dedicated about a third of its coverage to each Tymoshenko and Yushchenko. Conversely, it devoted less than ten percent of its election coverage to Yanukovych or other opposition candidates.¹⁸⁴

Election monitors observed two out of three types of financial resource abuse. First, monitors observed the distribution of goods to local officials seen as beneficial to voters. On four separate occasions and in four different cities, school buses, ambulances and/or land certificates were publicly provided to local government officials prior to both the first and second rounds of voting.¹⁸⁵ These actions were taken by the incumbent prime minister Tymoshenko. Second, unplanned social spending increases were suggested in letters mailed to all pensioners in Ukraine. These letters advised pensioners that the current government, led by Tymoshenko, was capable of maintaining the current pension levels and introducing increases in the following year, while such increases would not be possible by the opposition Party of Regions (and implicitly its candidate Yanukovych).¹⁸⁶ Both of these abuses were clearly aimed at persuading voters to choose Tymoshenko over her rivals.

One of three types of regulatory resource abuse was also observed. First, the incumbent prime minister was seen attempting to politicize the behavior of the electoral commission. Under Tymoshenko's orders, Precinct Election Commission officers were told that they must collect medical certificates when processing homebound voter ballots, or they would not be paid for their service. Such certificates are not legally required for voters to cast ballots from their

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ "Ukraine Presidential Election 17 January and 7 February 2010". *OSCE/ODHIR Election Observation Mission Final Report*. Warsaw: April 28, 2010.

¹⁸⁶ "Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions: Ukraine, Presidential Election". *International Election Observation Mission*. January 17, 2010.

homes. This action was seen to limit homebound voting that could support the opposition candidate Yanukovich. While not an overt abuse of regulatory resources, a second situation deserves attention. In the days before the second round of voting held on February 7, 2010, there was speculation that Tymoshenko would advise her nominees on the Central Election Committee to not report to work on the day of the election, thus invalidating the election. In an effort to prevent this from happening, the Rada, led by Yanukovich's Party of Regions, passed legislation on February 3, 2010 removing the need for a quorum on the CEC.¹⁸⁷ This activity received a great deal of attention, which Tymoshenko argued that it destroyed the democratic character of the elections while Yanukovich asserted that it preserved the integrity of the elections. The election monitors led by the OSCE stated that these events were distracting and provoked public concern about the fairness of the election.¹⁸⁸

Finally, one type of enforcement resource abuse was observed during the pre-election period. Police interference was observed during the election campaign. The Minister of the Interior, Yuri Lutsenko, was openly a supporter of Yulia Tymoshenko and her campaign. Throughout the pre-election period, he was observed directing police interference either in displays of support for Tymoshenko or against opposition candidates.¹⁸⁹ This conflict came to a head in late January, 2010, as masked individuals entered a printing press in Kyiv where the second round ballots were to be printed. Lutsenko sent the security forces in to defend the

¹⁸⁷ Interfax-Ukraine. "Update: Ukrainian parliament adopts amendments to law on presidential election proposed by Regions Party". *The Kyiv Post*. February 3, 2010. <http://www.kyivpost.com/content/politics/update-ukrainian-parliament-adopts-amendments-to-l-58582.html>.

¹⁸⁸ "Ukraine Presidential Election 17 January and 7 February 2010". *OSCE/ODHIR Election Observation Mission Final Report*. Warsaw: April 28, 2010.

¹⁸⁹ "Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions: Ukraine, Presidential Election, Second Round". *International Election Observation Mission*. February 7, 2010.

building, but Yanukovich and member of the Party of Regions blamed him for this crisis, passing legislation in the Rada that dismissed him from his position.

Discussion and Conclusion

While the total number was the same, the abuse of state resources differs in this case in comparison to the 2004 election. Both elections were contested, and during the 2004 election, all four institutional resources were abused. In contrast, only two of the four institutional types were abused during the 2010 election. While both elections witnessed one type of regulatory and one type of enforcement resource abuse, the 2010 election also saw two types of financial resource abuse. These findings support the theory of this dissertation. I hypothesize that financial, regulatory and enforcement resources are more likely to be abused during elections with higher contestation. These resources can serve the incumbent's goal of winning the election. While financial resource abuse aims to persuade voters to support the incumbent, regulatory and enforcement resources can hinder opposition activities. In this case, Tymoshenko distributed goods beneficial to voters such as land certificates and school buses while also sending letters to Ukraine's pensioners informing them that increases were contingent on her reelection. Both of these examples of financial resource abuse can theoretically convince voters to support her over other candidates. Yet regulatory and enforcement resource abuse hindered opposition activities. During this election, precinct electoral commission workers were threatened with no pay if they accepted ballots from homebound voters without medical certificates, which could support Yanukovich. Also, police, directed by the Interior Minister, were observed behaving in a partisan manner during the campaign, both supporting Tymoshenko as well as putting pressure on opposition candidates.

Yet institutional resource abuse declined from the 2004 election. I have argued that the 2004 election may demonstrate a miscalculation on the part of the incumbent prime minister at the time, Yanukovich. Institutional resource abuse is highly visible and can spur protests and demonstrations, a tangible cost of abusing state resources. Given the massive, widespread post-election protests present in 2004, I assert that in future contests, incumbents may be more wary of the costs of state resource abuse. The 2010 presidential election marked the first opportunity to examine this. This election revealed that while institutional resource abuse declined from 2004, the abuse of financial, regulatory and enforcement resource either increased or remained constant. The number of total financial, regulatory and enforcement resource abuses doubled from two to four types in this election when compared with the 2004 presidential election, which experienced no instances of financial resource abuse. Yet the abuse of institutional resources declined by half, from four types to two types. This suggests that incumbent candidates viewed institutional resource abuse as a riskier electoral strategy than the other three.

The examination of candidate attempts at voter persuasion revealed a great deal of similarity in strategies. Both incumbent and opposition candidates sought to negatively characterize their opponents as wrong for Ukraine. Yet these appeals did not focus on the contrasting policy positions. Instead, the vast majority of such critical attacks focused on values and character-traits of the other candidates. They aimed to polarize the electorate against their opponents by emphasizing such value-based deficiencies. There was also a great deal of similarity in candidate strategies when they highlighted their own values and priorities. All three candidates sought to present themselves as supportive of European and democratic values. Even Yanukovich, who supported the recognition of the Russian language, portrayed his position as a result of European norms of minority inclusion. This further suggests that all candidates

recognized what values and issues were salient, even as they accused one another of failing on these fronts. These types of accusations, especially of anti-democratic behavior, increased in quantity as the election drew nearer. I argue that these aspects demonstrate the relevance of contestation to the selection of voter persuasion strategies. In other words, much of their criticisms and value-based appeals were more often attempts to convince voters not to vote for the opposing candidate than they were seeking to reveal novel or relevant information about their opponents.

These strategies at voter persuasion are similar to those utilized in the 2004 presidential election. In that election, Yanukovych and Yushchenko both attacked the values and character of the other, using especially divisive and polarizing language. As both the 2004 and 2010 elections saw at least medium contestation and low incumbent dominance, this is expected. However, the 2010 election saw far more agreement on the issues selected to disparage the other. In 2004, Yushchenko focused on Yanukovych's tenure as prime minister, and painted him, along with the Kuchma administration as bandits and criminals. He also accused Yanukovych of lacking core democratic values, and contrasting his pro-European positions with the pro-Russian positives of Yanukovych. Yanukovych, on the other hand, focused on Yushchenko's supposed ties to ultra-nationalists that posed a threat to Ukraine's minority populations. He argued that such values would drive Ukraine toward a civil war.

Yet as I have already pointed out, Yanukovych, Tymoshenko and Yushchenko relied on similar issues to attack one another. All seemed to agree that Ukraine was European, but accused one another of either being insufficiently pro-European, or too much so. Moreover, all agreed that Ukraine ought to respect democratic values. This led them to allege anti-democratic behavior in one another by claiming that their opponents would use fraud to win. Finally, all

three criticized one another personally, alleging inept, corrupt or even criminal behavior. I argue these changes signal that the candidates act strategically and likely evaluate the electoral conditions in selecting strategies. Yanukovich's shift on many of these issues is particular evidence of this. This reveals that candidates view strategies of voter persuasion as mutable and subject to change in response to electoral conditions.

In summation, these case comparisons have found support for the theoretical expectations proposed in this dissertation. I have argued that when faced with medium or high electoral contestation, the goals for both incumbent and opposition candidates are to win the election. To accomplish this, I argue that they will select strategies of voter persuasion and electoral interference aimed at convincing voters to support them over the other candidates. I have hypothesized that economic interest appeals as well as value and identity appeals can help serve these goals. The presidential election in 2010 had higher contestation than in 2004, and these case studies illustrate an increase in both of these strategies. Moreover, the total number of financial, regulatory and enforcement resource abuse rose in 2010 as well. Thus an increase in contestation also saw a rise in the hypothesized strategies of voter persuasion and electoral interference.

This chapter has compared two similarly situated cases, the 2004 and 2010 presidential elections in Ukraine. These two elections were both contested with low incumbent dominance. Given this, I contend that they provide illustrations of the hypothesized relationships between electoral contestation, electoral interference and strategies of voter persuasion and electoral interference. While Ukraine has remained constant on these theoretical factors, with the exception of the increase in electoral contestation, many other domestic factors have varied during the ten years during which these elections were held. According to Freedom House, civil

liberties scores increased from 2000 to 2010. Ukraine's score on Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index rose and fell multiple times from 2000 to 2010. Economic growth was mixed in this decade. From 2000 to 2004, Ukraine's GDP growth was at least 5%. However, this figure was less consistent from 2005 on, reaching an ultimate low of -15% in 2009.¹⁹⁰ Income inequality saw a steady decrease during these ten years.¹⁹¹ Moreover, Ukraine underwent political changes due to the events of the Orange Revolution. The power to appoint a prime minister and some of the cabinet was transferred away from the office of the president to the parliament. This was meant to weaken the power of the president after the tumultuous events of 2004 (Herron 2007). Yet despite these alterations, the behavior of the candidates in the 2010 election demonstrates that they still viewed the position of president as significant and meriting polarizing electoral strategies. I argue that despite the variation in many of these domestic factors, the electoral strategies of both incumbents and opposition candidates were remarkably similar in the 2004 and 2010 elections. Thus I maintain that the electoral conditions, incumbent strength and electoral contestation, are likely to affect the goals and subsequent strategies used during elections.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

This dissertation began with the recognition of a puzzle concerning elections in hybrid regimes. Both incumbent and opposition candidates and parties face problematic conditions when operating in such elections. If, by definition, the elections are unfair and biased in favor of the incumbent regime, then why do opposition parties and candidates participate at all? And if they do participate, how do they balance their desire to win and disseminate their messages with

¹⁹⁰ Source: World Bank World Development Indicators.

¹⁹¹ According to Ukraine's GINI coefficient, which started at 35 and dropped to 25 between 2000 and 2010.

their desire to remain organized and to avoid incumbent suppression and backlash? For incumbents, why do they allow elections at all? Why submit voluntarily to the regular exercise of public scrutiny that elections provide? And when interfering in elections, how do incumbents balance their desire to win with their worry about public backlash and protest?

I argue that we can make sense of these conflicting questions and situations by considering the goals held by incumbents and opposition actors during these elections. Elections can produce different goals for parties and candidates in democracies. These different goals have often attributed to different electoral systems and the type of system in place. Given this, I argue that the typical variation in contestation and incumbent dominance inherent to hybrid regimes alters the goals for both incumbent and opposition actors. Thus while opposition actors may not prioritize winning in lowly contested elections, they instead have alternative goals that guide their electoral strategies. A consideration of these goals can explain what often seems like counterproductive strategies by a long-marginalized opposition, including niche appeals or electoral boycotts. Niche appeals can serve the opposition in elections with low contestation and high incumbent dominance because their goal is to maintain their voter base and avoid atrophy. Similarly, electoral boycotts can demonstrate profound frustration with the status quo during elections with low contestation and low incumbent dominance.

The same holds true for incumbent and incumbent-supported candidates. Their goals are likely to change depending on the contestation present in the election. When faced with high contestation, incumbents will prioritize winning first and foremost. To do so, they are likely to take advantage of the unequal playing field by engaging in electoral interference. Yet I argue that they do so strategically, considering the potential for public unrest and protest as well as the perceived gains. In less contested election, then I argue that incumbent dominance establishes

the goals for incumbent actors. These differing goals can explain counterintuitive behavior on the part of incumbents as well. It may not make logical sense for an incumbent to interfere in predictable, lowly contested elections. Yet, with high dominance, the goal for incumbents is to demonstrate strength, making certain types of interference useful. Similarly, a consideration of these goals can explain why, in one election, an incumbent may be barely visible while in another, they may campaign actively, even if their such activities are largely void of specific policies. Incumbents are likely to either try and avoid public scrutiny in building legitimacy, or to demonstrate strength, depending on their level of dominance. Electoral conditions reveal these goals, and in turn, can explain such variation in electoral strategies.

I have demonstrated support for this theory in both the quantitative analyses as well as the case studies. The first two hypotheses posed compete with one another, positing whether economic interest appeals are more or less likely in highly contested elections. Incumbent and opposition actors may try to increase their attention to economic interests in highly contested elections to try to convince voters that they know what issues matter most to voters. Yet, on the other hand, incumbent and opposition actors may avoid such appeals in an attempt to appeal to largest number of voters. The quantitative analysis in Chapter 4 found support for the second hypothesis, but not first. Higher contestation is associated with a decline in attention to economic interest appeals by political parties during legislative elections. Yet Chapters 6 and 7 seem to provide more support for hypothesis 1. In both Russian presidential elections considered in Chapter 6, contestation was very low, as was attention to economic interest appeals. Conversely, Chapter 7 saw greater attention put on such issues during Ukraine's 2004 and 2010 presidential elections. What's more, economic interests were especially visible during the 2010 election, which was more contested than the 2004 election. These conflicting results could be

the result of the sole consideration of parliamentary elections in Chapter 4, while Chapters 6 and 7 focused exclusively on presidential elections. All but one of the post-Soviet cases included in this dissertation maintain presidential or semi-presidential system. Candidates for the presidency in highly contested elections may be more likely to focus on economic interest appeals given the prominence of the position. Thus, economic interest appeals may be less likely in contested parliamentary elections, but more likely to be emphasized in contested presidential elections.

The third hypothesis states that incumbent and opposition actors are more likely to emphasize value and identity-based appeals the higher the electoral contestation. I have argued that such appeals, as in democratic elections, can serve the goal of polarizing an electorate against the opposing candidate. Chapter 4 demonstrates support for this hypothesis. The quantitative analysis finds that an increase in contestation is related to an increased emphasis on value and identity-based issues in political party programs. This relationship is also observed in the case study comparisons presented in Chapters 6 and 7. Contestation was low both in Russia's 2004 and 2008 presidential elections, and value and identity-based appeals received minimal attention. Conversely, with medium and high contestation in Ukraine's 2004 and 2010 presidential elections, value appeals were used by both incumbent and opposition candidates. These appeals focused on Ukraine's identity as European, the treatment of ethnic and linguistic minorities, and moral values. Combined, Chapters 4 and 7 illustrate that value and identity-based appeals represent a preferred strategy during all elections with high contestation. Moreover, an increase in contestation between Ukraine's 2004 and 2010 elections also saw an increase in the heated and value-based appeals used by all candidates. I argue that, because the goal is to win the election, incumbent and opposition candidates will turn to value and identity-based appeals to prime the electorate against their opponents.

The fourth hypothesis states that financial, regulatory and enforcement resources are more likely to be abused during elections with higher contestation. I argue that these types of electoral interference are better suited to serve the goal of winning the election. Regulatory and enforcement resource abuse can hinder opposition activity, while financial resource abuse can aim to convince voters to support the incumbent. Chapter 5 reports support for this hypothesis. While electoral contestation is not related to any of these three types on their own, higher contestation is associated with combinations of these. In particular, the combined abuse of financial and regulatory abuse, as well as the combination of all three types, is associated with higher contestation. These relationships are also visible in the case study comparisons. Financial and enforcement resources were not abused in either of Russia's presidential elections with low contestation, while one type of regulatory resource abuse was visible in Russia's 2008 election. Yet in Ukraine, these resources were abused to a greater degree. During the 2004 presidential election, both regulatory and enforcement resources were abused. Moreover, with higher contestation, the 2010 presidential election in Ukraine witnessed all three types of resource abuse. The cumulative total also double from 2004 to 2010. Therefore, the quantitative and case study analyses demonstrate support for this hypothesis.

Next, I hypothesized that valence appeals are more likely to be emphasized during elections with lower contestation. Such appeals are likely to serve the goals of both incumbents and opposition actors. For incumbents, valence appeals can avoid public scrutiny or demonstrate strength by being vague and generally supported by the public. For opposition actors, valence appeals can be especially useful in that they do not antagonize the incumbent regime. However, Chapter 4 did not find support for this hypothesis in the quantitative analysis. There was no statistical relationship between electoral contestation and valence appeals. Chapter 6 did reveal

some support for this hypothesis. During Russia's 2004 election, multiple opposition candidates highlighted state security and opposition to the economic oligarchs, while they otherwise avoided specific policy appeals. Similarly, Putin emphasized general policy achievements while devoting little attention to future policies. Moreover, during the 2008 election, Medvedev focused on general social issues that maintain widespread public support, including demographics, housing, and reductions in pollution. Conversely, Ukraine's 2004 and 2010 saw a widespread focus on economic and value-based appeals, so that valence appeals did not stand out. Thus some support has been found for this hypothesis in the case study comparison chapters, while it was absent from the quantitative analysis of Chapter 4.

The sixth hypothesis proposes that opposition candidates and parties are more likely to emphasize support for democracy during elections with lower contestation. I argue that such appeals can serve opposition goals when faced with low electoral contestation. Appeals for democracy can either demonstrate dissatisfaction to the incumbent regime or they can avoid antagonizing the incumbent regime. Chapter 4 provides support for this hypothesis. Elections with lower contestation are associated with an increased emphasis on democracy. Moreover, an interactive effect was found between contestation, incumbent dominance and appeals in favor of democracy. When an election has low incumbent dominance, lower contestation is related to an increased emphasis on democracy in political party programs. Chapter 6 demonstrates support for this hypothesis. Both the 2004 and 2008 Russian presidential elections experienced low contestation, and in both cases, opposition candidates highlighted democracy. With low incumbent dominance in 2004, multiple candidates used appeals toward democracy to explicitly criticize the incumbent Putin. This illustrates that appeals in support of democracy can function as a tool to show dissatisfaction with the regime. In 2008, incumbent dominance increased,

while contestation remained low. In this case, appeals toward democracy continued, but were generally void of criticisms of Putin and his supported-candidate, Medvedev.

However, Chapter 7 also saw appeals toward democracy utilized in a highly contested election. During the 2010 presidential election in Ukraine, such appeals represented a major portion of the voter persuasion strategies utilized by both incumbent and opposition candidates. While this is contrary to the theoretical expectations, I offer this explanation. Within the context of the 2010 election, democracy had become interconnected with pro-European values in Ukraine since the Orange Revolution. All the major candidates accuse one another of being anti-democratic, while they themselves can best represent democracy and Ukraine's place in Europe. In this context, democracy became a divisive, value-based appeal used to polarize the electorate. I do not expect democracy to be used in this way generally. The empirical analyses presented in Chapter 4 support this, as appeals for democracy are negatively associated with contestation, while value and identity appeals have a positive relationship.

The seventh hypothesis I pose states that incumbents are more likely to abuse institutional resources when they enjoy high dominance. I have argued that the goal for incumbents during elections with low contestation and high incumbent dominance is to demonstrate strength. As institutional resource abuse is especially visible and blatant, I consider it well-suited to demonstrate incumbent strength and control. Chapter 5 reveals support for this hypothesis. The quantitative analysis finds that such abuse is more likely in hegemonic authoritarian regimes, those states with high incumbent dominance. This finding means that incumbents abuse institutional resources during elections with low contestation. In other words, they interfere in elections even when they know they will win. However, while incumbent dominance is related to the abuse of institutional resources, contestation is not. The case study

comparisons in Chapter 6 supported these findings. The abuse of institutional resources rose from the 2004 to the 2008 Russian presidential election. This rise coincides with the increase in incumbent dominance from one election to the next. Institutional resource abuse was also high in Ukraine's presidential election in 2004. However, as I have already discussed, that election likely represents a strategic miscalculation by the incumbent-supported Yanukovich given the post-election protests.

Relatedly, I hypothesized that incumbent actors are more likely to emphasize strong state appeals during elections with high incumbent dominance. These appeals can also contribute to the goal of demonstrating strength and power. Chapter 4 displayed support for this hypothesis. High incumbent dominance is related to an increased emphasis on strong state appeals in political party programs during legislative elections. Chapter 6 also supports these findings. As the only case considered with high incumbent dominance, Russia's 2008 presidential election saw the incumbent-supported Medvedev focused on authority of the president generally in relation to the rest of the government, as well as in society. This emphasis was in contrast to Putin in 2004, who focused more on particular advancements and achievements made during the previous four years. Thus the combination of quantitative and case study comparisons support this hypothesis.

Finally, I hypothesize that opposition parties and candidates are more likely to stress niche appeals during elections with high incumbent dominance. The goal under these circumstances is to maintain their voter base and avoid voter atrophy. Chapter 6 provided the only direct examination of this relationship. The opposition candidates in Russia's 2008 presidential election focused far more on their core issues and platforms than they did in the previous election. The communist candidate emphasized the great achievements of the Soviet

Union and the troubles that capitalism has brought to Russia, while such issues were absent from the 2004 election. Similarly, the nationalistic candidate eagerly focused on anti-Western and pro-ethnic Russian issues that were mostly lacking from the previous election. These types of appeals seek to motivate the cores of their respective electorates to remain loyal and supportive of the parties despite the parties' inability to win the presidency.

Implications for the study of Hybrid "Regimes"

One of the main takeaways of this dissertation is the relevance of elections even given the absence of democracy. Having looked at elections and electoral strategies both quantitatively and in case study comparisons, I contend that the difference in these strategies support this notion. Incumbent actors, no matter their level of dominance, continue to engage with these elections and alter their strategies of voter persuasion and electoral interference. Even when they might be silent on specific economic policies, they may nonetheless exert energy on electoral interference, signaling to the public, the opposition and their allies that participation and victory matters to them. Moreover, incumbent actors recognize that their hold on power is not inevitable, and take contested elections very seriously. For those in the opposition, they too recognize that it is necessary to play the game, even if the playing field is unfair. So, no matter how low the electoral contestation or how high the incumbent dominance, opposition actors often participate and alter their electoral strategies accordingly. While their goal might not be to win the election, opposition actors still perceive participation in elections as useful and necessary for their survival. These findings support the growing attention on elections as serving an informational role, particularly in non-democratic states.

Beyond the importance of elections as informational tools, this dissertation also demonstrates the relevance of electoral factors. These factors can consider the short-term,

internal conditions within a state more so than structural or international explanations.

Contestation and incumbent dominance are more poised to capture the temporal dynamics at work in a given election. Moreover, as this dissertation has demonstrated, electoral factors are more likely to alter the strategies used by opposition and incumbent actors. This is especially important when considering electoral interference. Other studies have sought to explore the relationship between international democracy assistance or the presence of election monitors on the occurrence of such interference. Their findings that such interference can persist even given such international influences suggests the need to consider the electoral context more deeply in order to understand this behavior.

In this dissertation, I treat incumbent dominance as an electoral factor. This is consistent with the discussion and conceptualization of competitive and hegemonic authoritarian regimes, as these concepts are based on the amount of support electoral received by the incumbent. Yet this treatment also highlights the potential for change within states. Incumbent dominance is not an immutable, rigid concept but instead reflects the reality that, as shifts toward and away from democracy continue, so too do shifts in incumbent dominance. And with such shifts come changes in the electoral strategies on the part of both incumbent and opposition actors. Incumbent dominance as an electoral factor fits with the arguments of others that the reliance on the term 'regime' in describing the gray area between democracy and autocracy implies an unnecessary sense of inevitability (Bunce and Wolchik 2011). Given the existence of elections, and the strategic focus all competitors place on these elections, incumbent power is not inevitable.

Finally, the theory and hypotheses proposed in this dissertation assume that political actors behave strategically. I maintain that the findings demonstrate support for this assumption.

If certain incumbent actors always emphasized certain issues, or always abuse certain resources, this would suggest that voter persuasion and electoral interference are subject to the individual whims of each person. Yet this was not the case. First, the descriptive statistics on both issue emphasis and the abuse of state resources demonstrated that both types of electoral strategies vary over time within each state. Political party pre-election programs varied not only the issues included, but the amount of emphasis they received. Moreover, the case study comparisons illustrated the strategic nature of opposition and incumbent actors. Having examined two elections held back to back in the same states, many of the same candidates and parties competed in both elections. These case studies saw shifts in voter persuasion by the opposition candidates in Russia's presidential elections even given the constant low contestation. The candidate from the Communist Party of the Russian Federation emphasized far more conventional communist issues in 2008 than in 2004. Similarly, in Russia, the same Putin-led incumbent governments utilized varying amounts of electoral interference in 2004 and 2008. In Ukraine, Yushchenko and Yanukovich switched roles from opposition to incumbent candidate, and visa versa, from 2004 to 2010. Despite Yushchenko's, and Tymoshenko's attention to democracy in 2004, they were both nonetheless observed abusing state resources. And Yanukovich adopted more pro-European positions and rhetoric in 2010, despite his professed pro-Russian status in 2004. Thus Opposition and incumbent actors behave strategically even given the constraints inherent to elections in hybrid regimes.

Implications for the study of politics in the former Soviet Union

This dissertation focused on the post-Soviet region for both its quantitative and case study analyses. Observers and comparativists alike have often noted the vast difference in trajectories between the post-communist states in Eastern and Central Europe and those from the

former Soviet Union. These considerations can focus on the emergence and consolidation of democracy within the former region in contrast with the absence in the latter.¹⁹² Yet despite this distinction, I argue that the theory and findings presented in this dissertation demonstrate the continued relevance of elections and electoral politics in this region.

The variation witnessed in elections across the post-Soviet region suggest that, despite shared historical legacies, the political realities in these settings remain dynamic. Electoral contestation has varied not only across the region, but also, in most cases, within each state. Similarly, incumbent dominance differs across the region, including cases of low and high dominance in the Caucasus, Central Asia and those states bordering Europe. This variation demonstrates that cultural or historical factors do not determine the level of incumbent dominance witnessed. The variation in strategies of voter persuasion and electoral interference further demonstrates this point. Rational or strategic behavior among the political actors within these post-Soviet settings implies that, unlike the perfunctory and obligatory elections held in the Soviet Union, elections provide a venue for intense activity. Thus agency regarding electoral conditions as well as electoral strategies outweighs the effects of any path dependent or structural constraints.

Yet despite these variations, the findings from this region also present undeniable similarities. One consistent factor is the absence of consolidated democracy across the post-Soviet region. Ten out of the fifteen successor states all fall within the study of hybrid regimes. This reality signals the shared difficulty experienced across the region in transitioning to democracy. Their shared post-Soviet experience reflects that while dynamic, the political effects of eighty-plus years within the USSR remain palpable. Electoral interference persists across

¹⁹² Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia of course represent exceptions in these discussions.

these cases, even if the degree to which it occurs varies. So while at the electoral level, we observe variation, at the broader political and state level, this region has struggled to institutionalize the electoral system.

Another notable finding in this dissertation was the usage of value and identity appeals across the region. That they are more likely to be emphasized during highly contested elections suggests their utility as wedge issues within these states. Moreover, the European/ Russian divide witnessed during the case comparison in Ukraine suggest that Russia's influence remains a relevant political issue in this region. The collapse of the Soviet Union also represented a serious rupture in the identities of all those living within the newly established borders. This reality has potentially primed identity and value considerations, as well as relations with Russia, for usage as political tools. The emphasis on these types of issues during highly contested elections can not only serve the short-term goal of winning the election, but can also carry long term consequences by reinforcing potential divisions within these societies.

Yet value and identity issues aside, the findings in these elections suggest that the most visible and established political cleavage within this region is how actors relate toward the incumbent regime. This is striking because, despite a long shared history of communism, that economic and political orientation does not dominate post-Soviet politics. Because of the unfair electoral playing field inherent in these states, and the predominant usage of presidential and semi-presidential systems in this region, the role of the incumbent instead takes particular precedence in this region. The theory proposed in this dissertation assumes the importance of this cleavage through the expected goals held by both incumbent and opposition actors. Especially in the case of opposition actors, their explicit dissatisfaction with the regime can be useful in maintaining their relevance, even in uncontested elections. This was clear during the

case study of Russia's 2004 presidential election, where every opposition candidate pursued strategies that projected this frustration with the status quo. Moreover, this incumbent-support cleavage was also visible in Ukraine. In that setting, anti-incumbent appeals were often intertwined with value-based issues, but the necessity to address the significant role of the incumbent remained. Because incumbents, even with low dominance, maintain the ability to hinder or obstruct opposition activities, they pose an existential problem for opposition actors. As discussed above, the lack of institutionalized free competition means that this reality is likely to remain relevant for the near future.

Future Research Agenda

Having considered the theory and findings presented in this dissertation, I propose the following areas for future research. Given the above discussion on post-Soviet politics, I turn to the need to distinguish among opposition actors. While I maintain that the electoral goals developed in this dissertation are generally relevant to all opposition actors, I question whether the strategies are universally appropriate. The historical and political orientations of opposition actors may mean that they are more or less likely to, for example, boycott an election or participate. Possible distinctions include between Communist versus non-Communist parties, as well as independent versus party-supported candidates. Within the Russian context, observers often differentiate between the 'system' and 'non-system' opposition parties and actors. System parties are those that are able to officially participate in elections, even if they do not win. Conversely, non-system parties typically lack the legal standing to even register candidates for electoral competition. This dissertation has only been able to consider the actions of 'system' parties, as they are the ones that actually take part in or endorse candidates for elections.

Second, the findings in this dissertation have demonstrated some differences between legislative and executive elections. Yet the level of analysis has remained at the national level throughout both the quantitative analyses as well as in the case study analyses. One potential area for future inquiry is to shift the focus to the regional level. As much of the literature on hybrid regimes has argued, elections at the regional level can often be more contested, even within states with high incumbent dominance. These elections would allow for the consideration of the relative importance of contestation versus incumbent dominance. I have argued that, in the rare case that an election is highly contested within a hegemonic authoritarian regime, I would expect contestation to be more important. An examination of highly contested regional elections within a state with high incumbent dominance at the national level would be one way to explore these concerns.

Third, this dissertation has taken decidedly top-down approach to the study of politics. Public opinion and attitudes was not considered, with the exception being when I discussed perceptions of the incumbent and economy during the case study comparisons in Chapters 6 and 7. This begs the question of whether these theorized electoral strategies actually achieve the intended goals. Do people perceive a highly dominantly incumbent as strong when they abuse institutional resources? Do they understand that opposition actors may avoid criticizing the incumbent not because of their support but because they seek to remain in existence? And are people polarized by divisive value and identity appeals? Public perceptions of the actions of both incumbent and opposition actors could be very useful in both demonstrating the existence of varied goals as well as evaluating the utility of various electoral strategies.

Finally, another phenomenon present within hybrid regime political contexts concerns elite defections. The post-Soviet region is no different, leading me to question whether this

action alters their electoral behavior? When former supporters and contemporaries of the incumbent government are either dismissed or leave voluntarily, does this affect their goals in elections? Are they more or less likely to pursue the same strategies as other opposition actors? This is related to the discussion above about distinctions within the opposition camp, but it differs because a former elite may be viewed differently by the incumbent government. Their reaction to elite defectors may alter the goals or the strategies considered useful for these candidates.

Conclusion

Elections without democracy seem counterintuitive and potentially void of utility. Yet I argue that not only do such elections matter, they present opportunities for political engagement both by incumbent and opposition actors. These opportunities are determined by the varying goals held by both sides during these elections. This dissertation proposes a framework for understanding the alternative goals likely to be pursued by considering the conditions of the election. As more dynamic and immediate considerations, electoral contestation and incumbent dominance alter the goals for incumbent and opposition actors in these elections. And while some of these elections are quite predictable, many are contested and taken seriously by incumbents and opposition actors alike. Even elections with little to no contestation continue to hold purpose for opposition and incumbent actors. Having considered the electoral goals and strategies of both incumbent and opposition actors, my analyses demonstrate the persistent need for scholars to take these elections seriously.

This dissertation builds on and contributes to the literature suggesting the continued relevance of elections in hybrid and authoritarian regimes. That such elections continue to be taken seriously by opposition and incumbent actors demonstrates that these political institutions

can serve more functions than simply determining a winner. The variation in strategies of voter persuasion and electoral interference in post-Soviet states illustrate that, despite the flaws and unfairness present, elections remain a notable institution not just to access power, but also to disseminate information and attract public attention. The combination of such strategies by incumbents further reveals that, despite the tendency to interfere, they still need to try and win some genuine support from the populace. Moreover, elections can also occasionally provide openings for opposition victories. Given this, elections in hybrid regimes deserve scholarly attention. These elections represent an enduring institutional challenge to students of comparative politics and especially post-Soviet politics, because the same logic that governs electoral behavior in democracies is not necessarily at work in these settings. This dissertation addresses this need, but also illuminates further areas where deserving academic consideration.

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