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THE SPATIAL CHARACTER OF RUSSIA'S NEW DEMOCRACY
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Abstract
To date, virtually all research on Russian elections, beginning in 1991, have used tools and methodological approaches akin to voting research from the 1950's and 1960's. Researchers have relied either on public opinion polls that try to tease out correlations between a standard menu of socioeconomic characteristics, attitudes about candidates, and self-reports of voting history; or on journalistic assessments of aggregate election returns, coupled with substantive expertise of Russian politics. Here, then, we try to gain an understanding of those elections in more contemporary theoretical terms -- in terms of the spatial analysis of elections and voting. Although our analysis relies on a less-than-optimal source of data -- election returns aggregated up to the level of individual rayons (counties) -- we are able to draw a spatial map of those elections that is not too dissimilar from what others infer using less explicit methodologies. Specifically, we find that throughout the 1991-1996 period, a single issue -- reform -- has and continues to dominate the electorate's responses to candidates and parties. On the other hand, we find little evidence of the emergence of 'nationalism' as an issue, but conclude that to the extent we can detect this issue in the 1996 presidential contest, one candidate, General Alexandar Lebed, did succeed in differentiating himself from other nationalist candidates (most notably, Vladimir Zhirinovsky) without abandoning the reformist camp. In general, then, this preliminary analysis suggests that the same tools used elsewhere to uncover the spatial map of elections and the connection between basic and actionable issues (individual level thermometer score rankings of candidates and parties) can be applied to Russia with the promise of coherent, understandable results.

I. Introduction
Russia's transition to democracy and its electoral processes in particular are presumed to be bedeviled by a multitude of problems, including voters who are not well acquainted with democratic processes, as opposed to Soviet-style elections, an expansive menu of candidates and parties with ill-defined platforms and policy positions, a political elite well-schooled in the mechanics of electoral fraud and other forms of corruption, an economy that encourages acceptance of radical policy proposals, and an international environment including the expansion of NATO and the loss of superpower status that feeds the flames of nationalism. Nevertheless, despite Vladimir Zhirinovsky's meteoric rise in the 1993 parliamentary election, and an apparent
communist resurgence accompanied by the virtual disappearance of the traditional electoral standard bearer of reform, Russia's Choice, in the 1995 parliamentary contest, the Russian electorate appears to be remarkably stable. Although Yeltsin's vote in the 1996 presidential election did not equal his landslide victory in 1991, he not only emerged as the strongest candidate in the first round of balloting, but he also largely succeeded in the second round in pulling together all pro-reform voters to his side while simultaneously securing a disproportionate and critical share of votes from Lebed's first round supporters (Myagkov, Ordeshook, and Sobyanin 1997).

This essay explores this apparent stability further by looking at what we can infer about the structure of issues and candidate positions from the approximately 2,000-per-election rayon (county) level election returns. What we want to reevaluate particularly is the electoral 'map' of Russia drawn by political commentators who have relied thus far on their general understanding of politics and candidates and on vote totals aggregated typically at the regional and even national level. That map offers a picture of an electorate first dominated by a single issue (attitudes toward reform) which, with the emergence of Zhirinovsky as a national figure in December 1993, saw the addition of nationalism as a second relevant dimension. Subsequent elections (the 1995 parliamentary and 1996 presidential elections) are assumed to have reinforced this two-dimensional picture, with Zhirinovsky and a handful of minor candidates and parties staking out nationalism as 'their' issue, Yeltsin, the communists led by Zyuganov, various splinter anti-reform parties, and a fractured coterie of reformers jostling on a 'reform' issue that seemed mostly to be a referendum on Yeltsin's administration, and General Alexander Lebed offering a compromise (centrist?) alternative on both issues. Indeed, Lebed's emergence in 1995-96 as a potential successor to Yeltsin was attributed largely to his apparent ability to position himself on these issues so as to secure a share of both pro-reform and nationalist voters in such a way as to allow him to throw his support in one direction or the other between the two rounds of presidential balloting.1

While public opinion surveys give credence to this electoral map (see, for example, Wyman, White, Miller, and Heywood 1995, and Hough, Davidheiser and Lehmann 1996), its basic character derives largely from inductive attempts to make sense of the ebb and flow of official election returns from one election to another, aggregated up to the national or regional levels, in

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1. For presidential elections, Russia uses majority rule with a runoff. For its parliamentary contests to the State Duma, it uses a split system in which one half of the deputies (225) are elected from single-mandate constituencies and one half using national party list proportional representation. For the party list contests, only those parties with at least 5% of the vote are awarded seats. The data we use here from the parliamentary elections are restricted to the party list totals.
the context of some strong prior results as to the general orientation of parties and candidates (see, for instance, McFaul 1993, McFaul and Fish 1996, Boxer, McFaul, and Ostashev 1996, and Fish 1995).

There is, of course, much to be learned from informed interpretations of events. But such interpretations, when based on highly aggregated data, are subject to the traditional statistical degrees-of-freedom problem and to the informational limitations of the data analyzed. Thus, they cannot uncover potential nuances that can profoundly affect the future course of events such as the viability of Lebed’s presumed electoral strategy in the event that only he and some communist candidate compete in the next presidential election. Here, then, we reassess the extent to which a simple one or two-dimensional portrayal of the Russian electorate is appropriate using a less aggregated data set and a methodology (factor analysis) whose limitations are more readily deciphered than journalistic inference. Briefly, we find that although a shift from a uni- to a two-dimensional structure characterizes the period 1991-1993, both the 1995 and 1996 elections give evidence of the emergence of a more complex spatial structure -- a structure that is not inconsistent with the view that Russians, like voters elsewhere, not only judge on the basis of ideological predispositions, but also on the basis of specific characteristics of candidates (Enelow and Hinich 1984, Hinich and Munger 1994). We support the general explanation for Lebed’s ability to emerge as the third largest vote-getter in 1996, but here at least we conclude that the extent of his ‘compromise’ is less than has been otherwise assumed. Perhaps as a portent of the future, we argue that the compromise he achieved was not so great as to alienate those who might support reform in the next presidential election. Finally, we also see evidence of the emergence in 1995 and 1996 of pro-reform voters who nevertheless refuse to vote for Yeltsin or those associated with his administration, except when their choice is between that administration and a return to communist rule. It is these voters, in combination with Lebed’s overall strategy, that has thus far lent Lebed the aura as ‘the man to beat’ in the year 2000.

II. Methods and Data

A spatial (Euclidean) construction in which issues are represented as segments of real lines, candidate platforms as points on these lines, and voters as rational decision makers with well-defined issue preferences who vote on the basis of their distance from candidate positions, is by now a well-accepted representation of elections and a base paradigm for formal mathematical analyses of elections and candidate strategies (Ordeshook 1997). Correspondingly, statistically estimating the parameters of this representation -- the dimensionality of the issue space, the relative salience of issues, candidate positions, and distributions of voter preferences -- using
individual level polling data in the form of responses to requests for cardinal (thermometer score) or ordinal rankings of candidates has also advanced considerably (see, for example, Cahoon, Hinich, and Ordeshook 1978, Dow 1997, Lin, Chu, and Hinich 1996). This methodological literature, though, reveals the difficulties associated with estimating a complex nexus of parameters from even rich data: not only does the mathematical complexity of the underlying structural models make it difficult to establish the statistical properties of estimates, but inequities quickly appear when estimating the requisite parameters.

Although these difficulties can be overcome with appropriate data drawn from polls of individual voters and a few structural assumptions, they appear to be insurmountable when the only numbers at our disposal are aggregate election returns. For example, although it is tempting to conclude that if candidate X's share of the vote exceeds candidate Y's share, then X must on average rank higher than Y on the preference scales of voters, such an inference is invalid unless a variety of restrictive assumptions about spatial structure are satisfied. Candidate Y may be sandwiched between two other, more viable opponents so that despite aggregate returns, Y ranks higher than X for a majority of the electorate. The fact is that aggregate data tells us, in the absence of strategic voting, only the first ranked alternative in each voter's preference scale, whereas, as the methods of multidimensional scaling reveal, reliable inferences about the parameters that concern us require data on each voter's overall rank ordering of the candidates and perhaps even some cardinal measure of that ranking.

This is not to say that inferences from aggregate data are impossible or unjustifiable. The analysis of such data can often provide useful guidance to further research, provided we appreciate fully their informational limitations and the assumptions that must be imposed in order to proceed. To illustrate, suppose a single issue dominates campaign discourse, suppose the electorate's preferences on that issue are normally distributed, and suppose the candidates' (or parties') policy positions are uniformly dispersed so that each occupies a unique position and each is approximately equidistant from the candidate to his or her right and left. If all voters now vote for candidates nearest their preferred positions, then the candidates' vote totals should decrease steadily with their distance from the electorate's median preference. Notice also that as the overall distribution of preferences shifts from one side to another, the votes for candidates on the same side of the issue space will tend to rise and fall together whereas the votes for candidates on opposite sides will tend to correlate negatively. Thus, if we have aggregate data from a cross-section of election districts, each of which satisfies these assumptions, and if the mean preferences across districts are themselves distributed so as to give some 'meaningful' variance in election returns, then we can use a simple factor analysis of aggregate returns to estimate the issue space.
(i.e., recover its unidimensionality) and the candidates' relative positions on it.

Unfortunately, these assumptions (or their multidimensional extension) need not be satisfied in any specific election. First, electoral rules such as Russia's requirement that parliamentary seats can be won under proportional representation only by those parties whose vote exceeds five percent of the total can induce voters to act strategically -- to vote for a competitive candidate or party rather than the alternative closest to their ideal. Strategic voting can also characterize Russia's presidential contest, since there, through the use of majority rule with a runoff, voters might be concerned that a sincere vote will result in a second round choice between two wholly unacceptable alternatives. Second, absent any well-defined equilibrium and an evident clustering of splinter parties at various issue positions, candidate positions need not be uniformly distributed across the issue: a candidate who performs poorly because he is squeezed out by adjacent opponents may actually be close to the overall median preference. Third, nonvoting might correlate with policy preferences so as to distort any statistical estimates: and in Russia in particular there is evidence that turnout rates declined most rapidly among those who supported Yeltsin in 1991 (Myagkov, Ordeshook, and Sobyanin 1997). Fourth, preference distributions from one election district to another might not be sufficiently varied, as when districts are predominantly either 'pro' or 'anti' reform, in which case vote shares across regions will correlate in such a way as to produce a spatial map in which candidates tend to be located at one of only two positions. Finally, any monotonicity in the relationship between vote share and distance from an electoral median can vanish if preferences are not unimodally distributed -- something we cannot wholly discount for a country such as Russia in which voters can be reasonably assumed to be polarized between pro- and anti-reform policies.

Despite these limitations and indeterminacies, commentators and politicians find it hard or impossible to resist drawing inferences about the geography of an election using such data -- to infer salient issues, voter perceptions of the candidate's positions on those issues, and shifts from one election to the next in issue salience, voter preferences, and candidate positioning. This fact and the fact that the requisite individual level polling data remain unavailable or unreliable for countries like Russia compels us to examine more closely the things we can infer from aggregate data, including a factor analytic treatment of that data. After all, even though such an analysis proceeds on tenuous theoretical grounds, our advantage here is that our assumptions can be made wholly transparent. Thus, we can suggest alternative hypotheses for the patterns we find in the aggregate data that can be explored subsequently in future elections with more refined data. So even though we cannot offer definitive conclusions, we can give direction to the gathering of more precise individual-level data.
Briefly, the data we use consists of official rayon-level election returns for all Russian elections beginning with 1991 through the 1996 presidential election, including the April 1993 referendum that amounted to a vote of confidence on Yeltsin's administration in his conflict with the increasingly recalcitrant Congress of People's Deputies. The sole exception to the comprehensiveness of our data is the December 1993 parliamentary contest. There, since Russia's Central Election Commission has, suspiciously, never published official election returns except at the regional level, we rely on unofficial returns covering approximately half the rayons and which appear to represent a relatively unbiased cross section of the country (for additional discussion of this data see Myagkov and Sobyanin 1995). Thus, with the exception of 1993, we have approximately 2,000 observations for each election, where the specific elections considered are these:

- The 1991 presidential contest held before the dissolution of the Soviet Union in which Boris Yeltsin first assumed the office of the presidency of the Russian Republic.
- The April 1993 referendum in which voters were asked to answer four questions that directly or indirectly amounted to a vote of confidence in Yeltsin's reform efforts.
- The December 1993 parliamentary election in which the neo-Nazi Vladimir Zhirinovsky out-polled all other parties with 23% of the vote but in which Yeltsin succeeded in securing majority approval for his constitution for the now-sovereign Russian Federation.
- The December 1995 parliamentary contest that saw a resurgence in communist party support, the virtual disappearance of the old standard bearer of reform, Russia's Choice, and the first electoral appearance of General Alexander Lebed.
- The 1996 June-July presidential contest in which Yeltsin won reelection, but only after being required to confront his communist challenger, Gennady Zyuganov, in the second round of balloting after forming an explicit coalition with Lebed and an implicit and grudging one with another reform candidate, Gregori Yavlinski.

In the next section, 2, we briefly review the results of a simple factor analysis of the returns for each of these elections in order to see whether our results correspond to the electoral maps drawn by commentators on those elections. Here we see evidence of increasing dimensionality in the issue space from one election to the next (excepting the April 1993 referendum) although the issue of reform remains predominant throughout the period. The issue of nationalism, on the other hand, barely registers on our radar screen, and then only in 1996. In Section 3 we divide our data into three categories -- rayons that strongly support reform (or Yeltsin), those that support anti-reform candidates or parties, and 'others'. What we infer from this analysis is that, although the
Russian electorate appears to be remarkably stable and consistent in terms of the dimensionality of the issue space and in terms of the spatial positioning of candidates, there is interesting evidence that voters in June 1996 (the first round of balloting in the presidential contest) voted strategically for the primary contenders and that Yeltsin's strategy -- allowing Lebed full reign to campaign in that round in the expectation that he would draw votes from other nationalist candidates but that these votes would be won over by Yeltsin in the second round -- largely succeeded. Section 4 concludes with a variety of cautionary notes about the inferences we can draw from the aggregate data.

III. Trends from 1991 to 1996

The 1991 Presidential contest: Beginning with the 1991 Presidential election in which Yeltsin won with 57.3% of the vote and in which his nearest rivals, the communist Ryzhkov and the neo-Nazi Zhirinovsky, won only 16.9% and 7.8% respectively, Table 1 reports the results of a factor analysis of the data that considers these three candidates, two minor contestants, and the category 'against all', while Figure 1 offers a spatial portrayal of their estimated positions.

<table>
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<th>Factor</th>
<th>eigenvalue</th>
<th>% variance 'explained'</th>
<th>cumulative %</th>
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<tr>
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<td>45.2</td>
<td>45.2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>88.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>96.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: 1991 Presidential Election

The picture drawn by Figure 1 (page 23) should come as no surprise to those with even a passing familiarity with the 1991 election. As that figure shows, the 1991 contest was largely a competition between Yeltsin and the rest of the field, where the first and dominant dimension corresponds closely to the issue of pro- versus anti-reform (or at least to a referendum on Yeltsin's 'stick-it-in-your-eye' stance with respect to anyone associated with the old regime). Ryzhkov and Makashov were clear stand-ins for the old communist regime, Bakatin, although not an opponent of reform, was nevertheless likely to be associated with the status quo owing to his position as
Gorbachev's Interior Minister, and Zhirinovsky was by then a vocal opponent of nearly everything and anything.

Admittedly, Table 1 presents us with the usual dilemma in determining the dimensionality of the issue space. There is a rapid drop in percent variance explained after the first factor, but thereafter it is a matter of taste whether, in reporting these results, we should pay heed to factors 2, 3 or 4. In this regard it is worth noting that with only six candidates, including the Against All ballots, we will necessarily see an appreciable increase in 'variance explained' as additional factors are considered. Thus, it is best to postpone the interpretation of this table until we examine additional elections, except to say that the first dimension takes clear precedence over all others in that it alone accounts for nearly half the variance in election returns.

The April 1993 Referendum: As part of the increasingly nasty conflict between Yeltsin and Russia's parliament, the Congress of People's Deputies, Russians were asked in April 1993 to answer four questions:
- Do you have confidence in President Boris Yeltsin?
- Do you approve of the socioeconomic policy carried out by the president of the Russian Federation and the government of the Russian Federation since 1992?
- Do you consider it necessary to carry out early elections for the president of the Russian Federation,
- Do you consider it necessary to carry out early elections for the deputies of the Russian Federation?

Clearly, the pro-Yeltsin position on these questions was to vote Yes-Yes-No-Yes, and it seemed clear that the only issue under consideration in this vote would be people's attitudes toward reform. This presumption is largely verified in Figure 2 and Table 2, where the positioning of the 'Yes' response to the third question is diametrically opposite that of 'Yes' responses to the other three questions and where the first factor alone accounts for 73% of the variance. There is, nevertheless, some residual variance explained by a second factor that differentiates questions three and four from the first two, thereby reflecting the fact that although a voter might support Yeltsin and his policies in general, he or she might also prefer new elections for all national offices.
Table 2: 1993 April Referendum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>eigenvalue</th>
<th>% variance explained</th>
<th>cumulative %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>73.4</td>
<td>73.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>80.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 1993 Parliamentary Election: Following Yeltsin’s artillery assault on and termination of the Congress of People’s Deputies, Russia’s first party-based election as a sovereign state occurred in December 1993. Thirteen parties vied for the 225 seats allocated by national party list proportional representation, and eight succeeded in surpassing the 5% threshold for representation. Judging by their platforms and the public utterances of those who headed the list, the most visible pro-reform party lists were the ones headed by Yeltsin’s ex-Prime Minister and economic reform guru, Yegor Gaidar, the explicitly pro-Western economist Yavlinski, and Yeltsin’s legal advisor, Sergi Shakrai (for an ordering of the parties and candidates based on their public utterances and reputations see, for example, McFaul and Fish 1996). The centrist or moderate pro-reform positions were presumed to included Travkin’s list and Women of Russia. The Communist Party (CPRF) and their fellow-traveling Agrarians (APR) anchored the opposition, while Zhirinovsky’s Liberal Democrats (LDPR) sought to claim nationalism as its issue along with ambiguous utterances on reform. Table 3 and Figure 3 summarize the results of our analysis, which in this instance, is limited to unofficial data and which excludes the important heavily pro-reform regions of Moscow and St. Petersburg.

2. Zhirinovsky’s LDPR won 21.1%, Yegor Gaidar’s Russia’s Choice won 14.3%, the Communist Party (CPRF) won 11.5%, the Agrarians won 7.4%, Women of Russia 7.5%, Yavlinski’s Yabloko 7.3%, Shakrai’s list 6.2%, and Travkin’s DPR 5.1%.
Table 3: 1993 Parliamentary Election

As with 1991 and April 1993, we see again that the first factor cleanly separates pro- from anti-reform lists ('Small' in Figure 3 refers to the four smallest parties who failed to win any seats) and confirms to some extent the commonly perceived ideological orientation of the parties. Specifically, the ordering "Agrarian (APR), Communist (CPRF), Zhirinovsky (LDPR), Women of Russia (Ruswomen), Travkin, Shakrai, Yavlinski, and Gaidar" is probably not much different, if at all from, what most commentators would offer as the ideological ordering of the parties. The position of Zhirinovsky's LDPR, though, is interesting in that we do not see here any evidence of 'nationalism' as an issue that differentiates the LDPR from the rest of the field. Instead, the LDPR appears as a centrist party on both the first and the second dimensions. We cannot, then, reject the argument that Zhirinovsky's success derived more from his relative positioning on the issues than from his presumed ability to introduce new issues into the electoral debate. That is, the LDPR's first-place finish in 1993 appears to derive more from Zhirinovsky's abilities as a campaigner -- an ability that most commentators believed surpassed that of his rivals, especially Yegor Gaidar, who believed that arguing for 'macro-economic stability' was a viable campaign platform with which to attract people 'experiencing' his reforms.

Insofar as the dynamics of dimensionality are concerned, we should keep in mind that we are treating four more 'candidates' here than in 1991, which should require additional factors to achieve an equivalent level of significance. Correspondingly, Table 3 shows that it is increasingly difficult to assert a unidimensional or even a 2-dimensional issue space. Although the first factor, as before, clearly dominates the rest, the cumulative percent variance explained increases a bit more slowly in 1993 than 1991, and after the first factor, there is no clear cutoff point with which to argue that two dimensions are 'better' than three or that three is 'better' than four. Notice
though that although this contrast with 1991 may be primarily an artifact of the number of candidates considered, this same methodological problem would also be likely to characterize journalistic assessments of election returns, especially ones that are dependent on even a higher level of aggregation of the data. This fact might account for the ease with which events in 1991 were interpreted as unidimensional, while in 1993 -- especially when explanations were offered for Zhirinovsky success -- the search commenced for additional issues, including that of nationalism. These methodological issues, though, should not detract from the conclusion that attitudes toward reform remained the primary basis for classifying parties.

The 1995 Parliamentary Election: The picture for the 1995 election to the State Duma portrays a contest in which one dimension is no longer adequate to represent matters, but in which the issue of reform remains, as in 1993, the primary basis for structuring perceptions of candidates. Here, because of the great number of party lists (a total of 43 were listed on the ballot and only four, with a fraction less than half of the vote, surpassed the 5% threshold for representation), to compare our results with previous elections, we offer two sets of eigenvalues and two sets of spatial representations -- one that considers only 7 parties, and the second which considers 9 plus the 'party of nonvoters.' First, looking at Table 4, we see that with only seven parties, three factors account as before for more than 70% of the variance. However, the first factor accounts for only 36.2% compared with 45.2% in 1991 (when we consider 6 candidates) and 43.7% in 1993 (when we consider 10 party lists). Moreover, when we add three parties -- two party lists plus nonvoters - so as to make our analysis here comparable to our analysis of the 1993 parliamentary contest, the importance of the first factor declines to 30.7% and it becomes virtually impossible to choose between a 3, 4 or greater-dimensional representation -- the decline in variance explained from one factor to the next exhibits no discernable step. Clearly, then, the dimensionality of the issue space in 1995 exceeds that for 1993 and 1991.

3. Those four were the CPRF with 22.7%, the LDPR with 11.4%, OHR with 10.3%, Yabloko with 7.0%.
4. Since turnout increased in 1996 from 1995, 'the party of nonvoters' here corresponds to those who voted in 1996 but not in 1995. That is, the share of the vote attributed to this 'party' in each rayon equals the percentage increase in turnout between 1995 and 1996.
5. And even if we limit the analysis to 5 candidates (CPRF, LDPR, OHR, Yavlinski, and Nonvoters), the first factor accounts for a mere 37.6% of the variance.
Table 4: 1995 Parliamentary Election

Turning now to the graphical representation of these factors, note first from Figures 4a,b and 5a,b that the recovery of spatial positions on the first three dimensions is largely insensitive to the number of candidates considered (a similar picture obtains with a 5-candidate recovery). Insofar as the substantive interpretation of these dimensions is concerned, we see that once again, the first dimension differentiates between pro-reform and anti-reform parties, with Yeltsin's stand-in, Chernomyrdin's Our Home Is Russia (OHR), being the most centrally located 'reform' party. And as with 1993, the positioning of candidates on the second dimension again fails to reveal nationalism as a salient issue. Although Zhirinovsky and Lebed after him occupy one end of that dimension, Chernomyrdin occupies the other extreme. Indeed, Chernomyrdin's position here suggests that this second dimension has less to do with nationalism per se, but instead corresponds to something more like 'the party in power versus everyone else'. We suspect, in fact, that to the extent that this second dimension serves essentially as a way to differentiate the current regime, represented by Chernomyrdin, it is much like a valence issue in spatial theory (Enelow and Hinich
1984) -- something like "either you believe that Chernomyrdin is the least risky alternative, or you prefer change, left or right." However, whatever interpretation we give this second dimension, it seems clear that a simple left-right conceptualization of political competition became less relevant in 1995 than it had been in previous elections.

Figures 4a and 5a are interesting in two other respects. First, note that nonvoters in Figure 4a fall on the reform side of the first factor, which is to say that those who voted in 1996 but not in 1995 were predominantly pro-reform voters. Thus, if we combine this fact with the finding that the general decline in turnout between 1991 and 1993 came largely at the expense of pro-reform candidates (Myagkov, Ordeshook, and Sobyanin 1997), we see some of the stability of the Russian electorate. That is, it appears as though a significant share of the shifting fortunes of Yeltsin and his allies between 1991 and 1996 derived from decreased turnout among pro-reform voters as opposed to fundamental shifts in preference, and that when those voters returned to the polls in 1996, they reappeared once again as Yeltsin voters. Thus, Yeltsin's strategy in 1996 of encouraging turnout appears to have been more than mere civic-mindedness.

The second interesting thing to notice about Figures 4a and 5a is Lebed's relative positioning. Generally identified in the Moscow media as a sane alternative to Zhirinovski's nationalism, Lebed in fact appears to belong to the camp of reformers on the first dimension, whereas his distance from Our Home Is Russia on the second dimension suggests his success at establishing himself as an outsider to Moscow's politics or at least as distancing himself from Yeltsin's administration.

The 1996 Presidential Election: We come finally to June 1996, the first round of balloting in Russia's first presidential election since the dissolution of the USSR. Focusing again on the primary contenders -- the five candidates who account for approximately 95% of the ballots (Yeltsin 35.3%, Zyuganov 32%, Lebed 14.5%, Yavlinski 7.3% and Zhirinovsky 5.7%) -- Table 5 reports the eigenvalues for the first three factors, while Figures 6a,b give the associated spatial positions.
Table 5: 1996 Presidential Election, first round

The first thing to notice is that the dimensionality here is approximately the same as what we estimate for 1991 when considering 6 candidates. Thus, whatever evidence we thought we saw through 1995 of an increase in dimensionality appears to have reversed itself somewhat in 1996. More interesting, though, is the spatial configurations portrayed in Figures 6a,b. Here again we see Zyuganov to one side of the issue space and Yeltsin, Yavlinski and Lebed to the other. The second dimension, though, more clearly than in 1995, appears to correspond to nationalism with Zhirinovsky and Lebed anchoring one end of this dimension and Yeltsin the other. Arguably, though, this second dimension, given Zyuganov’s position, might be interpreted as ‘old faces versus new faces’ and, absent other evidence, should not then be taken as evidence that Russian’s are increasingly sympathetic to allowing their sense of nationalism to overtake their attitudes toward reform as the primary basis for evaluating candidates. The third factor, moreover, primarily differentiates between Zhirinovsky and Lebed, and suggests that even if the second dimension captures some part of the issue of nationalism, Russian voters can differentiate a sane alternative (ostensibly Lebed) and one who, although admittedly a skilled campaigner, is willing arguably to make any utterance to gain media attention.

Equally interesting is the inference we can draw from this figure as to Yeltsin’s strategy for defeating Zyuganov in the second round. If we take Figure 6a and, after scaling to reflect relative eigenvalues, draw the bisecting lines so as to map out the areas of support for each candidate, we would find that once Zhirinovsky, Lebed, and Yavlinski are eliminated, Zyuganov wins most of Zhirinovskii’s voters, while Yeltsin gets all of Yavlinski’s and Lebed’s. Making an explicit appeal for Zhirinovskii’s vote by promising him a position in his government was, of course, out of the

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6. If for purposes of comparison we perform a 5-candidate recovery for 1995 (OHR, Nonvoters, Yavlinski, CPRF, and Zhirinovskii), the cumulative variance explained by the first four factors is, in sequence, 37.6%, 59.9%, 78.5% and 94.3%. Thus, even if we limit the analysis to the same number of candidates, the variance explained increases more rapidly in 1996 than 1995.
question for Yeltsin, and of the two other possibilities, the most uncertain block is Lebed’s even
though, ceteris paribus, they should vote for Yeltsin in the second round. But an interim coalition
between Yeltsin and Lebed, as events revealed, came at no cost to Yeltsin (indeed, he arguably
gained not only votes, but a cease fire in Chechnya whose unraveling could be blamed on Lebed)
and rendered the support of Lebed’s voter more secure.

IV. The ‘Anomaly’ of the Pro-Reform Regions
Aside from the substantive importance of the contest, Russia’s 1996 presidential election is
interesting because of its strategic complexity, the uncertain response of voters to the war in
Chechnya, and the fact that ‘reform’ had brought something other than beneficial results to an
increasingly large part of the population. First, with respect to strategic complexity, we know that
majority rule with a runoff gives candidates ample incentive to try to position themselves so that, if
they fail to progress to the second round, they can use their support as currency in negotiations
with one or both of the two leading candidates. Lebed in particular understood this strategic
environment and, with an eye to both the current contest and to the next presidential election,
appeared to have successfully positioned himself to become pivotal in 1996 and Yeltsin’s heir
apparent in 2000. The strategic environment for voters is no less interesting since for many of
them the choice in the first round is between a sincere vote for a most-preferred candidate versus a
strategic vote for the least objectionable viable one. Pro-reform and anti-reform voters, though,
confronted different environments in 1996. The clear leader of the anti-reform camp was
Zyuganov, who was virtually certain to be on the ballot in the event of a second round. Indeed,
until Yeltsin’s resurgence in the polls, the question here was whether Zyuganov could win an
outright victory on the first ballot, and, if not, how great his margin of victory would be over a
candidate such as Zhirinovskiy. Thus, the average voter in a rayon in which most voters are
opposed to Yeltsin or any reform candidate has the luxury of not having to cast a strategic ballot.
They can vote straightforwardly for Zyuganov, or, if nationalism is most salient, for Lebed. In
contrast, pro-reform voters needed to decide which ‘reform’ (i.e., anticommunist) candidate --
Yeltsin, Yavlinski, or Lebed — had the best chance of defeating Zyuganov. And although Yeltsin,
as the product of a skilled campaign staff and not a little ‘maneuvering’ (e.g., briefcases filled with
non-consecutively marked $100 bills) emerged in the end as the front runner, that position may
have been hidden from view for all but those voters with access to and a taste for weekly public

7. Elsewhere we estimate that Yeltsin won 5 out of every 8 of Lebed’s voters, and 6 out of every 8 of
Yavlinski’s, whereas Zyuganov won 6 out of seven 7 of Zhirinovski’s voters (Myagkov, Ordeshook, and
Sobyanin 1997).
opinion polls. Thus, it is reasonable to speculate that one concern of voters who ranked Yeltsin below any reform candidate but above Zyuganov or Zhirinovsky is that absent strategic voting on their part, the second round of voting would present them with the Hobson's choice of a communist, Zyuganov, versus a neo-Nazi, Zhirinovsky.

Rendering 1996 more complex still is the fact that the definitions of 'reform' and 'anti-reform' also arguably blurred. Yeltsin, the clear leader of the pro-reform camp in 1991 and 1993, could readily be seen to have eroded his position owing to the general increase in corruption within his administration, policies that benefitted only a handful of 'New Russians', and the unsuccessful yet bloody pursuit of a military victory in the secessionist republic of Chechnya. And although Yavlinski could unambiguously be classified as 'pro-reform', and Zyuganov as 'anti-reform', it remained unclear even as voters entered the voting booths how they would perceive Yeltsin and how their perceptions would interact with the electoral system's strategic imperatives.

Finally, there is the argument that by 1996 at least, the Russian electorate had become wholly polarized between reform and anti-reform positions, reflecting the attitudes of those who had by then benefitted directly or indirectly from privatization versus those who continued to wait for pension checks that would not even pay for a below-subistence grocery list. Yeltsin's support, however defined, had been in continual decline since 1991, whereas Zyuganov and the old guard appeared to have been able to maintain all of their original support while taking full advantage of Zhirinovsky's diminished standing. If anyone occupied 'the middle', it was Lebed, but few gave him much of a chance of entering the second round of balloting by countering Zyuganov's communist party organization or Yeltsin's influence over the regional authorities who would administer the election or the bankers who might fund a campaign.

With these ideas in mind, let us now reconsider June 1996, but rather than look at the national sample taken as a whole, we first divide regions into three categories: 'strong pro-Yeltsin' \((n = 510)\), 'strong anti-Yeltsin' \((n = 510)\), and 'moderate' \((n = 1000)\) so that we can try to get a sense of how, on average, voters of different types responded to the candidates.\(^9\) Table 6, then, begins by giving the eigenvalues and variance 'explained' for the first three factors for each of these sub populations and reveals that although rayons from 'moderate' and 'anti-Yeltsin' regions

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8. Out of fear of alienating the more extreme members of his coalition (and perhaps even as a matter of ideological preference) Zyuganov never embraced a 'Social Welfare Democratic' platform and instead left broad hints of massive renationalization of industries, and other wholesale reversals of Yeltsin's policies. In any event, it was clear that Yeltsin's coterie of pro-Western economic reformers would have no role to play in a Zyuganov administration, except perhaps as residents of one gulag or another.

9. Pro-Yeltsin regions are those that gave Yeltsin more than 60% of the vote in the second round of balloting; whereas anti-Yeltsin regions are those that gave him less than 42%.
give approximately the same results in terms of the relative importance of the first and second factors, with the first factor explaining two or three times the variance of the second, the rayons from strongly pro-Yeltsin regions produce two factors that are nearly equal in terms of variance explained. This, of course, is the first instance in our analysis in which the first factor does not wholly outweigh the second.

The spatial portrayal of these factors and the candidates' positions on them, given in Figures 7a,b, 8a,b, and 9a,b, is no less interesting. Specifically, comparing Figures 8a and 9a notice that the relative positions of the five candidates considered are approximately equivalent and not much different from Figure 6a when we considered the national data set as a whole. The third factor in Figures 8b and 9b primarily differentiates Lebed from the other candidates, and, in particular, distinguishes between the two 'nationalist' candidates -- Lebed and Zhirinovsky. Overall, then, it is apparent from these figures that, as in our analysis of the national sample, Lebed is something more than a refined version of Zhirinovsky. His vote came predominantly from the 'moderate' and 'pro-reform' parts of the population, and, as such, was a natural coalition partner for Yeltsin going into the second round.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>eigenvalue</th>
<th>% variance 'explained'</th>
<th>cumulative %</th>
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</thead>
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<td><strong>Pro-Yeltsin Regions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>factor 1</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>38.3</td>
<td>38.3</td>
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<td>factor 2</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>70.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.83</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>87.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anti-Yeltsin Regions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>factor 1</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>60.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>factor 2</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>83.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>factor 3</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>92.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Moderate Regions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>factor 1</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>49.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>factor 2</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>73.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>factor 3</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>89.5</td>
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Table 6: 1996 Presidential Election, first round
However, Figures 7a and 7b, which concern the pro-Yeltsin regions, stand in sharp contrast to these results. First, factor 1 seemingly inexplicably has Yeltsin and Zyuganov occupying approximately the same position, while the other three candidates, including Zhirinovsky, occupy the polar opposite point. Second, although factor 2 divides Yeltsin and Zyuganov so that it is tempting to think of it as corresponding to an anti- versus pro-reform dimension, unlike factor 1 in Figures 8a and 9a, it leaves the remaining three candidates at the same position near the center. Figure 7a, then, is wholly unlike any earlier counterpart, including Figures 8a and 9a for the anti-Yeltsin and Moderate sub populations. Moreover, even the third factor for the pro-Yeltsin regions is unlike that factor in the remaining population. In Figure 7b, factor 3 essentially differentiates Yavlinski from Zhirinovsky, whereas in Figures 8b and 9b, it more or less differentiates Lebed from the others.

There are any number of explanations for such results, ranging from a violation of the assumptions necessary to allow factor analysis to accurately recover spatial maps to speculations about strategic voting under Russia's runoff rules for presidential elections. However, before we speculate, it is useful to reconsider the December 1995 parliamentary contest, which preceded the first round of presidential balloting by only six months. Dividing our sample as before on the basis of the final round of balloting into Pro-Yeltsin, Anti-Yeltsin and Moderate regions, Table 7 reproduces Table 6, while Figures 10a,b, 11a,b, and 12a,b parallel those we show for the presidential election.

Notice first with respect to Table 7 that the data from all three sub-populations look essentially equivalent -- and in particular, unlike Table 6, there is no sub-population for which the first two factors are of approximately equal importance. The plots here of candidate positions also seem more in keeping with initial expectations. Nevertheless, there is an important exception: although factor 1 appears to correspond to an anti- versus pro-reform dimension and factor 2 appears primarily to separate Zhirinovsky's LDPR from other party lists, the list headed by prime minister Chernomyrdin, Our Home Is Russia (OHR), is, like Yeltsin himself in 1996, located far to the right in pro-Yeltsin regions but, in keeping with our intuition about things, is given a more centrist and pro-reform position in all other regions. Thus, if we treat Yeltsin and Chernomyrdin as equivalent, the parallelism between Figures 7a and 10a lead us to reject any speculation about strategic voting and the like -- speculations that relate to voting rules, since the rules in 1995 (party-list PR) and 1996 (majority rule with a runoff) are wholly distinct.
<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
<th>eigenvalue</th>
<th>% variance explained</th>
<th>cumulative %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pro-Yeltsin Regions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>factor 1</td>
<td>2.70</td>
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<td>1.18</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>75.9</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Anti-Yeltsin Regions</strong></td>
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<td>2.76</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>39.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>factor 2</td>
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<td>61.3</td>
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<td>factor 3</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>75.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Moderate Regions</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>factor 1</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>35.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>factor 2</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>53.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>factor 3</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>68.2</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 7: 1995 Parliamentary Contest

Insofar as other potential explanations are concerned, perhaps the one most consistent with the usual journalistic interpretations of events concerns the attitudes toward Yeltsin and his administration among pro-reform voters in combination with the distribution of preferences in pro-reform regions. First, in earlier elections, pro-reform voters, unlike their procommunist counterparts, demonstrated a clear willingness to divide their vote among a variety of party lists (Yabloko, Russia's Choice, Our Home Is Russia, and a double handful of smaller parties led by individual personalities) or, when dissatisfied, to simply stay home. Indeed, reform candidates themselves in 1993 and 1995, viewed sometimes as a collection of prima donnas with presidential aspirations, seemed to spend more time focusing on the policy and personality differences among themselves than the things that set them apart from their communist or anti-reform opposition. Thus, Yavlinski and Gaidar, both pro-Western economists, found it impossible to coalesce in 1995, while it did not seem at times in 1996 that Yavlinski cared whether his candidacy might help elect Zyuganov. Add in economic and social circumstances along with the war in Chechnya, and we can reasonably suppose that in December 1995 and June 1996 the more liberal and pro-reform
a voter might be, the greater would be the dissatisfaction with Yeltsin and his administration, and the more likely would that person be to cast a ballot in 1995 for any one of a handful of splinter democratic parties or, in June 1996, for someone like Yavlinski or the enigmatic General Lebed. This behavior, of course, would move Yeltsin (and, extending that argument backwards, to December 1995, Chernomyrdin’s Our Home Is Russia), to the right, in the direction of Zyuganov. That is, a dissatisfied pro-reform electorate -- one that would never vote communist but that also would not support Yeltsin unless the choice were between him and a communist -- would generate data in which Zyuganov and Yeltsin appear on the same side of the first factor.

In effect, then, the supposition here is that among pro-reform regions, with voters sensitive to the different nuances between pro-reform candidates and parties, the electorate’s mean preference consistently falls between Yeltsin in 1996, or Our Home Is Russia in 1995, and all other pro-reform parties and candidates, in which case a significant share of any increase in Yeltsin’s or Chernomyrdin’s vote there comes from the reformist camp and not exclusively from Zyuganov or any of his communist, anti-reform counterparts. In this event (i.e., absent adequate variance in mean preferences) factor analysis sets Yeltsin and Our Home Is Russia apart from the remaining pro-reform alternatives and near the anti-reform bloc. On the other hand, because Yeltsin and Zyuganov’s vote still correlate negatively, a second nearly equally important dimension is required to distinguish these two candidates just as the second dimension in 1995 distinguishes Our Home Is Russia from the other party lists. In the second round of the presidential election, however, with the population mean to the right of Yeltsin and Yeltsin to the right of Zyuganov, these regions vote most heavily for Yeltsin.

For anti-reform or communist voters, of course, Yeltsin, Chernomyrdin, and the rest of the administration are little different from any other advocate of reform, democracy, and a market economy. But insofar as explaining the relative consistency in Zyuganov’s estimated spatial position in contrast to the inconsistency in Yeltsin’s or Chernomyrdin’s, we note that Zyuganov appears to have been much more successful at holding the communist and anti-reform voting blocks together, so that voters in anti-reform regions saw no difference among anti-reform alternatives. Especially in 1996, Zyuganov stood virtually alone on the right. His only semi-serious competition there was Anpilov, whose vote appears largely to have been limited to winning some disaffected voters who had abstained in previous elections (Myagkov, Ordeshook, Sobyanin 1997). And although in 1995 the Communist Party under Zyuganov confronted nearly as many splinter anti-reform challengers as did Our Home Is Russia, Zyuganov largely succeeded is consolidating the anti-reform vote, as witnessed by the fact that much of the his party’s increased support came from voters who had cast ballots in 1993 for the fellow-traveling Agrarian Party. Put differently,
the speculation here is that the median preference in 1995 and 1996 in anti-reform regions varied around Zyuganov and not merely to his right or left, and thus allowed factor analysis to recover a relatively undistorted estimate of his position. Or to put matters differently still, Zyuganov in 1995 succeeded in positioning himself at the overall median of voters likely to support him; in contrast, Yeltsin and Chernomyrdin found themselves closer to the overall population median (hence Yeltsin’s eventual victory), but consistently to the right of preferences among voters most supportive of reform.

V. Conclusions

Naturally, any conclusions we offer here about spatial positions need to be tempered by the methodological limitations of our analysis -- most notably, the fact that we rely here on data with relatively low information content. Nevertheless, the broad sweep of our conclusions is consistent with the intuition that throughout the 1991-1996 period Russia remained divided between pro- and anti-reform positions and that no candidate succeeded in establishing a viable middle or centrist position. Our Home Is Russia appears to come closest to establishing that position in 1995 as its identity, but even then it is best identified as pro-reform except perhaps among those voters who made sharp distinctions among such parties. This finding may, of course, be an artifact of our methodology. But we suspect that it is also a consequence of a sharply polarized electorate and the fact that no candidate or party has thus far attempted or succeeded at being the happy face of democratic capitalism -- the 'Social Democratic' alternative to communist and reformist camps. It was assumed during the early stages of the 1996 presidential campaign that such a platform was available to Zyuganov. But apparently out of fear of alienating other more radical members of his coalition (or perhaps because he IS a communist of the old school, pure and simple), Zyuganov ran the lackluster campaign of a person more familiar with old communist election procedures and slogans. That center, then, appears to remain unoccupied.

It is unlikely, moreover, that any of the current crop of reform personalities can change this spatial map. Throughout the 1991-1996 period, reformers -- most notably Gaidar and Yavlinski -- have anchored one end of the first dimension of competition and it is unlikely that any of their kind can transform the electorate's view of them so that they are perceived in more moderate terms. Of course, the difficulty with filling the center is that if the electorate is bipolar, then under majority rule with a runoff, no person is likely to advance such a platform and advance to the second round of presidential balloting. But here we need to enter another note of caution with respect to drawing conclusions about the future. Political leadership does not always involve acting like a Bill Clinton so as to mold one's policies and campaign pronouncements on the basis
of the latest public opinion polls. Leadership also entails shaping issues and public opinion to one's own purposes -- in this case, reformulating the issue of reform so as to create a viable center. Unfortunately, Russia today appears to have few if any leaders capable of performing this task.

Insofar as the feared issue of nationalism is concerned, it is nowhere to be found until 1996, and even then it (the second factor) does not wholly set Lebed and Zhirinovsky apart from all other candidates or at least from a pro-reform candidate like Yavlinski whose pro-Western orientation manifests itself with frequent visits to Washington D.C. and Cambridge (Mass.). Interestingly, though, notice that although nationalist rhetoric in 1996 may have resonated with voters in the anti-Yeltsin and `Moderate' regions (see the second dimension in Figures 8a and 9a), that issue within pro-Yeltsin regions appears to take a backseat to the structuring of preferences around reform and Yeltsin himself.

Of course, none of our conclusions or spatial maps can be approached with confidence until they are confirmed or otherwise replicated (in subsequent elections) with richer data -- with individual poll results that measure each respondent's cardinal rankings of the candidates or parties. Only then can we ascertain the relationship between the `fundamental' dimensions uncovered by a multidimensional scaling methodology and the more narrowly construed issues discussed in a campaign (see, for example, Enelow and Hinich 1984) Nevertheless, the most general albeit tentative conclusion we reach here is that the Russian electorate is not altogether infertile ground for the development of a coherent party system that would primarily pit a left-leaning and right-leaning party against each other. Although we cannot reject the hypothesis of a polarized electorate, the relative constancy and coherence of the issue in the space of more than five years of tumultuous socioeconomic change seems a firm basis upon which parties can fashion coherent ideological positions. And even if secondary issues in the form of valence dimensions (e.g., OHR's position on the second dimension in 1995) arise from time to time, Lebed's apparent ability to moderate other secondary Euclidean issues (i.e., nationalism) without negating his pro-reform positioning suggests that parties can accommodate this multi-dimensionality. It is indeed unfortunate, then, that Russia's electoral system discourages such a development. National party-list PR in parliamentary contests followed by a majority rule plus runoff presidential election can only sustain the highly fragmented and personalized `party system' we see today. This fermentation may present social scientists with interesting data, but it is unlikely to facilitate political stability or a viable federal state (Ordeshook 1996, Ordeshook and Shvetsova 1997).
Figure 1: 1991 Presidential Election; National Data
Figure 2: 1993 April Referendum
Figure 3: 1993 Duma Election
Figure 4a: December 1995 Duma Election
Figure 4b: December 1995 Duma Election
Figure 5a: December 1995 Duma Election
Figure 5b: December 1995 Duma Election
Figure 6b: June 1996 Presidential Election
Figure 7a: June 1996 Presidential Election, Pro-Yeltsin Regions
Figure 7b: June 1996 Presidential Election, Pro-Yeltsin Regions
Figure 8a: June 1996 Presidential Election, Anti-Yeltsin Regions
Figure 8b: June 1996 Presidential Election, Anti-Yeltsin Regions
Figure 9a: June 1996 Presidential Election, Moderate Regions

Factor 2

Factor 1
Figure 10a: December 1995 Duma Election, Pro-Yeltsin Regions
Figure 10b: December 1995 Duma Election, Pro-Yeltsin Regions
Figure 11a: December 1995 Duma Election, Anti-Yeltsin Regions

Factor 1

Factor 2
Figure 12a: December 1995 Duma Election, Moderate Regions
Figure 12b: December 1995 Duma Election, Moderate Regions
REFERENCES


