Issue Dimensions in Russian Electoral Politics: A Comparative Analysis of Regional Gubernatorial Elections

Evgenia Popova
Doctoral student at the
Faculty of Political Science and Sociology,
European University at St.Petersburg.
3, Gagarinskaia ul., 191187, St.Petersburg, Russia
E-mail: pevgen@eu.spb.ru;

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Some paradoxical development appears in Russia after the installation of the gubernatorial elections. Opinion surveys often show a public discontent with governors' activities. At the same time, however, gubernatorial incumbents are reelected in many regions. Are the campaign and, in particular, program rhetoric significant in these elections? Are the election programs important on the campaign or are only intra-elite relations significant for electoral struggle? Under what circumstances is the election program matters for election results? These questions form the basis of my research.

This paper is designed to offer a description of the models of rhetoric strategies of the gubernatorial candidates in the Russian regional elections by locating their positions in issue spaces. I argue that there is a possibility to use the concepts of spatial theory (Downs, 1957; Enelow and Hinich, 1984; Ordeshook, 1986; Riker, 1990; Hinich and Munger, 1997) for comparative research of the electoral strategies of political actors during elections in transforming societies. The main idea of the paper is to place an analysis of electoral politics in Russia into existing framework of comparative studies. In so doing, I pay attention to the method of analysing programmatic statements in regional elections. The framework is based on the scheme provided by the "Manifesto Research Group", ECPR (Budge, Robertson and Hearl, 1987). The principal assumption is that the definition of election rhetoric in terms of issue space and attempts to locate political actors in this space make it possible to generalise and to compare different cases of sub-national elections, that is, this provides an opportunity of comparative research. Thus, we can compare issue positions of candidates and logics of electoral competition both across different territories (nations, regions) and across time.

There are many works on the topic of gubernatorial elections in Russia (see review: Gel'man and Ryzhenkov, 1998) but almost all of them are either descriptions (McFaul and Petrov, 1998; Turovskii, 1998; Matsuzato and Shatilov, 1997) or single election case studies (Alexeev and Vagin, 1999; Melvin, 1998). Only a few papers are concerned with comparative cross-regional electoral studies (Solnick, 1998; Golosov, 1997). But they did not focused on programmatic all issues of electoral politics. So, differences in strategies of

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1 I use term "governor" as a synonym for more legally correct category "head of regional administration".
2 Rhetoric strategies are the candidate’ attempts to alter voter's electoral decisions by means of the reference to him.
verbal representation of main actors, differential articulated issues on these elections are still underinvestigated. Why do the issues articulated by candidates in one region differ from issues in the other regions? Which factors of regional development influence the choice of the issues and the rhetoric strategies of candidates in the elections? Are issues chosen and addressed by the candidates significant for electoral success? All these questions will be highlighted in this paper.

The first part of the paper will outline the model of comparative party program analysis (Budge, Robertson, and Hearl, 1987; Oates, 1998), and its main propositions. The second part of this paper will present the data analysis of the five gubernatorial elections. Finally, the third part will focus on development of this model and perspectives of its using in comparative studies of the candidates' rhetoric strategies.

**Studying of Gubernatorial Election Programs**

There is an assumption shared by most Russian political scientists and journalists that the Russians "vote for the person and not for idea", especially in regional elections. In other words, it is not important what candidates say to the voters but who and how he speaks. It is, however, possible to assume that a program rhetoric and a targeted strategy of positioning of candidates in elections are more important for voters. Thus issues can result in a victory or defeat of a candidate. Therefore, what candidates say to voters can be important for the outcome of elections. My research problem is summarised in the question: Are issues chosen and articulated by candidates significant for election victory and what factors influence their choices?

The aim of this work is to reveal the impact on candidates' choices of electoral rhetoric strategies of logic of electoral competition. To accomplish this, first, I discover important issues for gubernatorial candidates by analysing their manifestos. Second, I bring to highlight similarities and differences of proclaimed issues and rhetoric electoral strategies in candidates' election programs by means of comparison within each selected region. Third, I make a cross regional comparison of candidates' electoral strategies to find the factors, supposedly, influencing these choices.
The propositions.

I proceed from the notion of the strategic nature of elections. This position consistent with rational choice theory. In other words, I believe that candidates are goal-seeking individuals. Their end aim is winning elections and for this they use all available resources.

One of the important resources is the candidates' rhetoric, which they can alter depending on voters' preferences, elites' interests and the rhetoric of other candidates.

Electoral programs\(^3\) are an important part of the rhetoric strategies due to a number of reasons. Firstly, manifestos reflect debates on significant issues, which possibly exist before the campaign or, may be formed during the one. Secondly, the programs are one of the most important informational sources for voters. On the program basis the ideas about candidates' ideological positions are formed. Thirdly, the manifestos limit the number of possible issues defining their (Riker, 1993: 1). In other words, they diminish the quantity of alternatives for voters thus the possibility of non-transitivity\(^4\) is limited (McKelvey, 1976). Besides, the program analysis is the most available for comparative study methods of gathering information about electoral rhetoric. Furthermore programs ensure similar data for such analysis (see: Mair, 1999; Budge, 1994).

Existing Approaches to Manifesto Research.

Western political science has developed some techniques of analysis of electoral programs. So, one of the most known projects is the Manifesto project, which comprises of comparative cross national researches of the program documents of competing parties. Party programs are assumed indicators of political emphasis and political positions of parties (Volkens and Hearl, 1990, referred by Agasoster, 1999). The approach developed by David Robertson (Robertson, 1976) and by Ian Budge (Budge, Robertson and Hearl, 1987), uses the methodology of historiography to analyse documentary sources for the study of party electoral rhetoric (see: Budge, Robertson and Hearl, 1987). The research group, based on the European Consortium of the Political Research (ECPR), has been collecting data on party programs in Western democracies since 1979, and has been analysing them for more than two decades,

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\(^3\) Terms "electoral programs", "manifestos", "program documents" are used as synonymies in paper.

\(^4\) Transitivity is understood here as consistency of voter' preferences.
They use a content analysis to detect issues which candidates and party leaders put before voters in electoral rhetoric. I used the similar methodology for the goal of my paper.

The theoretical foundation of the Manifesto project is the theory of issue voting (spatial theory) developed by Anthony Downs (Downs, 1957) and his followers (Enelow and Hinich, 1984; Grofman, 1993; Riker, 1990; Hinich and Munger, 1997). General assumptions of the models of issue dimensions are the claims that elections offer two kinds of actors - voters and candidates, which are considered rational and their goal is personal interest achievement. Candidates compete for the votes by means of offering to voters certain alternative sets of a future. The estimations of the candidates' positions by voters are built on the basis of the greatest conformity of personal interests and opportunities of their implementation offered in pictures of the world by candidates. A candidate also sees the direct connection between the set of articulated issues and possible behaviour of electorate. According to Downs (1957), political actors try to occupy an issue position by means of which they could win. In categories of classic spatial theory candidates' electoral strategies are such as: candidates define and articulate their positions following their assumptions about the issue position of the majority of voters.

**Program Analysis in Russian Regional Elections: Some Preliminary Findings**

*Selection of cases*

I have conducted a pilot research of presented candidates' positions in elections in five regions of Russia: Saratov oblast’ (1996), Nizhniy Novgorod oblast’ (1995), Pskov oblast’ (1996), Sverdlovsk (1999) oblast’ and St. Petersburg (1996). The investigated regions are chosen on the basis of my classification and they are typical for each category (see: tabl. 1 here).

Tabl. 1: **Selection of the cases for comparisons**
The basic distinction is competitive or non-competitive elections. The competitive elections are understood in the research as elections with possible re-election of an incumbent. In other words, as the authors specify (Dahl, 1971; Karl and Schmitter, 1991), competitive elections should give a certain range of alternative points from which a voter can choose. This category was formalised in the following way: non-competitive elections were considered any elections where the incumbent has received more than 2/3 votes of voters. In our case it was the election in Saratov region in 1996. In this election incumbent D.Ayatskov received 80.19% of votes. It is an extreme case of consolidated elite in elections, since no competition among elites occurred at all.

The competitive elections are divided into regions with consolidated and fragmented elites. I proceed from the assumption that a result of elections in different regions depends to a greater extent on the consolidation within regional elites. This position is not original. Many elite researchers (Higley, Gunther, Pakulski) and transitologists (Karl, Schmitter) refer to relations within elites as the most significant factor of transitional political process. Each type of regions with competitive elections is presented by two regions, according to the second distinction of classification is victory or defeat of the incumbent. The non-competitive elections do not present a case of a loss by incumbent of his office in this research.

Cases of fragmented elites comprise situations when the major incumbent’s contender is a representative of the local ruling elite, for example, the chairman of a regional legislative assembly or the mayor of the oblast’ centre. In our research the region with a winning incumbent presents the case of election in Sverdlovsk oblast' in 1999.

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5 This approach supposes possibilities to achieve voter’s personal interests depending on the abilities of the candidates to provide conditions for those in the case of a positive vote.
situation of a loss of the operating governor is demonstrated by the case of election in St. Petersburg in 1996.

The case of a consolidated elite is the situation with the basic incumbent's opponent as an outsider for regional ruling elites, that is, a representative of the local opposition or a national politician (for example, A. Lebed' in Krasnoyarsk oblast' or A. Rutskoi in Kursk oblast'). In the research such cases of elections are Nizhniy Novgorod oblast' in 1995 where the incumbent won, and Pskov oblast' in 1996 where the election was finished by the defeat of governor V. Tumanov.

The choice of particular cases of elections is conditioned by a number of the reasons. First, the accessibility of regional press, where program documents were searched. Second, the availability of the programs or other relevant documents, which can be considered as such, because not all elections have ensured representation of election programs. This fact can also be a subject of the analysis but we do not consider this. As Newman specifies (Newman, 1998), the lack of any fact in the case of the supposition about the necessity of its presence is eloquent, and requires special attention. But to solve my problem (the possibilities of a comparison of the program documents), I have chosen those cases, where the real programs of the basic candidates are submitted.

**Content Analysis of Election Programs**

Content analysis of candidates programs will allow us to obtain the data to address empirically a variety of questions. This method will enable me to distinguish significant issues in each campaign and in each region. I will assess what types of electoral competitions are most conductive to candidate issue positions.

Unlike the methodology of Budge and his co-authors, my research is based on qualitative methodology with the elements of quantitative analysis of data. It is relevant for several reasons. First, there is no conventional model of analysis of the issue dimensions in Russia for formalisation of concepts (similarly to a model of Budge and his colleagues). The accomplishment of the research within a framework of qualitative methodology allows me to correct the research strategy for the further research. Second, the difficulty of the use of quantitative method related with the special form of the data for analysis. Not all elections ensured a competitiveness of the programs, in some cases the major candidates did not offer voters any programs. Therefore, in this
paper the electoral program is a document declared as such by the candidates. In other words, I scrutinised the documents, where the candidate articulated his issue positions. In this case I use a series of the documents presenting a set of significant issues in election. They are calculated as the separate documents. Thus, as electoral programs we analysed wide range of the available documents that make difficulties for a quantitative analysis.

The sentences of all investigated programs were coded. The process of coding based in the definition of a share of sentences in a certain theme to volume of all sentences submitted in the program (see: Budge, Robertson and Hearl, 1987; Oates, 1998). All introductory sentences, slogans, biographic information about a candidates, insignificant for this study were considered as non-coded sentences.

The standard programs were submitted in elections in St. Petersburg and Sverdlovsk oblast', in all remaining cases I analysed the documents published on the free advertising space in regional newspapers. In the case of the Saratov oblast’ election only the platform of incumbent governor D.Ayatskov was analysed. In all remaining cases, except Sverdlovsk oblast’, the programs of the two basic candidates were analysed, in Sverdlovsk oblast' I have analysed documents of three candidates (see tabl.2).

**Results of Analysis**

The role of intra-elite relations has appeared rather significant for a choice of rhetoric strategy of the candidates and for outcomes of the elections. In the case of non-competitive elections (in our research it is the election of 1996 in Saratov oblast') the strategy chosen by the incumbent is not important. The case of Saratov oblast' demonstrates, that in such elections the program documents are not presented to voters. But electoral rhetoric fulfil the important function of legitimisation of a monopolistic elite. It is strengthening a undemocratic situation in a region by strengthening the role of ruling group.
Elections in the regions with consolidated elites (Nizhniy Novgorod 1995 and Pskov 1996 oblast') also have shown little significance of the issue dimensions. In these cases incumbent governors are practically not limited in the choice of issue position, although he forced to speak and report addressed to a regional economic context (Nemtsov offered one of three publications on free newspaper space about this (see: tabl. 3). Tumanov represented 30.8% of the program. Even Ayatskov, which had not serious opposition, devoted 21.6% of the program to this). In the cases of a consolidated elites incumbent is capable to choose practically any issue positions. For example, both cases of Nemtsov and Tumanov are illustrative. Nemtsov, who acquired during his office term image of a reformer, used much more leftist rhetoric in the election than his contender Rasteryaev, who got support by local Communists. But it did not means that reform-oriented electorate reoriented and voted for Rasteryaev as the greater reformer according to his program. In Pskov oblast' V.Tumanov used national-patriotic rhetoric, that is the rhetoric of the party of his rival Mikhailov (LDPR), while Mikhailov avoided these issues in his program. Most likely, Tumanov has tried to use an oppositional nationalistic electoral preferences of voters presented in all national elections (see: elections, 1997; Alexseev and Vagin, 1999). As this case shows this case, in a situation of electoral protest-orientations, the alter of incumbent rhetoric in this direction does not have positive results for an incumbent.

The comparison shows that the principal issue in the regional elections with a consolidated elite is positioning of the candidates' positions in accordance with the positions and previous activities of the incumbent. And in the issue rhetoric candidates can even interchange by places in issue space. It became important who speaks but not what this person speaks. This claim is also confirmed through the fact of ideological "tumbling" of candidates. So happened when "communist" Rasteryaev articulated more right positions than "reformer" Nemtsov.

In the case of fragmented elites, the former incumbent is limited in his issues representation by his previous activities. And the articulated issues begin to play a more important role. Similarly to other cases, an incumbent has an advantage in his choice of issue positions (Polsby and Wildavsky, 1971). But the cases of fragmented elites shows that the positioning of an incumbent becomes more significant factor for his victory or defeat. Moreover, its positioning generates a certain degree of opposition consolidation.
On the basis of conducted research I assume one more significant factor, which can influence on program rhetoric. This is the regional party system development. It played role on a possibility of shaping against the incumbent governor. For example, in the case of Sverdlovsk oblast' two basic contenders took positions further to the left and the right relatively to the incumbent governor Rossel. The creation of the opposition coalition thus became impossible on ideological reasons (see: Laver and Shepsle, 1990). A crucial fact, also, is that Rossel took a position in the centre of the left-right continuum, thus agreeing with Downs average median of voting he taken a more favourable stand. It is necessary to point out, that in the case of Sverdlovsk oblast' the issue positions of the incumbent and his major rival A.Chernetskii were defined long before a beginning of the election campaign. Thus Burkov which was the second in the race had ideological positions determined by both major contenders. He had thus taken a free ideological niche on left rhetoric (see: May, 1999). It is necessary to stress, that the possibility for such positioning of all political actors in Sverdlovsk oblast' existed due to relatively well developed party system present in the region. But it is a rare and unusual situation in the political developments of Russian regions (Gel'man and Golosov, 1998). Thus, each candidate represented some of the regional parties and the positions of the major candidates were known long before the polling day.

St. Petersburg in 1996 represented quite an opposite case. The regional party system is poorly developed and the coalition against the incumbent governor has developed in a situation of participation of non-partisan actors. Thus, there was a chance to create a coalition on a principle of "negative consensus", outside of any ideological restrictions, which would be impossible faces with a developed party system (Laver and Shepsle, 1990).

Comparing the issue dimensions present in the elections in the regions with fragmented elites, it is possible to conclude, that both cases demonstrate distinctions in the candidates’ positions on economic and social issues and on the issue of decentralisation. Both cases demonstrated that the candidates articulated the positions on basic issues other than incumbent had more successful electoral results. One more significant dimension in the election in Sverdlovsk oblast' was the organisation of a local government. It was presented in the program rhetoric of both Rossel and
Chernetskii. In the program of Rossel 2.1% of the program is devoted to problems of local governance and in the program of Chernetskii the share is 8%. This kind of opposition can be pronounced as a cleavage because there was a real conflict between local and regional elites and their constituencies. The conflict of local and regional authorities included both actors (major Chernetskii and governor Rossel), who were not able to solve through force or through negotiated pacts (Gelman, 1999; Higley and Gunther, 1992). As a result this conflict was transferred on electoral level.

In all investigated cases, except the case of Pskov oblast’, the logic of issue position occupation by political actors was built relatively of the incumbent position. The incumbent is limited in his choice of articulated issues by his previous activity only (as institutional approach specifies). Our research has shown that the issue positioning of incumbent matters in the cases when 1) elites are fragmented or 2) incumbent had a position that could be different from a mood of majority of electorate (the case of election 1996 in Pskov oblast’). The case of Pskov oblast’ shows that in situation of an electorate protest mood, inclination opposed ideological preferences of the incumbent and the voters, voters can "insist" on their preferences despite to regional and federal elite support of an incumbent. I believe, this challenge the positions upheld by many political analysers, that relations inside elites and support of a federal authorities are most significant for electoral result in Russian regional elections.

The results based on small-N comparison are only partial evidence, and they will have to explored on large-N analysis. On the basis of the preliminary analysis of the results and of the revision of the theoretical material I have offered the implementation of a quantitative research for a solution of the posed problem. Further I going to discover possible factors influencing candidate choice of rhetoric strategies in the Russian regional elections.

Prospects for further research

I am going to testify existing in Western political science theoretical models of issue voting. I assume to analyse three models: 1) Candidates that occupy nearest issue positions to each other: the classical or proximity model (Downs, 1957; Enelow and
Hinich, 1984). 2) Candidates that represent the extreme positions on issues within the “region of acceptability”. That is the conflict of issue positions: the directional model (Rabinowitz and McDonald, 1989; McDonald, Listhaug and Rabinowitz, 1991). 3) Candidates that articulate the different issue dimensions because they aspire to avoid the issues represented by the contenders and which are associated with their names: the salience theory (Budge, Robertson and Hearl, 1987; Budge, 1994; Riker, 1993, 1996).

The major important factor influenced on the candidate choice of program rhetoric was appeared a phenomenon of incumbency. Thus, I offer the exposition of models of uncertainty (Ordeshook, 1989; Hinich and Munger, 1994; Alvarez, 1997). They focused on electoral strategies of candidates and consider strategic character of voting behaviour. The authors of the theory of uncertainty aspire to overcome these lacks by developing the position of Downs's theory (1957) about expensive information. They assert that not only reception but also judgement and awareness of the free or cheap information are expensive. In the view of the above-stated criticism, a different understanding of elections with asymmetric spread information is offered. In other words, assumptions about strategies of politicians and voters' decision making in the situations of uncertainty are proposed.

Three possible electoral strategies of candidates in the theories of uncertainty could be distinguished: 1) candidates strategically represent uncertain and ambiguous issue positions to voters (Downs, 1957; Ordeshook, 1989). Politicians do not know optimum issue position (the position of the median voter) but they wish to capture maximal vote. But in such model the problem of expensive of information reception and interpretation by voters remains unsolved. 2) A number of authors (Hinich and Munger, 1994; Alvarez, 1997; Glasgow and Alvarez, 2000) offer strategies of representation of the information about the person of candidate. This information is proposed as most important data for voters’ decision. As Glasgow and Alvarez (2000) assume, voters do not wish to take over the charges necessary to know the candidates’ issue positions. Therefore, there is a problem to find out simpler criteria voter estimation of candidates. Such criteria are believed to be the personality of a candidate. This estimation can be based on the daily strategies of voter' judgements about the people thus not demanding the big expenses. But according to other authors (Downs, 1957; Fiorina, 1981) the information search about the candidates' personality is also expensive, so the most simple judgements on candidates is
the estimation about incumbent’s work – whether satisfactory or not. Therefore, the third strategy is the 3) strategy of positioning candidates in terms of the “incumbent vs. challenger”. Some authors (Fiorina, 1981; Atkeson and Partin, 1995) consider that the voter choice is based on judgements about incumbent actions. Thus, retrospective voting takes place. Incumbent positions are believed as resources which the incumbent can take advantage for winning. From this point the strategies of political actors in elections are built around the characteristics of the incumbent and the opponents. Candidates aspire to diminish the negative resources and maximise the positive ones of their position.

*Toward a Further empirical research*

I intent to check up the degree of influence the regional context and the logic of electoral competitions on candidates’ choice of rhetoric strategies. I assume a number of factors which may influence electoral rhetoric in the Russian regional elections (see tabl.8): the character of elections (competitive or non-competitive); relations inside regional elites (fragmented or consolidated); type of opposition to the incumbent (partisan vs. non-partisan); the level of the regional party system' development; ideological preferences of the electorate. We should check the degree of influence of these factors on a candidate’s choice of rhetorical strategies.

The dependent variables are based on formalising the listed above models of rhetoric strategies. Thus, at first, I shall test three variables (issue voting, positioning "incumbent - opponent" and presentation of personal characteristics) which will be quantitatively measured as the share of sentences in the text to the whole volume of sentences. Using these variables we can judge what kind of rhetoric strategies are merely used and why.

Further, the research goal to check up the strategies of issue positioning, if any. It is necessary to determine the location of declared issues relative to each other (the level of conflict of positions, or candidate indifference to the issues of the contender). So, we might be able to answer the question what issue strategies are most used and in what conditions. Formalisation of this variable should be taken into account by the proposed of coding model.
Furthermore, I am concerned with the level of internal consistency of candidates’ programs. I argue that this factor may be considered as an indicator of the level of program ambiguity and uncertainty. I propose to test the program consistency in the two ways: the consistency of positions on one issue and the consistency of positions on two and more issues, if more than one dimensions are present. For example, positions on economic and social issues are frequently articulated. Thus, it is needed to test the degree of coincidence of the general directions on these issues. Do candidates have a liberal social position with a liberal economic one (Nie, Verba, Petrocik, 1979) or not? Besides, it is important to check the internal consistency of candidates’ positions on each issue. I assume this variable is significant for the study of party manifestos in transition societies. We also have to test the influence of structural factors when issue non-consistency in the programs is present.

**The limits and opportunities for analysis of elections in Russian regions**

In Russia, especially in the regional elections, candidates merely not represent any party, and the elections are non-partisan. Therefore, that appears to be a problem when using the represented theories to study such elections. The above listed models were created to study party competition and the basic question was the problem of dynamics of party system’ ideological development in different countries (Downs, 1957; Budge, Robertson and Hearl, 1987; Rabinowitz and MacDonald, 1989).

But there have been recently many works studying the role of articulated issues in the USA presidential elections (Alvarez, 1997; Asher, 1976; Popkin, 1991) and even in the elections of governors in the United States (Carsey, 2000; MacDonald and Sigelman, 1999; Tompkins, 1988). Some of these researches tested the spatial models (Carsey, 2000; Merrill and Grofman, 1999; Kramer and Rattinger, 1997; Rabinowitz, Gurian and McDonald, 1984). Although U.S. elections are partisan elections, those authors argue that the increase a role of issue voting in elections, results in a decreased role of party identity for voters’ decisions and a growing role of the candidates’ personalities. Besides, the increase of issue voting leads to a greater independence of candidates from the party

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6 Virtually all candidates represents any of the parties in the USA elections.
positions in issues addressed to voters (Asher, 1976; Popkin, 1991). Anyway, the influence of party system development on gubernatorial elections and candidate partisanship should be included in the empirical research.

Despite to this, the set of problems, which are necessary to solve to solution of the posed questions, remains. So, it is necessary to develop a model of coding, distinct from the models Budge and his colleagues proposed for quantitative research. The previously used model elaborated for the conduct of the qualitative research. Thus I could compare the relatively non-unified data, not represented quantitatively. But for the next stage of my research it is necessary to develop a more detailed coding model. It should be possible, for example, to test the issue voting models and answer the questions posed before about factors, which could influence on the candidates choices of the program rhetoric and the issue positions, in particular. There is also a need to pay more careful attention to the models of uncertainty, developed in Western political science, which were not taken into account by the scholars of the Manifesto project.

I believe I could develop a scheme, which might be useful for systematic comparisons of program rhetoric in transforming societies not only at the regional level but also to analyse developments in national elections. According to Sartori (1970), the definition of an issue space permits us to walk up the "ladder of abstraction" so that we can establish concepts and measurements with their help we can “travel”.

**Appendix**

Table 2: The major candidates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elections</th>
<th>The major candidates</th>
<th>Share of the votes (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saratov oblast’ - 1996</td>
<td>D. Ayatskov - incumbent</td>
<td>80,19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nizhni Novgorod oblast’ - 1995</td>
<td>B. Nemtsov - incumbent</td>
<td>58,37%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V. Rasteraev – businessmen, supported by the local Communists</td>
<td>26,17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8 The second numbers in brackets are the results of the first round of the elections.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Incumbent</th>
<th>Votes (2016)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pskov oblast’ - 1996</td>
<td>V. Tumanov - incumbent</td>
<td>36.89% (30.92%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E. Mikhailov – deputy of State Duma (LDPR)</td>
<td>56.46% (22.71%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sverdlovsk oblast’ - 1999</td>
<td>E. Rossel – incumbent. Lider of party “Transformation of Urals”</td>
<td>63.09% (38.80%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Burkov – deputy of legislative assembly of Sverdlovsk oblast’ (party “May”)</td>
<td>28.26% (18.37%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Chernetskii – major of Ekaterinburg. The leader of party “Our home – our city”.</td>
<td>(15.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Petersburg - 1996r.</td>
<td>A. Sobchak - incumbent</td>
<td>45.8% (29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V. Yakovlev – the first deputy of major of St.Petersburg.</td>
<td>47.5% (21.6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: **Operationalisation of independent variables.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Operationalisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of elections - competitive or non-competitive.</td>
<td>Non-competitive elections are considered to be all elections in which the incumbents have received more than 2/3 votes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relations within regional elites - fragmented or consolidated elites.</td>
<td>Fragmented elites represent cases of elections in which the main contender of incumbent was a representative of a local elite, for example, the chairman of a regional legislature, a member of a regional administration or a mayor of a regional centre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of opposition to the incumbent – partisan vs. non-partisan</td>
<td>Whether someone from candidates stand from any party.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The level of regional party system development.</td>
<td>Share of party deputies in a regional legislature (Golosov, 2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological preferences of the electorate.</td>
<td>Level of party families’ support by regional electorate on national elections. That is, voting for the left and right parties is an indicator of preferences on the left - right political continuum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of previous support for the incumbent</td>
<td>Share of votes given the incumbent governor obtained the previous elections.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**References**


