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HOW TO STUDY MISREPORT IN RUSSIA? THE PROBLEM OF ELECTORAL SURVEY VALIDITY IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE.

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Статья посвящена методологическому анализу технологии прогнозирования электорального поведения в период выборов. Анализируются наиболее типичные ошибки и фальсификации, допускаемые при анализе электоральных предпочтений, при проведении экзитпулов основными российскими социологическими центрами.

The article analyses the methods of forecasting electoral beharior in the elections period. The Russian sociological centers seem to misreport due the electoral preferences while exitpooling

Study of Misreport in the U.S.

The problem of misreport of the actual votes in the pre-electoral and post-electoral polls is well-known. Even asking a simple question about the current registration status researchers systematically receive a significant overreports of the numbers of registered voters; participation in the elections is also usually overreported. *"And the magnitude of the reporting errors has been substantial, in the range of 10 to 15 percent greater self-reported participation rates than validated ones"*, write Katosh and Traugott in their article on validation studies (Katosh, Traugott 1981, p. 519). There are also some systematic biases in measurement of the ballots cast for candidates. Although many researchers since 1940s had noticed the phenomenon (see Katosh, Traugott 1981 for overview), the first study thoroughly evaluating the validity of the responses in electoral surveys was held in the mid-1960s by Clausen (Clausen 1968, usually referred to as Clausen's report). The researcher attempted to explain the difference between actual participation in the 1964 elections and data from two surveys. He compared survey data collected by the Survey Research Center and by Census Bureau with official voting records. His primary hypothesis was that the overreport of the turnover in the survey data is due to a sampling error; but after adjusting the

sample according to his findings, a significant gap between the official estimate of turnover and the survey data remained unexplained.

Traugott and Katosh (1981) replicated Clausen's Study, using the data for 1976 presidential election. First of the surveys they used (1976 National Election Study by the Center of Political Studies) included both pre-election and post-election polls; second one (Census Bureau's Voting Supplement to the November 1976 Current Population Survey) used only post-election polls. The surveys estimated the turnout rate of 72 and 59 percent consequentially, while actual turnout was 54%. Two explanations for the overestimate of the turnout suggested by authors are the following. First, they suggest that the sampling problems noticed by Clausen may still remain unsolved. Second, they assume that in the case of the National Election Study the very fact of a pre-election interview could stimulate some respondents to vote; this can be an explanation for the gap between NES and Census estimates, but it does not explain what had skewed the Census Bureau's poll, which did not use pre-elections interviews, to the same direction. (Traugott, Katosh 1981, p. 361) Analyzing the differences between certain groups of the population, the authors came to the conclusion that at least some misreport is due not to a sampling error, or to the effect of the pre-election interviewing, but to the response error, namely, *the respondents misreport their participation, as well as their registration status.* They also report that for the Center of Political Studies they were able to check the voting records for actual respondents who participated in the study. The results show that 288 out of 1867 participants of the study who answered the question self-reported being registered for vote, and actually did not register; 287 out of 1732 said that they had voted, while they did not; 217 of those even were not registered. The number of respondents who lied "in an opposite direction", namely, that they did not register/vote, when actually they did, was significantly smaller: 51 and 33 (Traugott, Katosh 1981, p.365). This check on the individual level shows that, although the pre-election interview effect is definitely present (the validated participation rate for those interviewed before election was 7% higher than average national estimate), there is also a strong response error in the survey, and it systematically skews the data towards overreport of participation. There are several patterns of the misreport found: young citizens (age 18-24) are more likely to misreport their participation than older ones, non-whites are more likely to do so than whites, people with low income (below $6000) more than others. This can be probably explained by the fact that people who have less power in the society feel more pressure to picture themselves as responsible citizens in the eyes of the interviewers. Interestingly, though, the pattern does not stay for women, another typical group with relatively low power; female rates of misreport are consistently lower than male ones. Even more surprisingly,

people with strong party identification, tend to overreport their participation more then others. This might mean that people with strong party identification feel more pressure to present themselves as politically active; but it also raises a question of possible overreport of party identification. May be people present themselves as more interested in politics than they actually are, given their actual behavior.

Although, as it was mentioned before, the research had shown a strong relationship between the misreport and the social status, neither the sense of political efficiency, nor trust in the government seem to affect the probability to misreport the voting behavior. Data also does not support an intuitively plausible assumption that the misreporters are less interested in politics than those who report accurately. In a later article the respondents were asked a question that measures their knowledge about the politics. For those who report their participation accurately, the knowledge was related to the frequency of vote (as one would expect the more people vote the more they also know about politics.) At the same time those who misreported their participation at least once out of three times possessed a relatively high knowledge of politics. Their knowledge was higher than for those who voted two out of three times, but lower than for those who voted all three times (Presser, Traugott 1992, table 3). Therefore, **not attitudes to the political regime, but some social characteristics are related to misreport of the voting behavior.**

The validation studies also consistently found overreport of vote for the winner. There is no way to find out who personally misreported their vote for a candidate, but interestingly, those who lie about participation in the elections claim that they have voted for the winner two times more frequently than others. Comparing survey data from presidential elections from 1952 to 1976 the authors show that the bias was nearly always in favor of the actual winner of the elections. Later the same authors also have shown that on Senate, House and gubernatorial elections the misreports also favor incumbents (Katosh, Traugott 1981, p.522-523). Overall, **people overreport voting for the actual winner in the post-election surveys, as well as they overreport voting for the most likely winner in the pre-election surveys.**

In other article the same authors compare validation studies of 1976 and 1978 election polls in order to account for the variation of misreporting among different electoral contexts (Katosh, Traugott 1981). In 1978 they used more advanced validation techniques and their validated estimates of the participation and registration rates were closer to actual registration and turnout numbers, supporting the view that the sampling error was part of the problem with earlier estimates. At the same time the number of people who were proofed to have misreported their status remained around the same;

both in 1976 and in 1978 the gap the self-reported and validated rates of registration and voting were around 10%. Around 14% in both samples were misreporters, with a strong bias towards overreporting the participation (Katosh, Traugott 1981, pp. 522-524). In order to account for the effects of using non-validated data for prediction of voting behavior Katosh and Traugott made series of comparisons of regression models. They had regressed different factors on registration status and on vote. They compared pairs of regressions where the same factors were used as independent variables, while a validated version of the variable and a self-reported one were used as dependents. As independent variables in different models they used measures of socioeconomic status, measures of attitudes to political regimes, and measures of party identification. There are several interesting findings there which are irrelevant for my paper. The relevant one is that out of 16 comparisons reported in the article, **all** R-squares are higher for the regressions that used the self-reported data as dependent variables (tables 4 and 5). The factors reported in the interviews seem to be better predictors of what people report about their participation, than of their registered real-life participation. **In other words, what people have said in the interviews about their status and political attitudes was more consistent with what they have said about their voting behavior, than with what they actually did on the elections.** This might be an indicator that the misreporting stems from willingness to maintain some consistency of the image of the respondent during the interview. The internal forces and socialization processes that are responsible the underlying notions of such "consistency" might be subject for deeper research. Now it is only possible to make an assumption that there are some social mechanisms that are responsible for this phenomenon. *"Social scientists use surveys to build models of how the world operates. But survey respondents have their own models about the way world works, and these models can affect the answers they provide."* (Presser, Traugott 1992, p.86)

The issue of comparison between self-reported and validated measures of voting behavior receives more attention in a recent study (Presser, Traugott 1992). First, they show that most of misreporters do not vote at all. For example, out of those who falsely claimed that they had voted in 1976, 87.9% did not vote also in both 1972 ad 1974, and only 2.5% voted in both of these earlier elections. Also, around half of the misreporters for each election year also misreported about their participation in other elections (for those who reported accurately about their participation the rate of misreport is around 9%). So, **there are the same people who misreport their voting behavior most of the time.**

There are three underlying conditions that shape the discussion of the problem of misreporting in the U.S. First, there is a notion that people as-

cribe positive value to the participation in the elections; this explains why some respondents tend to falsely report participation (both registering for vote and actually voting) even when they actually do not participate. Second, the data shows that on the pre-election surveys misreporters usually falsely report voting for the incumbent (given that the incumbents are most likely winners) and on the post-election surveys they say that they had voted for the winner. This assumes that people value being with the majority; the misreporters try to present themselves as voting for the (potential) winner, switching their preferences over the time. In other words, some people hesitate to admit not participating in the elections, as well as to admit voting for an unpopular politician or party. Third, at the same time many studies had shown that the party identifications in the U.S. are pretty stable. Although there is an unsolved discussion over the extent and the sources of the stability of party affiliation, all researchers agree that the party identification is robust to change (see e.g. Eldersveld and Walton 2000; Baker 1983; Green, Palmquist and Schicker 2002). The importance of this third factor for the discussion of the misreporting problem is to be discussed below.

Misreport and other Survey Problems: Russian case

In Russia no validation studies were conducted so far. At the same time pollsters in Russia face the problem of misreporting, although in a different way than their American counterparts. Alexander Oslon, the head of the Foundation for Popular Opinion (*Fond Obshestvennoe Mnenije*, or FOM), which is the Russian leading survey company, reports the problems his company faces in the pre- and post- electoral surveys (Oslon 2003). The misreport of the participation in the elections is relatively high on the pre-election surveys. The pre-election survey conducted one week before 2003 parliamentary election returned the following figures: 55% said that they will definitely vote and 24% said that they will most likely vote, which gives 79% turnover; while the actual turnover was only 62%, as recorded by the Central Electoral Committee (*Tsentralnaya Izbiratelnaya Komissija*). Oslon also reports some estimated based on the experience FOM had accumulated surveying for every federal of district[1] elections in the country between 1991 and 2003. The estimates are made from comparing pre-electoral self-reports to turnover. The usual probability for those who say they will vote to actually show up at the polls is estimated around 90%; the same probability for those who say they would most likely vote is only 40%. Note, that these estimates are not a result of validation of individual self-reports; they are just coefficients used by the FOM to estimate turnover

[1] Russia is divided into 88 districts that elect governors and local legislatures. The election cycles are normally 4 years.

from self-reports. Of course we do not know if people actually lie on the surveys, or just change their minds about going to the polls during the last week of campaign, when the surveying is prohibited by Russian electoral law.

The post-election surveys held right after the elections, unlike in the U.S., return no significant misreport on participation in the elections (which in Russian case means voting, because the registration here is automatic; it requires no action on the side of the voter and, therefore, never studied in the surveys). This probably means that, unlike Americans, Russians do not hesitate to admit political passivity. It worth noting here, though, that on average Russians are politically active; for example, the turnouts on presidential and parliamentary elections in 1991-2004 were between 60% and 75%. So, what is different is not the predisposition for political participation, but the attitude to it. Given the fact that the misreport on other issues is even higher in Russia than it is in U.S. it is possible to assume that in Russia the social pressures for political participation is not that big. Nobody, even those who feel fine about misinforming the interviewer on other issues, feels pressure to fake political activity.

Interestingly, though, in the post-electoral studies the "voting for the winner" misreporting is not only significant, but also dynamic. In U.S. studies I found only modest amount of accounts for the dynamic of misreporting. Comparing consecutive post-election studies on three different elections of the same nature (parliamentary elections) Presser and Traugott found no difference in how people report their participation (Presser and Traugott 1992). The percent of misreporting the participation was around 9% for the elections held in 1972, 1974 and 1979. At another hand, Traugott and Katosh demonstrated that the variation of the misreport rates among presidential elections is significant, when it comes to the question "whom you have voted for" (Traugott and Katosh 1979, table 4). But nobody reports about asking the same question on participation in the same election over the time. Oslon reports that FOM kept asking the question "whom did you vote for on last elections?" in its weekly survey for ratings of political parties and politicians. The dynamics is impressing.

Right after the election we can already see 8.3% of respondents reporting falsely their vote for the winner, but not at the expense of the vote for the second candidate; there are probably just 8.3% people claiming to come and vote for the recent winner who actually voted for someone else[2]. It is

[2] The Presidential elections in Russia are held in 2 rounds, with many candidates competing in the 1st round and 2 leaders in the 2nd one, unless someone gets more than 50% of votes in the 1st round. In 2000 Putin accumulated more than 50% of the votes in the 1rst round, so there was no 2nd round. The figures (presented as a % of eligible voters, not of those who actually voted) refer to the choice out of multiple candidates.

important that, given practically absent post-hoc misreport on the participation (and the question about the participation was on the surveys every time), most of these misreporters are most likely participated in the elections, but voted for different candidates. Zuganov's reported rate of support remains practically the same as his actual rate (it is even higher, but the difference is inside the margin of error). Of course, the hypothesis of the sampling error can be suggested. But it cannot explain the dramatic growth of the "error" over the time, given the standardized sampling strategy used by FOM. As early as in one year, the number of those who claim to vote for one of two leading candidates, 69%[3], approaches the actual turnover of 68.8%; 8-9% more claim to vote for Zuganov; the figures for other candidates are not available. This also means that, although in immediate post-election study there was no misreport on participation, after a year at least 8-9% of the respondents falsely report participation. 8-9% is only the lower bound of estimate that stems from the table 5; but actual overreport of the participation should be larger, because it is logical to assume that some people still claim that they have voted for other candidates.

Table 1. reporting March 2000 presidential vote

Candidate Time	Putin (winner)	Zuganov (2^{nd})
Election results, March 2000; percentage of the eligible voters that voted for...	36.4%	20.1%
March 2000 post-election survey, percentage of the respondents who claimed to vote for...	44.7%	20.9%
April 2003 survey	61%	8-9%
December 2003 survey	57%	8-9%

By December 2003 the misreport on voting for the leader declines, but underreport of vote for Zuganov remains the same. In April 2003 the rate of overreport of vote for Putin was 67%; every 2 out of 5 people who claimed to vote for him have made a false claim. Out of those voted for Zuganov more that a half would not admit it a year after. Also, note that as actual validation studies were not possible, these figures underestimate the actual number of misreports, because they do not take into account a possibility that some people misreported in different "direction" (validation studies in

[3] In 2000 Putin won in the first round of two-round elections, so the turnover exceeds significantly the number of votes for two leaders of the race.

U.S. consistently show that the rate of this "counter" misreport is usually low, but not zero).

One of the possible explanations for such a massive misreporting on electoral behavior can be the pressures from growing authoritarianism of the Russian political regime. One can argue that people who did not hesitate to cast a secret vote for one of oppositional candidates, or just to ignore the elections, could be frightened to admit this act when Putin, suspect in dictatorial ambitions, actually came to power. Also, the number of people willing to express loyalty to the regime could grow with time, as the regime concentrates more power. But in this case we might have seen some of the similar dynamic on exit-polls, at least compared to immediate post-electoral surveys, when the change of mind over time is not an issue. This never was true. Both in 2000 and 2004 presidential elections, as well as on 2003 parliamentary elections the exit-polls presented accurate estimates for votes. For example, in 2003 the differences between exit-polls estimates and electoral results for all 23 parties running for the seats did not exceed 1%. For the ruling party "Unity" ("*ER*") the exit-polls returned 0.2% lower rate than the electoral records. Therefore, a plausible hypothesis would be that not only willingness to fake loyalty, but also some other mechanisms drive the misreporting. The willingness "to be on the right side", to be with a winner is a plausible explanation, applicable to Russians as well as to Americans. What is still unclear is why the misreport rates are so much higher in Russia than they are in the U.S.

Fortunately, in Russian case we can look at the process of changing of voter's preferences after the election closely. What provides us with a tool for this closer look is some strange technique used by Russian pollsters, which in all other cases constitutes serious problems with their data. Below I try to explain the problem to the best of my knowledge. Most of the information is obtained in private conversations with employees of two leading Russian survey centers, FOM (the one which issues the data used in this article) and Levada-Center. Given the level of misreport of the electoral preferences, both companies face the problem of making their predictions accurate. Neither of them was willing to disclose the actual rate of the misreport of the pre-electoral surveys (because these constitute their source of income, while the post-election studies are more of academic interest). Nevertheless, employees of both companies said that the pre-electoral misreport rates for specific parties or politicians correlate somehow with the levels of the misreport for the same party on previous elections. This relationship was proven by comparisons between pre-electoral surveys, actual rates and post-electoral surveys for previous elections. I cannot validate this claim, but if this is correct, it supports significantly the role of "be with the leader" motivation as a source of misreport. Such correlation is consistent with the idea

that, if the survey is made in 2002, the same force makes people to overreport on it the voting for the winner on 2000 and drives them to over-claim intentions to vote for the same winner. In order to make plausible predictions for future elections, both companies use the party-specific misreport rates from previous elections to weight self-reports on the intentions to vote for the parties next time. The rates of support that they get this way proofed over the years to return decent estimates for actual rates of support to parties.

Due to the strange strategy described above, the pollsters publish the rates of support of the parties not as a raw data, but weighted to the previous vote. So, we cannot say how many people actually claimed in a certain week that they would vote for, say, communists. Instead we can see how many people, in the opinion of the survey experts, would vote for communists, were elections today (derived from how many claim this intention and from the estimated misreport rate for this party). But also due to this strategy, they regularly publish the cross-tables that show, which percentage of those who claim to had voted for certain party last time claims the intention to vote for certain parties next time. Table 2 presents an example of such data for one week.

Table 2. Example of FOM's data on electoral preferences.

Question 1: Were elections next Sunday, which party you would vote for?
Question 2: For which party you voted in Dec 2003?
May 27 2004

In 2003 Voted for... Now would vote for (%)...	ER	KP	LD	Ro	DM	Did not vote
ER	**85**	2	2	4	5	15
KP	1	**86**	0	3	1	4
LD	0	1	**84**	1	0	6
Ro	0	0	1	**61**	1	1
DM	0	1	1	3	**67**	3
Would not vote	2	2	2	1	3	**37**
No answer or other party	12	8	10	27	23	34
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

It is plausible to assume that asking these two questions together in the same questioner would enhance the misreporting due to the fact that people want to show more consistency in their party identifications. The results could be biased so that those who had voted for each party say they would vote for it again. If the consistency of the electoral behavior has any value in the eyes of Russian voters as it has in the eyes of American voters, one

would not expect the data to be biased against the consistency. The actual dynamics of the data shows that with time many of the respondents admit change in their party preferences. In Picture 1 I demonstrate the change of the number of loyal voters for 5 main parties (see attachment 1 for the list of parties with the meanings of codes used in the pictures). Below I will call **"loyal"** those voters who claim that they already had voted for certain party and would vote the same one again. If the party identification would be ideally stable (so that all the voters would remain loyal after voting for their party once) all the lines on the graph on the Picture 1 would be parallel to the X-axis on the 100% level.

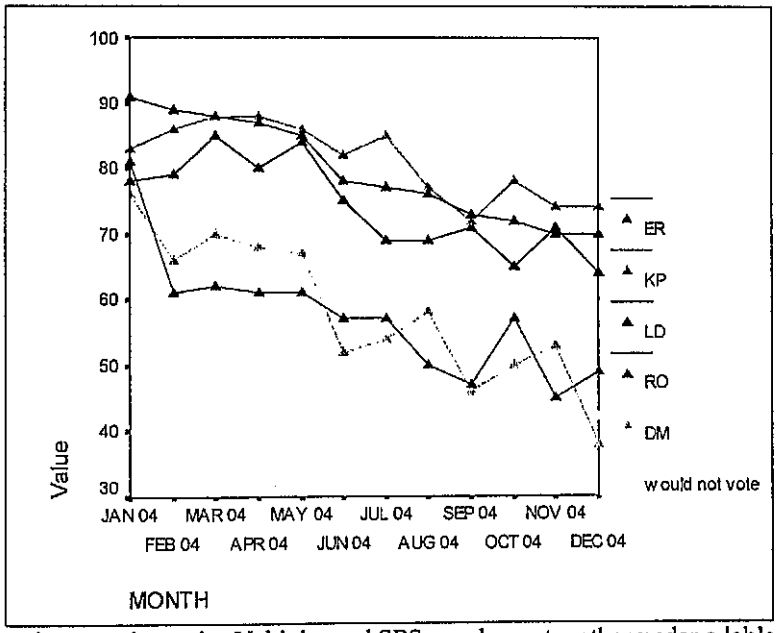
Before I proceed, I have to say several words about the methodology. I understand all disadvantages of using secondary data and, especially, of an attempt to infer about actions and attitudes of individuals using statistics that apply only to social groups. I only know that, say, number of those who in May claim to have voted for party N in before and simultaneously claim the willingness to vote for it now declined by 5% compared to April survey. I do not know how it is connected to actions of certain people. Did 5% simply flee from N's electorate? Did 10% of previous N's voters flee, and 5% of those who had fled earlier return? I cannot say. So I have to be extremely careful making inference from this data. Below I use correlations and even regressions to analyze the data about changing attitudes to parties among social groups. I do it only where I want to account for actions of people as members of these groups; also, all suggestions I make about the meaning of my data on the individual level are just mere suppositions, and require further testing by raw survey data. Also, the assumption that the misreport is directed in the direction I can observe from secondary data always underestimates the level of misreport and instability of party affiliation, which always works against my findings; the possible error introduced in the results by this simplifying assumption never strengthens them.

Below is the data for the juxtaposition of "party voted for" vs. "party would vote for" in dynamics during one year of 2004. The tendency is pretty obvious. Each party starts to loose the voters who had expressed support for it right after the election. The only group that seems to feel better about their choice, when the time is passing, is those who did not vote at all. In reality, in one year since parliamentary elections in December 2003 each party lost from 26 (Communists) to 62 (two democratic parties together[4]) percent of those who claim that they had voted for them in December 2003. Already in January 2004, only a month after elections, a significant number of self-reported voters claim that they would have made a different choice

[4] Unfortunately FOM presents data for two democratic parties, SPS and Yabloko together, so in some cases I have to follow this presentation style

were elections now. The share of such quick switchers vary from 9 (for ER, which won the elections) to 24 (democrats) percent. All parties lose their loyal voters consistently over the year. Note, that these data are not weighted. The current supporters are presented in percentages of those who claimed to vote for the party before. Note also, that all these switchers did not hesitate to admit openly their disappointment in the parties they had voted for.

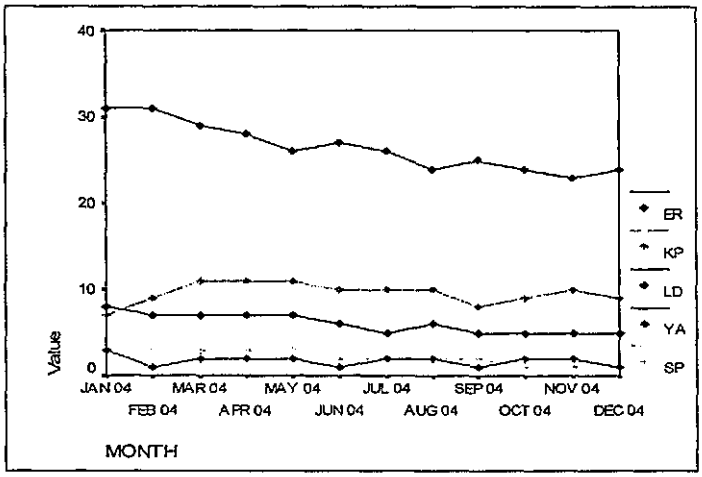
Picture 1 Decline in the number of loyal voters for each party*, Jan-Dec 2004 (Dec 2003 = 100%)



*(two democratic parties Yabloko and SPS are shown together under a lable DM, due to how the data was presented by the pollsters)

This does not necessary mean that all parties are loosing support rates. Some parties managed to attract new supporters to replace those they had lost during the same period of time. Picture 2 presents the rates of party support estimated by FOM (the self-reported raw rates are not published, but, if my information on the FOM's weighting process is valid, the dynamic of the rates reflects the actual dynamics of the raw data, although the numbers themselves do not reflect the raw data). All the parties experience some decline in their rates of support during 2004 (in favor of the options such as "would not vote", "against all" and "I don't know"), although on different level.

Picture 2 Rates of the parties in dynamic (FOM, 2004)



It is interesting, how the estimated overall rates of support for each party change in comparison to the self-reported flight of the loyal voters from each party. For example, during the year Liberal Democrats (LD) lost 37% of their overall support (estimated rate of support declined from 8% to 5% of potential voters), and 36% of its loyal voters. ER, which won the elections, lost in the first year 22% of its estimated overall rate, but the flight of the self-reported loyal voters was 30%. Communists (KP) lost 28% of their rate, but only 26% of the loyal voters. For Democrats, which were declining rapidly during the 2004, the numbers are consecutively 62% and 67%. Overall, for all parties the flight of those who voted for them on the past elections is going on in parallel with overall loss of support. Only the "ruling" party, ER, the leader of elections and representative of the regime, demonstrates some specific tendency: those who claim that they had voted for it in 2003, demonstrate a strong predisposition to withdraw their support from this party; the ER's rate of support among its recent supporters declines quicker than the same rate among the overall population.

Despite the fact that the general dynamic of support rates compared to "loyalty" rates seem similar, for many parties the overall rate of support is not significantly correlated with the level of support for it among those who voted for the same party already.

Table 3 Correlation of Rate of Support for party with Share of its Loyal Voters

	ER	KP	LD	YA	SP
Pearson Correlation	.305	.684*	.830**	.626**	.402
Sig. (2-tailed)	.288	.071	.001	.029	.196
N	14	14	12	12	12

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.10 level (2-tailed).

Out of five parties that I have information about, only two – "Yabloko" (YA) and "Liberal-Democrats" (LD) demonstrate a strong dependence on their loyal electorate. For the Communist Party the correlation is insignificant on .05 level, but significant on .10 level. The leader of the elections, ER, and the right-wing libertarian SPS seem to depend on the repeating support much less.

At the same time, the percentage of people willing to vote for the same party again is positively correlated **among** parties. The processes of decomposition of core electorate go for all parties in a parallel way. For two most popular parties, Communists and "ER", the correlation coefficient is .887. Just to reiterate: the flight of the electorate from different parties is more correlated among parties, that the same flight is reflected in changes in the overall rate of support for each party. There is a process of flight of loyal electorate, common for all the parties. Of course, dealing with time series we cannot exclude a possibility that there are separate causes that drive the electorate of each party to get disappointed in it in such a similar manner; but this explanation does not seem plausible.

It is also very interesting that for ER, the electoral leader, the rate of general support is not correlated with percentage of its own electorate that remains loyal, but **is** significantly positively correlated with the loyalty of the electorate of nearly all other parties. This correlation might be just a coincidence due to the fact that we deal with time series (as if there are some parallel processes going on in different electorates); but this does not explain the fact that this correlation coincides with independence between the rate of support and the loyalty for ER itself. One possible explanation is the specific nature of this party. ER is a party created by government to accumulate the votes of all people loyal to the regime. Unlike other Russian parties it does not claim any strong ideology and does not proclaim a program that can consolidate people of certain views. Instead, it refers to general loyalty to the existing government and tries to keep its ideological claims as blurred as possible in order to keep doors open for everyone and to avoid alienating people of different social groups. It might be that the rate of support for ER, therefore, depends more on some processes in the society that drive people's trust in political system.

Table 4 Share of loyal electorate: those who voted for the party and would vote for it again. Correlation towards parties.

		ER	KP	SP	LD	RO	YA	DM	NU	ER rate	KP rate
Already voted and would vote again for											
ER	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.887	.830	.861	.831	.593	.926	-.850	.305	.496
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000**	.001**	.000**	.001**	.042*	.000**	.000**	,288	,071
KP	Pearson Correlation	.887	1.000	.790	.770	.668	.365	.775	-.705	.056	.684
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000**	.	.002**	.003**	.018*	.243	.003**	.010*	.850	.007**
LD	Pearson Correlation	.861	.770	.877	1.000	.560	.357	.835	-.798	.704	.372
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000**	.003**	.000**	.	.058	.255	.001**	.002**	.011*	.233
RO	Pearson Correlation	.831	.668	.572	.560	1.000	.697	.793	-.715	.821	-.256
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001**	.018*	.052	.058	.	.012*	.002**	.009**	.001**	.422
SP	Pearson Correlation	.830	.790	1.000	.877	.572	.223	.854	-.745	.573	.412
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001**	.002**	.	.000**	.052	.486	.000**	.005**	.051	.183
YA	Pearson Correlation	.593	.365	.223	.357	.697	1.000	.698	-.378	.652	-.302
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.042*	.243	.486	.255	.012*	.	.012*	.225	.022*	.341
DM	Pearson Correlation	.926	.775	.854	.835	.793	.698	1.000	-.750	.769	.142
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000**	.003**	.000**	.001**	.002**	.012*	.	.005**	.003**	.660
NU	Pearson Correlation	-.850	-.705	-.745	-.798	-.715	-.378	-.750	1.000	-.788	-.109
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000**	.010**	.005**	.002**	.009**	.225	.005*	.	.002*	.736
Estimated rate											
ER rate	Pearson Correlation	.305	.056	.573	.704	.821	.652	.769	-.788	1.000	-.728
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.288	.850	.051	.011*	.001*	.022*	.003**	.002**	.	.000**
KP rate	Pearson Correlation	.496	.684	.412	.372	-.256	-.302	.142	-.109	-.728	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.071	.071	.183	.233	.422	.341	.660	.736	.000	.

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

For those with strong ideological attitudes this trust can relate to an incentive to vote consistently for the party of their choice; for others (those with weak ideological attitudes) it might relate to a incentive to express support to the ruling party. In other words, when other parties depend on the trust in the political system among their potential electorate, ER depends more on such trust in overall society. Of course, I use here "trust" not as some substantial category, but just to suggest that there is some force that works differently for the ruling party and for all other parties. One of the indicators that the correlation is not coincidental is that the second largest party, Communists, is in a different situation: consistent with what seems intuitively plausible, its rate of support is related, although only on .10 significance level, to the loyalty of its own voters, but unrelated to the situation of other parties.

On the level of individuals we can see the process of permanent flight of loyal electorate from all parties: every month more people are willing to switch from the party of their previous choice. Can we explain this by systemic changes, namely, by the fact that some groups in the society start feeling better represented by other party and turn to it in some numbers immediately after they cast the vote for the first party? Here I cannot speculate if such turn would be explained by changes in the party policies, or by change in the social groups. I only want to see if the flight from one party to another consistent with some social characteristics.

Below I am using the rates of support for ER among different groups to account for the dynamics of support for this party. The representations of those who are willing to vote for a party among some group seem to show no significant trend for any group. It seems that the movement of voters of certain groups in and out the electorate of the ER is chaotic, or sometimes, that the party attracts and looses the support of all groups simultaneously (Picture 3).

No doubt that some groups are systematically overrepresented in the electorate of certain parties; for example men support ER on a rate 10% below the average rate of support for this party, while women support it nearly 14% more frequently that average (see Table 5). At the same time I could find no visible tendency of any group systematically moving into the electorate of some party.

In order to avoid self-correlation problems typical for the time-series, for further exploration I substituted the rates of support for parties among social groups (e.g. in May 2004 21% of men and 30% of women claimed that they would vote for ER) by the rates of group deviation from average rate of support. For example, given that in May 2004 ER's rate of support among entire population was 26%, the deviation for men in May would be

(21-26)/26= -19.2% , and for women the deviation would be (30-26)/26 = +15.4% .

Picture 3 Rates of support for ER among different groups

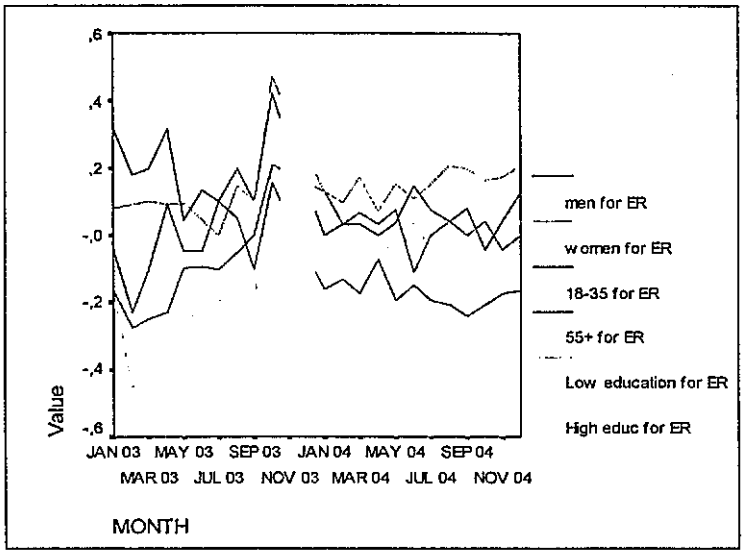


Table 5. Variation for deviation of party support inside groups from general rate of support for party, January 2003 - December 2004

groups	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
	ER				
Men	22	-.24	.16	-.1012	.1142
Women	22	.00	.47	.1396	.0919
Age 18-35	22	-.04	.42	.1184	.1166
Age 55+	22	-.27	.21	-.0034	.1213
Low education	22	-.45	.21	-.0857	.1614
College education	22	-.21	.45	.0024	.1828
	Communist Party				
Men	22	-.21	.35	.0894	.1187
Women	22	-.32	.06	-.0896	.0983
Age 18-35	22	-.80	-.50	-.6740	.0806
Age 55+	22	.42	1.22	.8331	.2127
Low education	22	.11	.82	.5918	.1970
College education	22	-.47	.05	-.2070	.1403

The ranges of variance in the share of supporters for certain party are huge and the support rates change significantly from month to month. It

looks like a significant part of each group changes their party affiliation every month. The standard deviation for most of the groups exceeds 10%, and for some it is close to 20%. Out of 12 variables tested, for 8 the standard deviation is larger then the distance between 0 and the mean. Paradoxically, the stability of general rates of support is much larger than the stability of rates of party support inside the social groups (see **Ошибка! Неверная ссылка закладки.** for comparison). This means that people from different social groups move in and out of each party electorate chaotically, and on relatively similar rates. For example, there is no systematic movement of women in or out of the electorate of ER, but the rate of support for this party among women vary during two years from average (zero deviation) to 47% above average.

At the same time parties depend on support from certain groups. Although there is no systematic pattern of change in the group rates of support for some party, the variation of general rates of support for each party depends on the variation in group rates of support for this party; this crucial electorate is also different for different parties (unlike the U.S. where two parties usually have to struggle with each other for "switchers", being less concerned about their core electorates). This conclusion might seem obvious, but given the evidence provided above that the movement of people between parties is chaotic, it makes sense to test the null hypothesis that the variance of parties' rates of support is independent from this Brownian motion from one party to another.

Table 6 Variation of monthly rates of support for parties among population in general, January 2003 - December 2004

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
ER	23	19.00	31.00	23.9130	3.5537
Communists	23	7.00	23.00	15.0435	6.0112
Valid N (listwise)	23				

I used the monthly deviations in rates of support for two most popular parties, ER and Communists, to test this hypothesis. Column "Mean" in the table 5 represents the average deviation for certain groups in their support for two main parties; the average deviations are also shown in the tables 7 and 8.

Table 7 Monthly Deviations of Rates of support for ER among Social Groups from General rates of Support Regressed on Rates of Support for ER among Overall Population.

	B	Sig	Deviation from average rate of support
Full Model			
Intercept	29.663 (1.773)	**.000**	
Low education	19.055 (6.298)	**.012**	+8.5%
High education	-5.652 (5.444)	.321	0
Men	-20.349 (12,570)	.134	-10%
Women	-48.989 (15.818)	**.010**	+14%
Age 18-35	.230 (9417)	.981	+12%
Age 55+	-.849 (11.100)	.940	0
Adj. R square	.814		
Model Sig	.002		
Reduced model			
Intersept	29.821 (1.683)	**.000**	
Women	*-24.137* (11.036)	**.045**	+14%
Low education	20.318 (3.483)	**.000**	+8.5
Adj R square	.658		
Model Sig	.000		

I used gender, age and education as indicators for social status. I also decided not to enter to the regression the groups of average age (35-54) and average education (school); entering these groups do not change much in the overall picture, they are not significant in any equation. At the same time I only have 24 cases, and I do not want to make the whole thing senseless by regressing 8 independent variables using such a small sample. Even 6 is too much; but my final regressions (after getting rid of insignificant variables) include at most two variables. Race and ethnicity are not represented in FOM reports, although assume that they could be useful here; and the self-reported income is present, but not trustworthy, given that in Russia around 40% of income are illegal.

Table 8. Monthly Deviations of Rates of support for Communists among Social Groups from General rates of Support Regressed on Rates of Support for Communists Among Overall Population.

	B	Sig	Deviation from average rate of support
Full Model			
Intersept	30.270 (14.363)	.052	
Low education	1.171 (12.131)	.924	+59%
High education	-1,262 (8.647)	.030	-20%
Men	10.570 (13.247)	.437	+08%
Women	18.057 (24.121)	.466	-09%
Age 18-35	-6.641 (26.403)	.805	-67%
Age 55+	-24.312 (10.107)	**.030**	+83%
Adj R square	.425		
Model Sig	.021		
Reduced model			
Intersept	31.207 (3.880)	,000	
Age 55+	*-29.728*	,000	+83%
Adj. R square	.462		
Model sig	.000		

The results seem interesting. ER is significantly dependent on the support of two out of three groups that tend to support it more that other groups. From the full model (Table 7) it is easy to see that the variation in ER general support does not significantly depend on its support among younger part of the population, although younger respondents tend to support it 12% more than average. It depends on support among low educated people (sig .012), and there is a significant relationship between the support for ER among women and its overall rate. But this relationship is strange. Although women are the most "core" electorate of ER among groups tested (support is on average 13% more that entire population), the dependence is significant on .05 level and **negative**. Actually the more women want to vote for the ER, the less the overall population wants to do so.

I interpret it in a following way (although all "individual level" interpretations of evidence derived from regression of secondary data is dangerous, see page 11). ER, as it was already said above, is a "catch-all" party that tries to include as much voters as possible and which depends not on attracting certain groups, but on its ability to avoid alienating any group, which does not have a strong inclination to vote for its competitors. At another hand, there is no feminist agenda in the programs of Russian liberal parties, as well as no significant feminist movement. As a result, the activists of ER, aware about the prevalence of female voters in their electorate, try to capture and exploit specifically "female" issues. For example they lobby quotas for women in the administrative structures, which for many voters resonate simultaneously with a "Western" feminist program and with an outdated Soviet system of social quotas in all institutions. The number of people who would potentially suffer if the full-fledge quota system will be restored is very large, because the Soviet system attempted to control the access to wide range of positions and opportunities by as many parameters as social background, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, political affiliation and many more. Taken together with the negative predisposition to feminism in the society as a whole, the political initiative that actually attempt to make the party more inclusive for women alienates more men than it attracts women. On another hand, when the party seizes its attempts to target women as a specific group and returns to its all-inclusive, nothing-specific policies, its overall support grows.

If this interpretation applies only to the ER, the all-inclusive party, we can expect that the second largest party in Russia, the Communists, would have a different pattern of support. Unlike ER, Communists have a clear ideology and very concrete agenda. Their program is not consistent but also targets their core electorate very precisely. It is concentrated on encouraging social spending on behalf of elderly on social security and of governmental employees; their activity for helping the underprivileged groups other then

elderly is much less impressive; they justly do not see young, families with children, urban poor, etc. as their dedicated supporters. The also really can consider themselves as a party that represents certain social group: their rate of support among those over 55 years old (55 is a minimum pensionable age in Russia) is 83% higher than average, and their rate of support among people with low education is 59% above average. We might hypothesize that this party would deeply depend on its usual supporters. The full model in the I used gender, age and education as indicators for social status. I also decided not to enter to the regression the groups of average age (35-54) and average education (school); entering these groups do not change much in the overall picture, they are not significant in any equation. At the same time I only have 24 cases, and I do not want to make the whole thing senseless by regressing 8 independent variables using such a small sample. Even 6 is too much; but my final regressions (after getting rid of insignificant variables) include at most two variables. Race and ethnicity are not represented in FOM reports, although assume that they could be useful here; and the self-reported income is present, but not trustworthy, given that in Russia around 40% of income are illegal.

Table 8 shows that, although unlike ER the social status makes a very serious difference in the group average rates of support for Communists, the variation in their general support rates only depend on variation in their support rates among their core electorate, those above 55 years old. But the most important is that, contrary to the obvious hypothesis, the relationship between variation in support of elderly and variation in the general support rate is **negative** again. In other words, even for such a consistent party as Communists the consistency constitutes a disadvantage; wherever they succeed to attract more people from the social group that supports it in numbers, they are alienating even more others.

Discussion and Implications

The problems of electoral surveys in Russia to a large extent stem from the problems of the political system. It looks like the most important problem that reduces pollsters' ability to predict results of elections is not the misreport, but actual instability of party affiliations. The entire picture looks like the voters at the first hand are not satisfied with the political system as a whole. Each party lost 10 to 25 percent of those who claim to vote for it in just one month after the elections (see Picture 1); this shows that many people who granted their support to any party quickly began to regret about their choice and are willing to make another choice. But the disappointment in one party does not bring more support to another party: general support to all parties declined after the elections. Also, parties for their support depend more on their ability to avoid disappointing general public, than on their

ability to accumulate support of their core electorate. All-inclusive strategy advantages parties, when ability to please the core electorate is negatively correlated with support rates. Combined with other features of the Russian political system discussed above this means that regardless their initial party affiliation the voters do not feel that any party represents them well. When need to vote, they chose to vote for the one that alienates them less than others, but withdraw their support easily and quickly. The chaotic change of partisanship among social groups probably means that the voters shop for a party of their choice nearly randomly, and many of them cannot find any party that represents their interests.

The fact that rates of support for parties are positively correlated with each other shows that the support for all of them between elections depends rather on some general attitudes of the electorate to the political system as a whole, than on their relative success in attracting certain groups. I would assume that these attitudes are somehow connected to trust in general political system. When the trust declines, the electorate flees from all parties, and relative success is guarantied to those who alienate general public less then others. Given this, there is no surprise that the winner of the elections, ER, is the party that demonstrates the "all-inclusive" strategy to the most extreme extent.

This general disappointment in the political system will have some implications for validation studies in Russia. Here are some hypotheses to be tested when validation studies will become possible in this country.

1. Misreport on participation.

a. The evidence shows that, unlike in the U.S., the *immediate* post-election surveys return no significant overreport of participation in the elections. A validation study should check, if it actually means that Russians do no lie about participation in the post-election studies. It is possible, and one of the explanations might be that, feeling unsatisfied with the political system, those who do not vote, also do not feel they should had voted, and so do not hesitate to report non-participation. If this is proven, this creates an opportunity for further research: we can use every immediate post-election survey as a source of information about the misreport about who people voted for, the data non-accessible directly neither in U.S. nor in Russia. Unfortunately, the opposite hypothesis also can appear to be true. Namely, the validation might show that some people do not want to admit non-participation (because they think that voting is their civil duty), while others do not want to admit participation (because they feel fooled by the system and feel shame for participation in what they perceive as a farce). In U.S., where most of the citizens are loyal to the system as a whole, "overreport" of participation overweight "underreport around 10 times. In Russia the numbers can be similar, but not necessary small. Only a thorough validation

study on the individual level can give us evidence for which hypothesis is true.

b. The evidence shows that longitude post-election surveys (asking the question "whom did you vote for after some time passed) generate some overreport due to the willingness of some non-voters to claim the vote for a winner. The scope of this misreport is to be checked by validation studies, as the secondary data allows only a lower-bound estimate.

c. I would expect that in Russia, like in the U.S. the rates of misreport of participation will vary among groups.

2. Misreport on the ballot

a. The evidence shows that many people do not hesitate to admit that they had changed their minds about which party they should vote for. Of course this does not mean that other people would not misreport their vote or current affiliation in order to cover the fact of switching from one party to another (which also means having votes for a "wrong" party). But given the flexibility of the party affiliation and general disappointment in the party system, I would not expect "consistency" issue to be a powerful source of misreport on vote. I would rather expect that people sometimes even exaggerate the instability of their party affiliation. Many voters probably claim on the surveys that they would vote for a different party in order to express their disappointment, but when it comes to an actual ballot they choose the same party, which seemed to be the least evil last time.

b. Given the existing evidence I would expect the "vote for winner" intention to be the most important source of misreport.

Overall, although validation studies might provide the pollsters in Russia with a powerful instrument for improvement of their predictions, I would expect that they will not solve completely the problems of making the predictive power of the electoral surveys more satisfactory. I think that the overall flexibility of party affiliations in Russia and general disappointment in the political system introduce more problem in the prediction of electoral behavior than simple misreport. At the same time, given the level of misreport, I think that validation studies can really improve the measurement.

Attachment 1
Parties and codes used

code	Party	Russian trans-literation	Comments
ER	"Unity"	*Edinaya Rossiya*	The "Ruling" party winner of the elections in 2003
KP	Communists	*KPRF*	2nd largest party, targets elderly and state employees
RO	"Fatherland"	*Rodina*	Nationalist socialist party
LD	"Liberal Democrats"	*LDPR*	"Leader-centered" populist party with nationalist rhetoric
YA	"Apple"	*Yabloko*	Socialist-Democratic party
SP	"Union of Right Forces"	*SPS*	Right-Wing Democrats
DM	democrats		FOM sometimes presents the data for two "democratic" parties, YA and SP, combined. Wherever I was not able to obtain specific data for these parties, I used this code for the combined data

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