Expanding the Pie: Compensating Losers in Authoritarian Regimes

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Abstract

Changes to electoral rules in order to advantage the ruling party often do not uniformly benefit all members of the ruling coalition. A switch from proportional representation to single member district plurality, for example, may disproportionately reward the ruling party with seats, but not every member of the ruling party will be able to keep his seat after such a change. As a consequence, dictators must compensate potential losers within their own coalitions either indirectly through an electoral boost or directly with appointed positions. To support our claim, we show that changes in electoral rules are associated with these forms of compensation in the 2007 Russian Duma election and in legislative elections for all autocracies during the post-World War II period.

Introduction

Most autocracies in the world today allow for multiparty national elections. Their benefits are many and varied: legitimacy, cooptation of potential opposition, signaling of dominance, provision of information, and metrics for evaluating lower level officials (Lust-Okar 2006, Brownlee 2009, Blaydes 2011, Simpser 2013, Gehlbach and Simpser 2015, Rozenas 2016, Rundlett and Svolik 2016). Many of these benefits, however, emerge only to the extent that election results actually reflect parties' unfettered efforts and voters' preferences. Yet allowing for unhindered participation and contestation by those who would challenge the regime can be threatening for incumbents either through the ballot box or post-electoral protests.

To manage this tension, authoritarian incumbents have a number of tools at their disposal. Their most brazen tactics include electoral fraud, biased control over the media, and violence against the opposition (Levitsky and Way 2010, Schedler 2013). Yet incumbents also adopt more subtle forms of manipulation: changes to electoral rules often made through a legal process, but designed to disadvantage competitors. For the 2016 Duma election, for example, the Kremlin left few laws unaltered in its quest to solidify United Russia's advantage. The electoral system was changed from pure proportional representation (PR) to a mixed system and even the date of the election was changed from December to September. The Communist opposition complained that the date change would hurt its chances: many of its voters would still be away for the end of summer holidays. For the Kremlin, low turnout was acceptable since it had just done away with turnout requirements.

In their quest to disadvantage the opposition, however, autocrats run the risk of creating dissension within their own coalitions. Changes to the electoral system are designed to maximize the share of legislative seats for the ruling party – by either fragmenting the opposition or conferring a seat bonus to the largest party (Diaz-Cayeros and Magaloni 2001, Lust-Okar and Jamal 2002, Higashijima and Chang 2016). However, these rule changes have consequences that are not equally distributed among ruling coalition candidates (Katz 2005, McElwain 2008). Almost any major change between electoral systems creates *prospective losers* – incumbent legislators who now face greater uncertainty and lower chances of holding onto their seat primarily because of the change in rules. In other words, absent a change in rules, it is very likely that these legislative incumbents would have retained their seats. When Russia returned to a mixed system for its most recent election, for example, some legislators seeking reelection went from competing under closed list PR to single member district plurality (SMDP). Their seats were no longer distributed by party leaders, but instead determined directly by voters.

We argue that this tension – changes in rules that benefit the whole coalition, but disadvantage certain individuals within it – induces dictators to offer compensation to the prospective losers. Assemblies in autocracies are important for maintaining the loyalty of elites because legislative membership provides access to opportunities for enrichment and policy-making (Lust-Okar 2006, Malesky and Schuler 2010, Truex 2014, Reuter and Robertson 2015). When changing the electoral rules endangers access to these valuable positions for some elites, the dictator runs the risk of creating a cohort of individuals who have the motivation and means to depose him (Landry 2008, Svolik 2012).

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Compensation can occur in one of two ways. One option is to boost the reelection prospects of the prospective losers. An alternative is to appoint them to political offices. We investigate both of these mechanisms by looking at the 2007 career prospects of United Russia members who had run in the previous election. Because there was a change from a mixed to a pure PR system between 2003 and 2007, we compare what happened to the UR members who were forced to switch from running under SMDP to PR with those who were able to continue operating under PR. We find that UR members who won under SMDP in 2003 were more likely to receive appointed positions within the federal and regional executives. For those prospective losers who decided to roll the electoral dice, they are more likely to be included and placed higher up on the 2007 party list. The results suggest that the Kremlin singled out this group for compensation.

For autocrats, however, compensation through appointment is a more complicated story. The trick is to include prospective losers while not displacing current holders of these positions. As a consequence, we expect to find that changes to the electoral system are associated with expansions in the number of appointed positions, such as cabinet ministries. We examine this mechanism through a cross-national analysis of dictatorships during the post-World War II period.

The paper proceeds as follows. The following section reviews the ways in which and the reasons why authoritarian incumbents manipulate electoral rules. This section also lays out the fundamental tension that rule manipulation creates for autocrats – benefits for his coalition as a whole, but costs born unequally by its members – and the solution of compensation. The third and fourth sections provide our empirical analyses: United Russia candidates in the 2003 and 2007 Duma elections and a cross-national sample of dictatorships in 115 countries, respectively. We find preliminary support for our arguments. We conclude the paper with a discussion of the "fairness" of compensating prospective losers in autocracies.

Manipulating the rules

Incumbents have several ways of manipulating electoral rules to disadvantage the opposition. One common tactic is to constrain who actually can compete in elections through either outright bans or onerous registration requirements. In Algeria, for example, the legal stipulation that no party may form on religious, linguistic, racial, or regional bases clearly targets groups such as the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), an opposition party which won the first round of assembly elections in 1991.[1] Even for those candidates and parties who manage to participate in the election, their competitiveness is often constrained by election-related laws. They may face legal restrictions on campaigning, soliciting financial support, and on forming electoral coalitions. District lines also may be gerrymandered to provide safe seats for ruling party candidates and to marginalize the opposition.

Besides manipulating smaller rules, autocrats frequently change the electoral formula or rules that determine how votes are translated into seats within the legislature. The Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) in Mexico, for example, used five different electoral systems for legislative elections between 1985 and 1997. Seat maximization of the ruling party motivates

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[1] The Algerian military government promptly cancelled the rest of the electoral process and dissolved the party.

many of these changes, although the existing institutional context influences exactly how autocrats can achieve this goal. Autocrats with dominant parties or single party states likely already have well-developed organizations and thus prefer electoral systems that reinforce their dominance (Diaz-Cayeros and Magaloni 2001, Lust-Okar and Jamal 2002). Autocrats without an established ruling party may prefer to maintain their position by fragmenting the opposition and staying above the political fray (Lust-Okar and Jamal 2002, Barberá 2013, Higashijima and Chang 2016). For those dictators who anticipate that nothing can be done to preserve their power, they may choose the electoral rules that best provide some insurance to them and their political allies (Rokkan 1970, Boix 1999, 2010, Negretto 2006, 2009, Remmer 2008).

Rule changes and elite management

Tinkering with the electoral rules, however, creates a trade-off for the dictator. A change in the electoral system may increase the aggregate seat share of the ruling party, either by conferring a seat bonus or by fragmenting the opposition. But any change in rules has consequences that are not equally distributed among ruling coalition candidates (Katz 2005, McElwain 2008). Changing the rules by which incumbent legislators won their seats results in greater uncertainty: they are unsure about whether they can win under a new set of rules. For many of them, a new set of rules also means a higher likelihood of losing their seats. To take just one example, a change from closed list PR to SMDP means that seats are no longer distributed by party leaders, but are instead determined by voters. This change will benefit some ruling party incumbents, but not others.

Almost any major change between electoral systems creates *prospective losers* – those who face a lower likelihood of retaining their seats under the new rules. They likely would have won reelection had there been no rule change. The effects of major changes between electoral systems on the reelection prospects of any individual incumbent legislator depends on accompanying changes to the number of districts and the size of the legislature. We briefly review each of these scenarios to show that virtually all changes in electoral system – regardless of the direction of the change – will negatively impact the reelection prospects of at least some of the ruling party's legislators.

Consider an increase in the proportion of seats distributed by SMDP (i.e., PR or mixed to SMDP, PR to mixed).[2] There are three possible scenarios. In most of them, some incumbent legislators face a diminished prospect of retaining their seats – either because there are simply not enough seats for everyone or because they face stiffer competition to retain their seats.

- Scenario 1a: If the number of districts stays the same, then in each district, rather than multiple seats, there is only one seat up for election. In this case, the size of the legislature will shrink. There will be many ruling party candidates who would have been

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[2] For each of these scenarios, we assume that with a change in the electoral system: 1) the distribution of voters' preferences does not change, and 2) the relative importance of party label and of personal appeal in getting people elected does not change. In making these assumptions, we follow the work that offers simulated outcomes of prospective changes to electoral rules (see Remington and Smith 1996, Benoit and Schiemann 2001, Kaminski 2002).

on a list and won seats under PR who will now not even be nominated by the ruling party. Multiple incumbent legislators would be unable to maintain their seats.

- Scenario 1b: If the number of districts increases so that the size of the assembly stays the same, the geographic size of each district decreases. If a large district was not competitive, some smaller districts could become competitive (depending on how the districts are drawn). The issue is whether there are enough safe seats for everyone who was high enough on the ruling party's list to have had a reasonable expectation of obtaining a seat under PR. It is likely that some of these people will lose. So the dictator may have to compensate losers, but the extent to which this is necessary depends on how these people do in the election. (A slight alternative is one in which the number of districts increases but the size of the assembly shrinks. In this case, there will definitely not be enough places for all of the incumbent legislators.)
- Scenario 1c: If the number of districts increases and the size of the legislature increases so drastically so that all those people who would have won under PR will be able to get a seat under SMDP.

In scenarios 1a and 1b, there are likely to be incumbent legislators who lose their seats and will need some outside compensation. Not so in scenario 1c.

Now consider an increase in the proportion of seats distributed by PR (i.e., SMDP or mixed to PR, SMDP to mixed). There are two possible scenarios. In one of them, some incumbent legislators face a lower likelihood of retaining their seats than if the electoral rule had remained unchanged.

- Scenario 2a: If the number of districts stays the same, the district magnitude within each district is much higher. Thus, all the incumbent legislators should be accommodated, but the size of the legislature should dramatically increase. In this case, we should not see outside compensation.
- Scenario 2b: If the number of districts decreases, the size of the legislature should remain relatively constant and the size of any individual district increases. In this case, Gerring et al. (2015) claim that electoral contestation within the district will stay the same or increase. At a minimum, there should be some newly competitive districts so that some incumbent legislators will find it more difficult to retain their seats. So we are more likely to see outside compensation.

In scenario 2b, there are likely to be incumbent legislators who lose their seats and will need some outside compensation. Not so in scenario 2a (but we may be unlikely to see this scenario occur given the costliness of maintaining a legislature of such large size).

If most electoral system changes create prospective losers, why should the autocrat care about them? The answer lies in the role of legislatures in maintaining elite allegiance to the dictator. Elites are individuals who control political and economic resources, and hence, are desirable members of a ruling coalition from the perspective of the autocrat. Assemblies in autocracies are especially useful for maintaining their loyalty because legislative membership provides access to state-controlled resources as well as private opportunities for enrichment (Lust-Okar 2006, Truex 2014). In many contexts, membership in the legislature provides immunity from the law while in others, it enables elites to shield their assets from craven local officials (Hou 2015). Finally,

legislatures also are a forum in which members of the ruling party may weigh in on policy-making (Malesky and Schuler 2010, Noble 2016). For all of these reasons, legislatures play an important role in the cooptation of elites (Reuter and Robertson 2015). When changing the electoral rules endangers access to these valuable positions for some elites, the dictator runs the risk of creating a cohort of individuals who have the motivation and means to depose him (Landry 2008, Svolik 2012).

To be clear, autocrats may choose to run this risk because they are trying to increase the aggregate electoral fortunes of the ruling party. Boosting the aggregate showing of the party is important for several reasons. First and foremost, it deters a strong showing by the opposition. Relatedly, it generates a signal of invincibility that is important for deterring would-be challengers both within and outside of the ruling coalition itself (Simpser 2013). Finally, a legislative majority also enables the executive to pass laws and constitutional amendments that reflect his policy preferences and more importantly, secure his dominance (Reuter and Remington 2009). But this move creates a clear trade-off for the autocrat: reforming the rules to benefit the whole coalition, but also disadvantage particular individual members. Elections, and the necessity of managing them, creates this trade-off.

Compensation

In this context, what can the dictator do? When a change in the electoral system hinders the reelection prospects of some incumbent legislators from the ruling party, the autocrat will need to compensate them. This can be done in one of two ways. The first option is to boost the reelection prospects of the prospective losers. If there is a shift from PR to SMDP, for example, the autocrat could help those ruling party candidates who would have retained their seats under PR, but who may be less certain of doing so under SMDP by putting them in safer districts or funneling more resources to them. Alternatively, if there is a shift from SMDP to PR, prospective losers can be placed higher on the party list. These tactics are ways of giving an electoral boost to those incumbents who likely would have won again had there been no rule change. The ultimate goal is to help them retain their legislative seats.

The electoral mechanism poses risks, however. Even if the autocrat attempts to boost the electoral prospects of his co-partisans, he cannot guarantee their election. This is particularly true in the context of electoral rule change, which entails uncertainty about how voters' preferences, their propensity to turnout, and the strength of challengers will be shaped by the new rules (Andrews and Jackman 2005). The problem is often compounded in autocracies by the dearth of independent media and polling which could alleviate this informational problem. Prospective losers may prefer to receive "a bird in hand" – an appointed position. The executive controls a variety of appointed positions, notably within the cabinet and other executive agencies, such as parastatals (Arriola 2009). Executives also wield powers of appointment that extend to the legislative branch in the form of leadership positions and appointed seats.

Via either route – boosting the electoral prospects of prospective losers or appointing them to other positions – the dictator is compensating them for the fact that their diminished likelihood of retaining their seats is not due to anything they did, but rather due only to the electoral rule

change. The autocrat wants to avoid the creation of a cohort of disgruntled officials who have lost their jobs (Landry 2008, chapter 3).

We examine these two forms of compensation in two separate analyses. In the context of an electoral rule change in Russia between the 2003 and 2007 Duma elections, we investigate the extent to which prospective losers received an electoral boost under the new system and appointed positions. In addition, we use cross-national data on post-World War II dictatorships that hold legislative elections to investigate the association between electoral reforms and increases in the number of appointed positions.

Electoral rule change and United Russia

Since its founding, the Russian Federation has conducted Duma elections under three different electoral systems. The first four lower house elections (1993, 1995, 1999, 2003) occurred under a non-compensatory mixed system: half of the 450 Duma members were elected by party list under proportional representation while the other half were elected through single-member district races.[3] For the PR portion of the seats, parties submitted closed lists, and the Hare method was used to calculate the number of seats won by each party with an electoral threshold of five percent of the valid vote. For the 2007 election, there was a major change to the rules: the mixed system was replaced with an entirely closed list PR system with a legal threshold of seven percent. These rules were used again for the 2011 election, but reverted back to the mixed system for the most recent election in 2016.

Change between the 2003 and 2007 elections

In our analysis, we focus on the change from a mixed system to a pure PR system between the 2003 and 2007 elections. We do so for a number of reasons. First, in order to focus on the elite dynamics within United Russia, we must investigate elections in which it actually competed. The 2003 race is noteworthy because it was the first Duma election for which the regime made a concerted effort to construct a ruling party (Reuter forthcoming). Second, the Kremlin clearly designed the change to improve UR's electoral fortunes. Putin saw the switch to pure PR as a way to increase the party's seat share and generate more dependence between the party and its candidates (Moraski 2007).[4] Finally, the switch affected UR members differently. Those UR members who ran under PR in 2003 were experiencing, in essence, no change in rules. They again appeared on closed party lists organized at the regional level. But for those UR members who ran in constituency races in 2003, they simply no longer had that option four years later. In order to obtain a seat in 2007, their electoral fortunes now would be linked to others on the party list and determined by a much larger set of voters (since PR lists operate at the regional level, much larger than constituency districts). The UR members who ran (and won) under SMDP in 2003 were now prospective losers in the upcoming 2007 race.

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[3] President Yeltsin decreed a mixed system for the first Duma election in 1993. Duma members themselves voted to retain the mixed system for the 1995 and 1999 elections, mostly in the interests of preserving their individual reelection prospects (Remington and Smith 1996).

[4] The strategy did work: with the new pure PR system, United Russia secured 70 percent of the seats, a 92-seat increase from its 2003 total.

The party list (used both in 2003 and 2007) has multiple components: a federal list that has a handful of candidates and regional lists on which the vast majority of the party's candidates are placed.[5] Votes are aggregated nationally and seats are allocated first to candidates on the federal list and then to regional lists in proportion to the size of the party's vote share within each region. Consequently, the popularity and placement of candidates on the regional lists matters: not only in determining who receives seats, but also how many candidates from a regional list receive seats. By incentivizing turnout with popular candidates, a region increases the number of candidates off its list that receive seats.

The switch in electoral system raised the following questions for Putin and his coalition: Which UR members should be included and where should they be placed on the party's electoral list? As for any election, the Kremlin needed to put together a list of candidates that solidified the electoral prospects of the party. But because of the rule change, we argue that compensating prospective losers should have mattered as well. If, in fact, the Kremlin was attempting to provide prospective losers with a boost in order to magnify their electoral prospects in 2007, we expect to observe 2003 SMDP winners to be privileged in two ways by the formation of the 2007 party list. First, among those UR members who competed in the 2003 election, SMDP winners should be more likely than their PR counterparts to be included on the 2007 party list (*inclusion hypothesis*). Second, SMDP winners from 2003 should be more likely to be placed in the top part of the regional party lists (*placement hypothesis*). Because the 2007 list incorporated new UR candidates, the relevant comparison for the placement hypothesis is both 2003 PR winners and those who did not run in 2003.

The alternative to an electoral boost is an appointed position. Whether UR members from the 2003 election would go on to compete electorally in 2007, receive an appointment, or be dropped altogether is undoubtedly the result of a complex set of bilateral bargains between the Kremlin and individual members of the party. These bargains will depend on the outside options available to UR members and their perceived importance to the Kremlin. The timing of the bargains may vary as well: some UR members may prefer to try their luck with the elections and then demand an appointment in case they fail to win a Duma seat. Others may prefer to skip the electoral route, taking an appointment right off the bat. Abstracting away from these details (many of which we cannot observe), we expect that, on average, SMDP winners from the 2003 should be more likely than their PR counterparts to receive an appointed position (*appointment hypothesis*).

Inclusion

To examine the inclusion hypotheses, we investigate all individuals who participated in the 2003 Duma election under the UR label: 128 candidates in constituency races and 237 individuals on the party list for the seats allocated by PR.

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[5] For the 2003 election, parties were allowed to have up to 11 candidates on the federal list while for 2007, this allowance declined to three. For the 2007 election, UR had exactly one person on the federal list: Vladimir Putin.

We are interested in the likelihood that prospective losers were included in United Russia's 2007 electoral list. The dependent variable is a dichotomous indicator, *PR List 2007*, which takes the value of 1 if the individual is included in UR's 2007 party list, 0 otherwise.[6]

With constituency-level electoral results and UR's posted electoral list, we construct a dichotomous variable, *Ran SMDP 2003*, which takes the value of 1 if the UR member ran under SMDP and 0 if he/she ran under PR.[7] Using Reuter's Database of Russian Political Elites, we identify which of these individuals actually obtained seats in the Duma after the election. Our binary variable, *Won 2003*, takes the value of 1 if the UR candidate obtained a seat in the Duma after the election and 0 otherwise. UR members who ran and won under SMDP in 2003 are the prospective losers who need to be compensated, and therefore, included on the 2007 party list. We can compare their prospects of inclusion with three other groups from 2003 – PR winners, PR losers, and SMDP losers – with an interaction of these two indicators.

Those individuals who won constituency elections in 2003, however, may be included on the 2007 list for reasons other than compensation. If they are skilled at campaigning or have a popular following from prior elections, they may be important to include on the party list for electoral reasons (Grzymala-Busse 2002). To account for their potential electoral success, we include dichotomous indicators for whether the individual held elected office at the federal, regional, or local levels ever before (*Elected in Past*) or just before the latest election (*Elected Recently*). In addition, the Kremlin may have felt the imperative of coopting candidates with ties to the business community given their deep pockets and frequency of participation (Gehlbach et al. 2010, Szakonyi 2016). To account for this, we include dichotomous indicators for whether the individual has a background in business (*Business*) or was on the board of directors for a large firm (*Board*) just prior to the election.

The results in Table 1 are from a linear probability model, indicating the likelihood of inclusion on the 2007 party list.[8]

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[6] Summary statistics of all variables are in the Appendix (Table A1).
[7] Constituency-level electoral results are from Carr (n.d.) and United Russia's 2003 PR list are from the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Adygea (n.d).
[8] We report results from the linear probability model for ease of interpretation. Results from a logistic model are substantively similar. See Appendix (Tables A2 and A3).

	Dependent variable: *PR List 2007*		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Won 2003	0.276***		
	(0.062)		
Ran SMDP 2003	-0.083	0.136**	0.137**
	(0.100)	(0.066)	(0.068)
*Won 2003 * Ran SMDP*	0.218*		
	(0.117)		
Elected in Past		-0.041	
		(0.069)	
Elected Recently			-0.050
			(0.092)
Business		-0.010	
		(0.063)	
Board			0.105
			(0.081)
Constant	0.255***	0.558***	0.517***
	(0.048)	(0.051)	(0.043)
Observations	365	247	242
R^2	0.1240	0.0174	0.0255
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01			

Table 1: Inclusion on the 2007 party list.

The results from Column 1 show that having proven to be a winner in 2003 is clearly important for inclusion on the 2007 list. For both PR and SMDP candidates, the likelihood of being included on the 2007 PR list is higher if they have won in their respective 2003 races. Amongst PR candidates, winning a seat increases the likelihood of being included on the 2007 list by 27.6%. For SMDP candidates, winning a seat increases the likelihood of being included on the 2007 list by 49.4% (27.6% + 21.8%). For Putin and UR leaders, this makes sense given their efforts to insure that the party overall would do well in the 2007 race.

Among the 2003 winners, those who competed under SMDP are more likely to be included on the list for the following election. Winning SMDP candidates are substantially more likely to be included on the 2007 PR list than winning 2003 PR candidates: amongst winners, running in an SMDP race (as opposed to on the 2003 PR list) corresponds to an increase in the likelihood of appearing on the 2007 PR list of 13.5% (-8.3% + 21.8%). The results from Column 1 show that SMDP winners from 2003 were clearly being singled out for inclusion on the 2007 party list.

But is this evidence of compensation or merely smart electoral strategy on the part of the Kremlin and UR leaders? Perhaps the 2003 SMDP winners as a group have higher electoral potential then the others. To investigate this possibility, we take a few different approaches. In Columns 2 and 3, we control for different measures of electoral experience. Neither measure nor the ones for business ties is associated with inclusion on the list, and more importantly, having competed in constituency races in 2003 is still an important criteria for inclusion.[9] In addition, contextual factors suggest that SMDP winners are not likely to be more popular than their PR counterparts. First, PR lists are closed: voters cannot choose among candidates, but they do see candidates' names on the lists. As discussed earlier, those who put together the regional lists make an effort to include the names of popular notables in an effort to attract votes. Therefore, it is likely that 2003 PR candidates had popularity and name recognition on par with some of the SMDP candidates. Second, the name recognition of 2003 SMDP candidates may have helped them win their individual constituencies, but did not extend to the region – a much larger geographic space for which they now needed to exhibit popular appeal in 2007. In the meantime, the 2003 PR candidates were essentially competing for votes in the same geographic space: party lists operated at the regional level in both 2003 and 2007. Consequently, it is not obvious that 2003 SMDP candidates would have an electoral advantage over their PR counterparts at the regional level. For these two reasons, we believe that SMDP winners were not being targeted for inclusion just because of their electoral potential, but also for compensation.[10]

Placement

The size of UR's party list expanded significantly from 2003 to 2007: from 237 to 600 positions. The party list is composed of the federal list and regional lists that vary in size from 4 to 27 positions. The inflated list reflected a desire both to accommodate UR members who had run in 2003 and to put up new candidates – critical to the UR's efforts at party building. Therefore, to examine whether 2003 SMDP winners were more likely to be placed high on the regional lists, we look at their placement in comparison to their 2003 PR counterparts as well as new entrants in 2007. Consequently, our sample includes 738 UR members.

We are interested in the likelihood that prospective losers received a boost by being ranked near the top of their respective regional lists. Given the method of seat allocation, highly ranked candidates are more likely to obtain seats in the Duma. In order to construct a valid measure of ranking, however, we need to take into account UR's practice of *paravoz*, or the "locomotive." As discussed earlier, it was common practice for UR leaders to place popular candidates at the top of regional party lists. The placement of these candidates at the top of the list was designed to persuade as many voters as possible to vote for UR. The logic was that even if voters were not

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[9] We currently have data on electoral experience and business ties for only those UR members who won seats in the 2003 election. Hence, the smaller sample and the omission of the interaction term. Given that the results in Column 1 show the clear of importance of having won in 2003, we still think inferences from results in Column 2 and 3 are possible even if we are systematically missing data for the 2003 losers. We plan to collect information for these candidates as well.

[10] Among the SMDP candidates, we investigate whether their popularity (i.e., 2003 vote share) or traits of their districts (i.e., size of voting population) influenced whether they were included on the 2007 party list. District size exerted no influence. UR leaders clearly rewarded winners, but not ones that overwhelmed their competition. They rewarded candidates with relatively low vote shares if they fought close multi-candidate races. See Appendix (Table A4).

familiar with other down-ballot names or even with the party as a whole, they would be willing to vote for UR due to the name recognition of the person at the top of the list. These candidates pulled up the electoral prospects of the party, but they actually had no intention of entering the Duma. They often had more lucrative positions in government or the private sector which they did not want to give up for an assembly seat. Because UR leaders and candidates were aware of the practice, any list ranking of candidates should omit these "locomotives." We identify 70 of them, remove them from the sample, and construct indicators of rank that take into account this omission.[11] The dependent variable is *Top Half* which takes the value of 1 if the candidate was ranked in the top half of his/her respective regional list, 0 otherwise. We also experiment with a dependent variable that indicates whether the candidate was in the top third of the list (*Top Third*).

The primary independent variables of interest are dichotomous indicators of the rules under which an individual ran if they participated in the 2003 election. *Ran SMDP 2003* is coded 1 if the UR member ran in a constituency race in 2003 while *Ran PR 2003* is coded 1 if he/she ran on the party's list. The baseline category, consequently, are those UR members who did not participate in 2003 but were added to the party's list in 2007 (i.e., new candidates).

Table 2 provides the results from a linear probability model. Column 1 provides the baseline results for the likelihood of being included on the top half of the regional lists. Column 2 includes control variables for past electoral experience and ties to business. Columns 3 and 4 repeat the same exercise with *Top Third* as the dependent variable.

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[11] We identified the "locomotives" by finding candidates who were ranked first on the regional lists, but did not go on to take seats in the Duma (Fifth convocation). Given how dominant UR is across the regions, it is highly unlikely that in a region, UR would not have won enough votes to get at least one seat (i.e., the person ranked first on the list). In constructing our indicators of rank – *Top Half* and *Top Third* – we simply move everyone else up one rank in regions where we found a "locomotive."

	Dependent variable: *Top Half*		*Top Third*	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Ran SMDP 2003	0.085*	0.045	0.083**	0.088
	(0.046)	(0.063)	(0.040)	(0.056)
Ran PR 2003	-0.034	-0.048	0.045	0.086
	(0.037)	(0.060)	(0.032)	(0.054)
Elected in Past		-0.063		-0.045
		(0.058)		(0.052)
Business		-0.081		-0.107**
		(0.057)		(0.051)
Constant	0.320***	0.516***	0.176***	0.292***
	(0.023)	(0.068)	(0.020)	(0.061)
Observations	724	337	724	337
R^2	0.0064	0.0146	0.0081	0.0415

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 2: Placement on the 2007 party list.

The baseline models in Columns 1 and 3 provide support for our argument. Those UR members who participated in constituency races are roughly 8 percent more likely to be included on either the top half or top third of regional party lists. In contrast, those members who ran on party lists in 2003 are not any more likely than new candidates (the baseline category) to be ranked so highly. When we control for candidates' electoral and business experience – in Columns 2 and 4 – the coefficient on *Ran SMDP 2003* does not reach conventional levels of significance, but we note that the samples for these models are less than half than those used in the baseline models.[12]

Appointment

At the end of their terms, UR deputies from the Fourth convocation of the Duma (i.e., those who won in 2003) could have pursued various career trajectories leading to one of three outcomes by the end of the 2007 election: they either got reelected as deputies, took appointed positions, or disappeared from the national political scene. The previous analyses show that some potential losers from the rule change decided to take the electoral route and received a boost in the process. But were they also compensated through appointments?

We examine the career outcomes of UR deputies after finishing their term during the Duma's Fourth convocation. We want to know whether the potential losers from the rule change between elections were more likely to receive a political appointment from the Kremlin. The dependent variable is *Appointment*, taking the value of 1 if the individual was appointed to a position within

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[12] The results from a logistic regression are similar. See Appendix (Table A5).

the executive branch of the federal or regional governments or the Federation Council (Russia's entirely appointed upper house), 0 otherwise.[13]

Ran SMDP 2003 is again our proxy for the potential losers from the rule change. We use similar controls from the previous analyses – *Elected in Past* and *Business* – but also include a dichotomous indicator for whether the individual has ever served in an appointed position in the past (*Appointed in Past*). Table 3 provides the results of a linear probability model.

	Dependent variable: *Appointment*	
	(1)	(2)
Ran SMDP 2003	0.164**	0.149**
	(0.062)	(0.064)
Elected in Past		0.063
		(0.068)
Business		-0.028
		(0.063)
Appointed in Past		0.082
		(0.065)
Constant	0.189***	0.157**
	(0.041)	(0.062)
Observations	196	196
R^2	0.0342	0.0477
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01		

Table 3: Appointment after electoral rule change.

Our findings show that the potential losers from the rule change are 16 percent more likely than their PR counterparts from 2003 to land in an appointed position. The magnitude and significance of the result remains even after controlling for a variety of past experience. Interestingly, past experience in appointed office does not increase the likelihood of receiving an appointment again.[14]

Cross-national analysis

Autocrats may attempt to compensate prospective losers through appointments. But in this case, autocrats should expand the pie – create more appointed positions – to compensate prospective

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[13] UR deputies could have landed in an appointed position either after having foregone participation in the 2007 election or after having lost the election.
[14] Results from a logistic regression model are similar. See Appendix (Table A6).

losers without displacing current office holders. In order to examine this different, but related hypothesis regarding appointments and to address the external validity of our story, we now turn to cross-national evidence.

The unit of analysis here is a legislative election under autocracy. Our sample includes 662 elections to the lower house that occurred under the auspices of an authoritarian incumbent in 115 countries.[15] With unbalanced panels, countries range from having 1 to 17 elections. We used the National Elections across Democracy and Autocracy dataset (NELDA; Hyde and Marinov 2012), the Democracy and Dictatorship dataset (Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland 2010), and Barberá (2013) to identify the set of legislative elections as well as the political regime under which they occurred.

There are numerous types of political offices that autocrats can try to provide in an effort to compensate potential losers. The critical factor is that these positions should be appointed by the executive. In our analysis, we look at three possible sources of appointed offices: the lower and upper houses of the assembly as well as the cabinet. Accordingly, we examine the association between electoral system change and three different dependent variables.

Our first dependent variable, *Appointed Lower House Seats,* is a dichotomous indicator that takes the value of 1 if the number of appointed seats in the lower house increased, 0 otherwise. It is constructed from Barberá's (2013) data on assembly size and number of elected seats. This variable will allow us to explore whether autocrats compensate prospective losers by expanding the number of appointed seats in the lower house.

Second, we use the dependent variable, *Creation of Upper House.* This is a dichotomous variable that takes the value of 1 if an upper chamber was created in the year of the legislative election, 0 otherwise. We constructed this variable from a Varieties of Democracy indicator (v2lgbicam), which tracks the number of chambers within the legislature (Coppedge et al. 2016). This variable serves as a proxy for an increase in the number of appointed positions since upper houses in autocracies are frequently appointed (e.g., Russia), rather than directly elected.

Finally, we use *Change in Size of Cabinet*, which is a continuous variable that measures the change in the number of cabinet positions between the current and previous legislative elections. We constructed this variable from a Cross-National Time-Series Data Archive indicator (political10), which provides information on the number of cabinet ministries (Banks and Wilson 2014).

Our independent variable of interest is *Electoral System Change*, a dichotomous indicator that takes the value of 1 if the electoral system of the current legislative election differs from that used in the previous election and 0 if there was no change. We constructed this variable from a Varieties of Democracy indicator (v2elparlel) which distinguishes electoral systems as pure PR, pure SMDP, and mixed (Coppedge et al. 2016). If we instead use other measures of electoral system change from Barberá (2013) or the Database of Political Institutions (Beck et al. 2001; Keefer 2012), the results are similar, but we do not merge the three different measures because of disagreement among them.

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[15] This is the number of autocratic elections for which we have electoral system data.

For the two dichotomous dependent variables, we use a linear probability model (Models 1 and 2) while the continuous measure of change in cabinet size is analyzed using OLS (Model 3). In all of the models, standard errors are clustered by country. Table 3 provides the results.

	Dependent Variable:		
	Appointed Lower House Seats	*Creation of Upper House*	*Change in Size of Cabinet* (Continuous)
Electoral System Change	0.008	0.159**	2.089*
	(0.052)	(0.068)	(1.095)
Constant	0.066***	0.041***	1.161***
	(0.021)	(0.009)	(0.304)
Observations	329	499	132
Clusters (countries)	78	106	25
R^2	0.0001	0.0302	0.0062

Standard errors clustered by country in parentheses. First two columns are linear probability models. *$p<0.1$; **$p<0.05$; ***$p<0.01$

Table 4: Expansion of appointments and electoral rule change.

The results in Table 4 present some evidence of compensation in the form of appointed positions. In the first column, we find no statistically significant association between an electoral system change and an indicator for whether there was an increase in the number of appointed seats in the lower house of the legislature. However, the second column shows that an electoral system change is associated with a 15.9% increase in the likelihood an upper house in the legislature is created (statistically significant at the 95% confidence level). Finally, the third column indicates that a change in the electoral system is associated with an increase in the size of the cabinet by 2.089 (significant at the 90% confidence level). Although the statistical significance of the results is not consistent across our various dependent variables, it is worth noting that the direction of the association is consistent and that due to data limitations, the effective number of observations is relatively small, which may account for the lack of statistical significance. Taken together, these results provide some suggestive evidence that dictators compensate losers created by a change in the electoral system.

Conclusion

Holding elections presents a trade-off for autocrats. Although elections can provide benefits such as legitimacy, information, and the possibility of coopting the opposition, they may also threaten the position of incumbents by risking defeat at the ballot box or through post-electoral unrest. One way autocrats can manage this trade-off is by manipulating the electoral system to gain an advantage over opposition parties. However, this presents a second tension for the autocrat: electoral system changes that benefit the party or ruling coalition as a whole also create prospective losers. These prospective losers are a problem for the dictator because they likely would have won reelection in the absence of the rule change and therefore have both the motivation and the means (as elites who control political and economic resources) to depose the dictator. Autocrats deal with this problem by compensating prospective losers in one of two ways: improving the chance of electoral success for the prospective losers under the new electoral system or appointing them to political offices. We explored both mechanisms within the case of electoral system change in Russia. We also probed the external validity of our argument through a cross-national analysis of lower house elections in autocracies. Results from much of our empirical analysis are broadly consistent with the idea of compensation.

In compensating potential losers, are autocrats attempting to be "fair" to members of the ruling coalition? Our answer, to some degree, is "yes." Elites receive political goodies from autocrats, conditional on their importance, as reflected by their political or economic resources (Reuter forthcoming). We also subscribe to this view, but emphasize that those who are "unfairly" burdened by the rule change may receive a little extra. Whether the autocrat is doing this compensation out of a sense of fairness is a different question – whose answer, we suspect, is "no." In the case of Russia, for example, the electoral change between 2003 and 2007 occurred in the midst of UR's party-building efforts. Given that Putin sought to attract elites to the party, it makes sense that he would do a little extra to compensate those were unduly burdened by the rule change. Now that UR is a much more established ruling party, it remains to be seen whether the most recent electoral rule change prompted compensation. In any case, behavior that appears "fair" need not be motivated by a sense of fairness.[16]

Finally, is this story unique to authoritarian rule? Again, our answer is mixed. The actual structure of the problem is the same under both democratic and autocratic rule: when incumbents change electoral rules, they will need to deal with the fallout from within their own political coalitions. But the frequency of both the problem and the solution of compensation is likely to be greater under authoritarianism. The trade-off emerges for autocrats because they are able to push through a change in the electoral rules in the first place. In democracies, in contrast, when the sitting government proposes electoral system change, it is frequently shot down by its own backbenchers. In Japan, for example, Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) legislators often torpedoed its governments' plans to reform the electoral system (McElwain 2008). Under more democratic conditions in Russia, sitting legislators were able to veto Yeltsin's proposal to change the electoral system (Remington and Smith 1996). One consequence is that we should see major electoral system change happen less frequently in democracies, and this is exactly the case.

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[16] For another nice example of this, see Blaydes' (2011) discussion of elite management and legislative elections in Egypt under Mubarak.

Barberá (2013) shows that for the post-World War II period, substantial alterations in the electoral system occur 15 percent more in autocracies than in democracies. The tension in managing their coalition occurs more frequently in autocracies simply because autocrats have more unilateral ability to enact institutional change.

Democracies also differ from autocracies in their ability to solve the problem of elite management. While an electoral boost may be possible under both regimes, the strategy of appointment is likely more available in autocracies. Democratic incumbents, in turn, control who gets appointed, but have less power to unilaterally alter the size of appointed bodies. Consequently, compensation of allies through appointment may be less feasible, and the association between electoral rule change and the size of appointed bodies should be weaker for democracies. We, in fact, find this to be the case.[17] Autocratic incumbents both create the problem of elite management and find solutions to it because of their unconstrained power.

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[17] For the creation of an upper house in democracies, the coefficient on *Electoral System Change* is smaller in magnitude and at a lower level of significance (than in the sample for autocracies). For change in cabinet size in democracies, the coefficient on *Electoral System Change* is not significantly different from zero.

Appendix

United Russia analysis

	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Appointed in Past	349	0.430	0.496	0	1
Appointment	412	0.221	0.415	0	1
Board	330	0.276	0.448	0	1
Business	392	0.597	0.491	0	1
Elected in Past	377	0.459	0.499	0	1
Elected Recently	351	0.268	0.443	0	1
Number Other SMDP Candidates	128	7.539	2.811	1	19
PR List 2007	794	0.756	0.430	0	1
Ran SMDP 2003	365	0.351	0.478	0	1
Top Half	794	0.383	0.486	0	1
Top Third	794	0.276	0.447	0	1
Vote Share 2003	128	37.917	17.584	2.8	82.5
Won 2003	365	0.663	0.473	0	1

Cross-national analysis

	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Appointed Lower House Seats	393	0.063	0.244	0	1
Creation of Upper House	604	0.048	0.214	0	1
Change in Size of Cabinet	162	1.123	6.235	-25	22
Electoral System Change	540	0.065	0.246	0	1

Table A1: Summary statistics.

	Dependent variable: *PR List 2007*		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Won 2003	1.196***		
	(0.290)		
Ran SMDP 2003	-0.498	0.576**	0.581**
	(0.546)	(0.281)	(0.281)
*Won 2003 * Ran SMDP*	1.065*		
	(0.609)		
Elected in Past		-0.174	
		(0.291)	
Elected Recently			-0.218
			(0.388)
Business		-0.042	
		(0.263)	
Board			0.460
			(0.350)
Constant	-1.070***	0.236	0.065
	(0.237)	(0.213)	(0.179)
Observations	365	247	242
Log Likelihood	-228.584	-164.533	-160.930
Pseudo R^2	0.0939	0.0130	0.0192
Coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01			

Table A2: Logistic regression results for inclusion on 2007 party list.

	Marginal Effect	Standard Error
Effect of winning amongst PR Candidates	0.276	0.061
Effect of winning amongst SMDP Candidates	0.494	0.085
Effect of SMDP amongst losers	-0.083	0.083
Effect of SMDP amongst winners	0.135	0.063
Based on coefficients from Table A2, Column 1.		

Table A3: Marginal effects of winning and running under SMDP on inclusion.

	Dependent variable:
	PR List 2007
Won 2003	0.954***
	(0.216)
Vote Share 2003	0.023**
	(0.008)
*Won 2003 * Vote Share 2003*	-0.022**
	(0.008)
Number Other SMDP Candidates	0.030*
	(0.016)
Constant	-0.512**
	(0.237)
Observations	128
R^2	0.2380
Linear probability model. *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

Table A4: Inclusion of 2003 SMDP candidates on 2007 list.

	Dependent variable: *Top Half*		*Top Third*	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Ran SMDP 2003	0.375*	0.184	0.473**	0.451
	(0.203)	(0.255)	(0.228)	(0.282)
Ran PR 2003	-0.158	-0.195	0.274	0.454*
	(0.171)	(0.246)	(0.192)	(0.275)
Elected in Past		-0.259		-0.248
		(0.240)		(0.269)
Business		-0.332		-0.532**
		(0.234)		(0.257)
Constant	-0.755***	0.067	-1.539***	-0.938***
	(0.106)	(0.278)	(0.129)	(0.308)
Observations	724	337	724	337
Log likelihood	-453.317	-228.119	-365.216	-193.297
R^2	0.0064	0.0107	0.0077	0.0356

Coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A5: Logistic regression results for placement on 2007 party list.

	Dependent variable: *Appointment*	
	(1)	(2)
Ran SMDP 2003	0.849**	0.782**
	(0.332)	(0.342)
Elected in Past		0.333
		(0.354)
Business		-0.154
		(0.340)
Appointed in Past		0.435
		(0.344)
Constant	-1.455***	-1.645**
	(0.242)	(0.354)
Observations	196	196
Log likelihood	-109.026	-107.672
R^2	0.0297	0.0417

Coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. *$p<0.1$; **$p<0.05$; ***$p<0.01$

Table A6: Logistic regression results for appointment after end of Duma's Fourth convocation.

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