

Civic Duty and Voting under Autocracy

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Abstract

This paper explores the duty to vote under electoral autocracy. Using original survey data from Russia, I present evidence that most voters feel an ethical obligation—a civic duty—to vote. I suggest that the duty to vote under autocracy is rooted not in norms of democratic participation, but rather in reverence for the state. Because autocratic regimes often penetrate and politicize the state, I argue that opposition voters are less likely to revere the state and less likely than regime supporters believe that voting is a civic duty. Using a previously validated measure of the duty to vote, I find evidence in Russia consistent with these arguments. The theory and findings suggest that authoritarian incumbents have an inherent mobilizational advantage: their supporters feel a duty to vote, but regime opponents do not. This may help explain why opposition parties under autocracy find it hard to turn out their supporters.

KEYWORDS: Russia, Voting, Elections, Authoritarianism, Autocracy.

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1 Introduction

Why do people turn out to vote in authoritarian regimes? Given the lack of democratic norms or real competition, the act of voting under autocracy is an even greater paradox than it is in democracies. And yet, despite pervasive fraud and foreordained outcomes, many millions show up at the polls on election day. Conventional wisdom holds that much of this is due to clientelism and coercion, but these factors are simply not relevant for most voters living under autocracy.

Using original survey data from Russia, this paper provides evidence that, just as in democracies, civic duty is the primary driver of voting in Russia. Even though Russia is not a democracy, a near majority of Russians believe that they have a duty—a moral obligation—to vote in every election, regardless of how they feel about the candidates and parties.

Given that civic duty plays a central role in the voting calculus of Russians—and appears to play a major role in other autocracies as well—it is important to investigate the nature of these sentiments. Considering the relative lack of democratic socialization under autocracy, I argue that the duty to vote is unlikely to be founded on norms of democratic participation, as it often is in democracies. Rather, building on existing literature, I suggest that the duty to vote under autocracy is more likely linked to reverence for the state. In turn, I argue that supporters of the incumbent regime will feel a stronger duty to vote.

Under autocracy, supporters of the incumbent are more likely than opposition supporters to venerate the state. This can happen for a number of reasons, but the most fundamental is that autocratic regimes tend to penetrate and politicize the state, which makes one's attitude to the state contingent on one's support for the incumbent regime. Corrupted by the regime, the state loses its moral standing in the eyes of regime opponents, who, in turn, are less likely to feel duty-bound to participate in state-sanctioned elections. Regime supporters, by contrast, are less troubled by this fusion of state and regime. In fact, the politicization of the state by their preferred party may lead them to develop even deeper attachments to the state and a stronger duty to vote. Thus, in Russia, I predict that the duty to vote will be felt more strongly by supporters of Vladimir Putin's regime.

In addition to this direct linkage, I also explore several additional mechanisms that flow from

this fundamental argument about state-regime fusion and can help explain the relationship between regime support and the duty to vote. First, when the regime suffuses the state, perceptions of state legitimacy begin to hinge on perceptions of regime legitimacy. Therefore, regime opponents are less likely to view the state as legitimate and less likely to feel duty-bound to participate in elections. Second, I argue that because regime supporters are more likely to view long-run state performance positively, they will be more likely to develop attachments to the state and more likely to feel a duty to vote. Finally, I argue that differences in patriotic sentiments can also help explain why regime supporters are more likely to feel a duty to vote. For opposition supporters, the perceived fusion of state and regime undermines emotional attachments to the state and can break the sacred link between nation and state. Thus, opponents are less likely to regard voting as a patriotic duty.

I examine these claims using a new survey instrument that recently has been validated in the American context (Blais and Aachen 2018). In order to avoid problems of social desirability bias, this instrument asks respondents to choose between two normatively appealing justifications for voting: the duty to vote in every election and freedom of choice. Even though the duty to vote is usually associated with democracies and pro-democratic attitudes, I find little evidence that support for democracy or views of democracy in Russia are correlated with the duty to vote. Instead, one of the most important predictors of the duty to vote is one's attitude toward the Putin regime. Multivariate models show that Putin supporters are 50% more likely to report that they feel a duty to vote in every election. Using mediation analysis, I also find that this effect is mediated by attitudes toward regime legitimacy, state performance, and patriotic sentiment. But even while controlling for these factors, support for the Putin regime is still strongly associated with the duty to vote. In a series of robustness checks, I show that results are robust when accounting for 1) the possibility that the regime targets its supporters with duty-based campaign appeals, 2) excluding supporters of "non-system" opposition parties, and 3) regional heterogeneity.

These findings suggest that authoritarian incumbents have an inherent and sizable advantage when it comes to mobilizing their voters. In the concluding section of the paper, I present survey

data from 14 electoral autocracies showing that regime supporters almost always turn out at higher rates than do opposition supporters. Previous literature has attributed this imbalance to fraud, but I argue that the gap could also be explained by differences in feelings of civic duty. Autocratic regimes appropriate the morality of the state and receive electoral benefits from it. Opposition voters are more likely to feel disaffected from the state, and, as a result, feel less moral obligation to vote. This makes it difficult for opposition leaders to get their supporters to the polls.

2 Voting under Autocracy: The Role of Civic Duty

The act of voting has been described as a paradox. In elections of any size, the probability that an individual will influence the outcome is close to nil. And since the costs of voting are real, there appears to be no rational reason to vote (Riker and Ordeshook 1968). In autocracies, where electoral outcomes are all but foreordained, this paradox appears even more pronounced.¹

And yet, levels of turnout under autocracy can be quite high. Between 1975 and 2016, the average level of turnout in multiparty legislative elections under autocracy was 66% (Reuter 2017). In democracies, the average rate of turnout was only somewhat higher at 71%. To be sure, most authoritarian regimes employ some fraud, so official turnout figures should be treated as upper bounds. At the same time, most electoral authoritarian regimes win without resorting to large-scale fraud (e.g. Magaloni 2006, Levitsky and Way 2010). It is clear that vast swathes of the electorate vote in authoritarian elections. Why?

In democracies, explanations of voter participation fall roughly into two groups. Instrumental explanations focus on the extrinsic payoffs of voting. Voting is explained as a means toward the furtherance of some other desired consequence. Such theories include explanations based on clientelism (Nichter 2008), voter intimidation (Frye, Reuter and Szakonyi 2019a), social sanctions

¹Of course, some autocracies exhibit moderate levels of competition, and legislative elections under autocracy tend to be more competitive than presidential elections. The point is simply that, on average, there is much less uncertainty about election outcomes under autocracy

(Green, Gerber and Larimer 2008), and contractual citizenship (Putnam 1993, Levi 1997). Non-instrumental explanations, by contrast, view voting as an act that carries intrinsic value. Voting is done for its own sake, without reference to its effects on any other external consequences that could yield benefits. Such theories include partisan-based expressive voting (e.g. Brennan and Buchanan 1984) and arguments based on civic duty (Blais 2000, Riker and Ordershook 1968).

There are few studies on voter turnout under autocracy but those that do exist focus mostly on instrumental explanations. Much of the literature has focused on voter coercion and vote buying (e.g. Blaydes 2011, Frye, Reuter, and Szakonyi 2019a). While such factors are undeniably important and can swing elections, vote buying and coercion is not the reason that most people vote in contemporary autocracies, as only a fraction of voters receive such inducements (see, for example, Letsa 2019 and Frye, Reuter, and Szakonyi 2019b).²

There is far less work on non-instrumental explanations for turnout under autocracy. In democracies, research shows that such factors are the main drivers of turnout. Since *The American Voter*, scholars of public opinion have recognized that a sense of civic duty is one of the primary reasons most people vote (e.g. Campbell et al 1960, Blais 2000, Campbell 2008, Gerber, Green, and Larimer 2008). Following convention in the literature, I define the duty to vote as a moral obligation to vote. Those who feel a duty to vote do so not just in order to affect some outcome or receive

²For example, in the 2016 Russian election study, 2.29% of voters reported being threatened to turn out in the State Duma elections of that year and 3.4% received a vote buying offer. Implicit threats are more common, especially in the workplace, but still only affect between 10 and 20 percent of all Russian voters. Of course, subjective belief in the possibility of negative consequences for not voting is also possible, but difficult to measure. In appendix Table A5, I examine a series of regressions that model the decision to turn out in the 2016 Russian State Duma elections. While both threats and vote buying are positively correlated with turnout, they explain a small share of the variance in turnout. These regressions also examine other instrumental explanations such as social sanctions and performance-based explanations derived from theories of contractual citizenship.

some external benefit, but because they feel it is an ethical imperative.³

Despite its clear importance in democracies, the literature on turnout in autocracies makes little mention of it (see Letsa 2019 for an important exception). One reason may be that civic duty is typically viewed as an inherently democratic sentiment. Indeed, classic works of political participation viewed it this way (e.g. Downs 1957, Almond and Verba 1963). And yet, close studies of one-party elections in both the Soviet Union and China have found that agitators appealed to civic duty when exhorting citizens to vote (Karklins 1986, Shi 1999). More recently, Letsa (2019) uses survey data from Cameroon to show that a majority of citizens view voting as a civic duty.

Data from Russia, the empirical focus of this paper, suggests that civic duty is the predominant motivation for voting. Table 1 shows the distribution of responses to a question asking voters why they voted in the 2016 election. The data are from the 2016 Russian Election Study (RES).⁴ By far the most commonly cited reason for voting among Russian respondents is civic duty (Гражданский долг). This pattern seems to extend beyond 2016 as well. Between 2011 and 2018, the Levada Center asked this same (or a very similar) question five times after presidential, parliamentary, and regional elections. In each of those five surveys, civic duty was by far the most commonly cited reason for voting.⁵

³Under this conception, the duty to vote is what Weber would call 'value rational' (*wertrational*), for it involves a the "conscious belief in the absolute value of some ethical, aesthetic, religious or other form of behavior, entirely for its own sake and independently of any prospects of external success" (Weber 1947, 115)

⁴The RES will be used throughout this paper. The 2016 RES was conducted between November 8 and December 4, 2016. Its nationally representative sample contains 2010 respondents, stratified across 157 population points in 48 regions. The survey margin of error is 3%

⁵The share was 62% in 2011, 61% in 2012, 53% in 2014, and 50% in 2018.

TABLE 1: STATED REASONS FOR VOTING IN 2016 STATE DUMA ELECTIONS

Why did you vote in these elections? (Mark all that apply)	
1. Civic Duty	68.6%
2. So that my vote would not be used without my knowledge	19.4%
3. Habit	18.2 %
4. Desire to express my political position (even if it would not help a candidate/party)	14.6%
5. Desire to help the candidate/party that I prefer	13.7%
6. It is customary to vote in my social circle	9.4%
7. Someone asked me to vote and I couldnt refuse	2%
8. Other	1.5%
9. Hard to answer	0.4%

I also placed a question on the 2016 RES which asked respondents the following: “People have different opinions on what it means to be a good citizen. Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 means very important and 1 means not at all important, how important do you think it is to do the following things in order to be a good citizen (see Dalton 2006)?” Respondents were asked about the following activities: following the law, reporting crimes, helping the less fortunate, and voting in elections. Forty-one percent said that it was very important (5) to vote, while only 6 percent said it was not at all important (1). The mean score was 3.87 and in total 66% of respondents thought that voting was important in order to be a good citizen. Thus, a solid majority of Russians view voting as an important part of being a citizen.

This approach to measuring duty has multiple problems, however. For one it leaves open the question of why voters think voting is important for being a good citizen. The answer need not be linked to duty in this question formulation. In addition, if many believe that it is a social norm to vote then respondents may affirm that they think voting is a duty even if they do not really believe in this norm. This problem is particularly acute in the above formulation because the question framing implicitly valorizes voting by placing it in the context of a question about good citizenship and alongside other behaviors that are socially desirable. Similar problems bedevil agree/disagree questions that ask respondents directly about their attitudes toward the social norm. By implying

that voting or voting duty is a morally appropriate act, such questions induce acquiescence bias (Blais and Aachen 2018).

To get around these problems, Blais and Aachen (2018) have recently proposed a new survey instrument for measuring the duty to vote. Their approach minimizes social desirability bias by contrasting duty with “another widely-shared norm: choice (7)”. As they write: “Freedom is a strongly held value, and so most of us would like to have the choice between doing something and not doing it. Therefore, it makes sense to ask people whether they view voting as something that ought to be done (a Kantian duty) or something that is up to each person to decide whether to do or not (a choice) (7).” Following this approach, I placed a version of Blais and Aachen’s (2018) instrument on the 2016 Russian Election Study. The exact question wording was:

Different people feel differently about voting. Some believe that voting is a civic duty. They feel they should vote in every election however they feel about the candidates and parties. For others, voting is a choice. They feel free to vote or not vote in an election depending on how they feel about the candidates and parties. How do you personally feel about voting?⁶

- 1. I think that participating in elections is a civic duty*
- 2. I think that I have a choice—to vote or not vote in elections*

Thus, rather than pose the question so that respondents are implicitly forced to admit that they think voting is unimportant, this formulation asks them to choose between two socially acceptable attitudes about voting.

The results indicate that 43% of respondents viewed voting as a duty, while 57% thought it was a choice. This survey instrument has been implemented in three other countries: Cameroon (Letsa 2019), Korea (Hur 2019), and the United States (Blais and Aachen 2018). The share of respondents reporting that voting was a duty was 69% in Cameroon, 65% in Korea, and 49% in the US. Thus the results in Russia were most similar to those in the United States.

⁶In order to check whether the ordering of choice options influenced responses, the order of choice and duty in the prompt were randomized across the sample. Results do not depend on the ordering. The original Russian version of the question can be found in the appendix

In Russia, one concern might be that freedom of choice is not a widely-shared norm, while duty is. But surveys indicate that Russians strongly embrace abstract freedoms. In a well-known 2001 study of Russian attitudes toward freedom, McFaul and Colton (2002) find that 87% of Russians thought that it was important to have the freedom to have one's own convictions and the same number thought that freedom of expression was important. Indeed, it is noteworthy that Russians were *more* likely than Americans to claim that voting was a choice. The norms of duty and freedom are shared widely enough in Russia that expressing preference for one or another would not be viewed as socially unacceptable.⁷

These results indicate that the question format may be reducing social desirability bias. Standard duty questions indicate lopsided support for the idea that voting is a duty (Blais and Achen 2018). Indeed, although the formats differ significantly, this 43% figure is much lower than the share of voters who affirmed that voting is important to be a good citizen. Still, perhaps the most important conclusion is that a large number of Russians and a majority of Russian voters feel that voting is a civic duty.

In the appendix table A5, I show multivariate regression models that enter this variable as a predictor, alongside a range of other known correlates of turnout. Unsurprisingly, *Civic Duty* is the strongest predictor of self-reported turnout in Russia.⁸ Even though causality is difficult to pin down in such regressions, these associations, along with the the descriptive evidence from Table 1, suggest that civic duty plays an important role in the voting decision under autocracy. Thus, it

⁷The success of the instrument does not depend on balancing the normative appeal of these choices for each respondent; clearly some respondents will find one alternative more appealing than the other and there will be differences across cultural contexts. Rather the success of the instrument rests on presenting two *socially* acceptable alternatives, such that selecting one or another alternative does not reveal the respondent to be a social deviant.

⁸Following Blais and Achen (2018), I further validate this measure by showing that interest in elections and politics more generally have a larger impact on the voting decision for respondents who stated that voting was, for them, a choice.

is important to understand the foundations of civic duty under autocracy and to understand why some voters think of voting as a duty, while others do not.

3 The Duty to Vote Under Autocracy

One starting point for explaining the duty to vote under autocracy is to look at the literature on democracies. While there is voluminous scholarship on citizen compliance and turnout in democracies, there are relatively few studies that examine why (some) people view voting as a duty.⁹ Indeed, many accounts treat civic duty as a black box. But perhaps the most common view is that the duty to vote is linked to norms of democratic citizenship. Downs (1957) argued that citizens feel a social responsibility to ensure that democracy does not collapse. Democratic citizens may reason that the survival of democracy depends on the active participation of the electorate. In turn, one may feel compelled to do one's part in the maintenance of democracy. This sense of democratic duty was the lynchpin in Downs' model of turnout. Almond and Verba (1966) saw a cultural dimension to this linkage, arguing that a compulsion to fulfill one's civic duties was a key element of democratic political cultures. Similarly, the first hypothesized component of Riker and Ordeshook's (1968) D-term was the effect of being "socialized into the democratic tradition.(28)" And to this day, many scholars still link the duty to vote to support for democracy (Mueller 2003,

⁹In this paper, I focus specifically on explaining why some view voting as a moral duty. This is an attitude, not a behavior. Turnout by contrast is a behavior. And while feelings of civic duty and turnout are highly correlated, the belief that voting is a duty is neither a necessary nor even a sufficient condition for turning out. Many people vote even though they do not view voting as a duty (in the 2016 RES, 38% of those who voted did not think voting was a duty). Alternatively, many who view voting as a duty choose not to vote in particular elections. Just as a religious person may sin without forsaking their beliefs, a person who believes that voting is a moral duty may not always act in accordance with that belief. Indeed, in the 2016 RES 20% of those who believed voting is a duty reported that they did not turn out in the 2016 State Duma elections.

Dalton 2008, Galais and Blais 2017).

These ideas seem plausible in democracies, but there are *a priori* reasons to doubt that support for democracy is the only, or even primary, driver of the duty to vote under autocracy. Many citizens are aware that the system is undemocratic and support for the idea of democracy is usually lower in autocracies than it is in democracies. Moreover, norms of democratic participation are not well-established in most autocracies, and individuals are rarely exposed to democratic socialization during their formative years.

Nonetheless, we can use the survey data in Russia to see if democratic norms are associated with the duty to vote. If this were so, we might expect that those who support the idea of democracy would be more likely to think it is a duty to vote. We might also expect that those who believe Russia is a democracy would be more likely to think about voting in terms of moral obligation. Or, it might be the case that both conditions are required: those who support the idea of democracy *and* believe that Russia is living up to the ideal of democracy would view voting as a duty.

But if the duty to vote under autocracy is not primarily due to democratic citizenship norms, then what might explain it? A different scholarly approach argues that civic duty is founded on reverence for the *state*. Under this view, it is not democratic attitudes that matter but rather one's attachment to the state (e.g. Galais and Blais 2017). Riker and Ordeshook argued that the most important element of the duty to vote (their D-term) was the desire to "affirm allegiance to the political system."⁽²⁸⁾ Dennis (1970) linked the duty to vote with what Easton (1965) called "diffuse support" for the state. In contrast to "specific support," which is support directed at the government of the day, "diffuse support" is oriented toward the fundamental political arrangements of a country or the "basic aspects fo the system" (Easton 1975, 437). Thus, this framework rests on the conventional distinction between the state, on one hand, and the current regime or incumbent government on the other.¹⁰ Those who support the state should be more likely to feel that they

¹⁰The state is understood here as a bundle of institutions, symbols, and bureaucracies that the rulers of a country have at their disposal to administer society and exercise power within and on behalf of a particular political community. A state is a (relatively) permanent and stable structure.

have a duty to participate in state functions, such as elections.

In turn, reverence for the state can manifest itself in a duty—a moral obligation—to vote. Since Socrates, political thinkers have noted that a sense of duty or obligation can arise out of respect for authority (e.g. Simmons 2002, Weber 1947). Indeed, social psychologists have found associations between attitudes to authority and a sense of moral duty (Graham, Haidt, and Nosek 2009, Graham et al 2011).¹¹ To the extent that citizens recognize, respect, and revere state authority, they will be more likely to feel duty-bound to participate in state functions, such as elections. The link is not automatic. Many citizens who revere the state may feel no particular obligations when it comes to elections, but, *ceteris paribus*, those who venerate state authority should be more likely to harbor such feelings.

Communal attachments may also play a role. Communitarian political theorists have long argued that members of social groups (e.g. nations, ethnic groups, religious groups and the like) feel moral obligations to their communities, and a number of scholars draw a linkage between the duty to vote and a sense of obligation to one's country (e.g. Galais and Blais 2017). The most precise treatment of this viewpoint is from Hur (2017, 2019), who argues that a communal duty

In Russia, this corresponds to the concept of the *gosudarstvo*. A government, by contrast, is simply the rulers who exercise power at a particular time. A regime, as it is usually construed in the authoritarianism literature, is the set of rules and norms that govern how state power is used and how leaders are chosen (e.g. Lawson 1993, 187, Geddes Wright and Frantz 2014, 314). Regimes are more permanent than governments, but less permanent than states. As Fishman notes, "A state main remain in place even when regimes come and go" (1993, 428). Because incumbent turnover it is relatively rare in autocracies, it is common, though somewhat imprecise, for scholars to refer to incumbent governments as a "regime" and supporters of that government as "regime supporters". For the purposes of the theory below, the distinction between state, on the one hand, and regime/government on the other is more important than the distinction between regime and government.

¹¹Whether such attitudes are morally *justified* is an entirely different matter (Simmons 2002).

to the nation will only transform into a duty to vote in state-sanctioned elections when the state is seen to represent one's nation. Such duty can fade when the link between state and nation is severed.¹²

Whatever the mechanism—and multiple are likely at play—those who view the state as legitimate, revered, and worthy of respect will be more likely to feel a duty to participate in state-sponsored elections than those who do not. This suggests that the civic duty to vote can exist in the absence of strong democratic norms. It can (and does) exist under autocracy. As I will argue below this has important political implications for the survival of autocratic regimes.

4 Regime Supporters and the Opposition

What does this imply about the political factors that affect the duty to vote under autocracy? In my view, the most important implication—and the central argument of this paper—is that those who support the incumbent regime will feel a stronger duty to vote. Under autocracy, supporters of the incumbent are, I argue, more likely than opposition supporters to venerate the state. This can happen for a number of reasons, but the most fundamental reason is attributable to the fact that autocratic governments tend to penetrate and politicize the state, which makes one's attitude to the state contingent on one's support for the incumbent regime.

To see this, consider how the voters' view of the state in a democracy might differ from the voters' view of the state in a typical autocracy. In democracies, most voters recognize a distinction between the state and the incumbent government. Their allegiance to the state (and their feelings of obligation toward it) is not affected by their political opinions about the current government. In autocracies, by contrast, the perceived line between state and regime is often blurred. Because autocratic regimes politicize, exploit, and corrupt state institutions, the regime can appear inseparable from the state. So-called totalitarian regimes are an extreme example of this. Such regimes

¹²For instance, in settings where nation and state are misaligned (e.g. Quebec, Catalonia, Taiwan), Hur argues that communal duties to the nation do not compel a duty to vote.

are often defined as instances when the regime obliterates any distinction between state and regime (e.g. Fishman 1993, 428). On the other end of the spectrum are some developmental states, where the regime tries to limit politicization of the state apparatus. Most contemporary autocracies fall between these extremes, but, in almost all autocracies, this blurring tends to occur—or at the very least, many citizens perceive that it occurs ¹³

If regime and state become intertwined, citizens' sense of obligation to the state comes to depend on their political orientation. Opponents of the incumbent regime come to view the state as politicized and can become disaffected with it. Corrupted by the regime, the state loses its moral standing in the eyes of regime opponents. In turn, regime opponents feel fewer moral obligations to the state, which undermines the duty to vote in state-sanctioned elections.

Regime supporters, by contrast, are less bothered by the fusion of regime and state. In fact, it may lead regime supporters to view the state even *more* favorably, either because they think the state, in fact, should be captured by their preferred party or because of partisan motivated reasoning (Bartels 2002, Jerit and Barabas 2012). Through rose-tinted glasses, regime followers come to revere the state even more. They are proud of it and respect it. From such attitudes, feelings of obligation are likely to emerge. For regime supporters, voting is viewed as a duty. Thus, my primary hypothesis is that support for the incumbent regime is positively associated with the duty to vote.¹⁴

¹³There are many reasons for this, ranging from a lack of checks on executive authority to the fact that autocrats exploit state institutions precisely in order to disadvantage the opposition in elections and elsewhere. And although the relationship may not be causal, corruption of all types tends to be deeper and more widespread in autocracies.

¹⁴This argument presumes that duty varies with regime support, and, since the identify of the regime can change over time, my argument sits in tension with accounts that treat duty as being static over a person's lifetime (e.g. Campbell 2008). Thus, my account shares more in common with scholarship that views civic duty as sticky, but malleable over time. Easton (1975, 444-446)), for example, believed that 'diffuse' support for the state, while rooted in childhood experience, was

From this fundamental argument about state-regime fusion flow several additional mechanisms that may link regime support to voting duty. One related mechanism can be found in the concept of legitimacy. Without engaging in lengthy treatise on the subjective meaning of legitimacy, we can reason that those who believe the state has legitimate authority are more likely to feel duty-bound to participate in its functions. But when the regime penetrates the state, the legitimacy of the state begins to hinge on the legitimacy of the regime. Regime opponents are less likely to view state authority as legitimate. In electoral authoritarian regimes this often happens because regime opponents are less likely to view elections as free and fair (Robertson 2017, Williamson 2019). Opposition supporters are therefore less likely to feel duty-bound to participate in elections, which are viewed as regime-sponsored ceremonies.¹⁵

Another possible mechanism is the perceived performance of state institutions. Some scholars have found that turnout is positively correlated with perceptions of state performance, particularly economic performance (e.g. Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980, Pacek 1994, de Miguel et al 2015). Tracing their origins to theories of contractual citizenship (e.g. Putnam 1993), some of these works imply that voting is an instrumental exchange, whereby voters participate when they believe the state is providing sufficient benefits. Given their focus on expected payoffs, such arguments may appear to sit uneasily alongside a theory of civic duty, which is an intrinsic value. At the same time, some early scholars of political behavior believed that *long run* performance evaluations could also be influenced over time by direct experience. Indeed, some recent research finds that feelings of voting duty can depend on circumstance (e.g. Goodman 2018, Aytac and Stokes 2019) It is also worth noting that autocratic regime change is infrequent, so my argument need not imply that feelings of civic duty will oscillate erratically from election to election.

¹⁵As I discuss in more detail below, this is not about the instrumental payoffs from voting. Several scholars have argued that opposition voters are less likely to vote in elections because they believe that fraud decreases their ability to affect the outcome (e.g. Simpson 2013, Nikolayenko 2015). The theory here is about how views of state legitimacy impact voters sense of *duty*; it is not an argument about how they calculate the impact or expected benefits of their vote.

accumulate and affect one's fundamental disposition to the state. As Easton (1975, 446) argued: "[Diffuse support] may be a product of spillover effects from evaluations of a series of outputs and of performance over a long period of time. Even though the orientations derive from responses to particular outputs initially, they become in time disassociated from performance. They become transformed into generalized attitudes towards the authorities or other political objects. They begin to take on a life of their own." Thus, it is possible that long-run performance evaluations may affect citizen attachment to the state.

In turn, evaluations of state performance can depend on one's attitude toward the incumbent regime. Even in democracies, it is well known that partisanship can determine one's stance on a range of issues, such as foreign policy and economic performance (e.g. Duch, Palmer, and Anderson, 2000, Jerit and Barabas 2012). Given the blending of state and regime that occurs under autocracy and the control over media that most autocrats wield, such biases are likely to be even more pronounced in authoritarian regimes. Thus, in the empirical tests below, I examine the possibility that support for the incumbent regime increases civic duty via its relationship with long-run state performance evaluations.

Finally, patriotic sentiments could also help explain the link between regime support and civic duty. For many, allegiance to the state can manifest itself as an emotional attachment that can be called a type of patriotism.¹⁶ In this case, the duty to vote may reflect patriotic sentiments. Because state and regime can become intertwined under autocracy, regime supporters are more likely to feel an affective attachment to the symbols, institutions, ceremonies, and endeavors of the state. They are more likely to be proud citizens and more likely to think of voting as a patriotic duty.

Alternatively, the link between regime support and the duty to vote could also operate via emotional attachments to the country or national community.¹⁷ Many citizens harbor emotional

¹⁶I follow Connor (1993) and define patriotism as "an emotional attachment to one's state or country and its political institutions "(374)

¹⁷Following Anderson (1983), I conceive of a nation as an "imagined political community [that is] imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign"

attachments to their country, and some argue that moral commitments to the nation can transform into a duty to the state, especially if the state is seen to represent one's nation (Hur 2019). But, for opposition supporters, the fusion of state and regime that occurs under autocracy can undermine such a duty, because it breaks the sacred link between state and nation. If the state is politicized by incumbents, many opponents will cease to view it as a legitimate representation of the political community. Any duty owed to the political community is no longer owed to the state and its endeavors. Among regime opponents, the moral obligation to participate in state functions (e.g. elections) is attenuated.¹⁸ Thus, regime support may affect civic duty because of its relationship to state patriotism.

5 Modeling the Duty to Vote in Russia

This section discusses a series of empirical tests that examine the predictors of the duty to vote. The survey data is from the aforementioned 2016 Russian Election Study. The dependent variable is the duty-choice survey instrument described above. Note that this question does not reference a particular election, but asks respondents to consider voting in the abstract. It is equal to one if the respondent answered that voting was a duty and zero if the respondent answered that it was a choice. Measurement of key independent variables is discussed below and full question descriptions are given in the appendix. Given the binary nature of the dependent variable, I use logistic regression models throughout. Standard errors are clustered at the region level.

Before turning to the main hypotheses, Model 1 in Table 2 begins by examining how various demographic factors affect the duty to vote. Several results are worth noting. First, contrary to the findings in some democracies, *Education* levels do not appear correlated with thinking of voting as

¹⁸In some autocracies, the regime cultivates and encourages attachments to a particular national community, which can drive an association between regime affiliation and national pride. Some may even rely on ethnonationalist appeals. But this is not a universal phenomenon and is dependent on empirical context.

TABLE 2: PREDICTORS OF EXPRESSING A DUTY TO VOTE

VARIABLES	(1) Duty	(2) Duty	(3) Duty	(4) Duty	(5) Duty	(6) Duty	(7) Duty	(8) Duty
Age	0.008*** (0.001)	0.005*** (0.001)	0.005*** (0.001)	0.006*** (0.001)	0.006*** (0.001)	0.005*** (0.001)	0.005*** (0.001)	0.005*** (0.001)
Male	-0.021 (0.022)	-0.054** (0.022)	-0.041* (0.022)	-0.047* (0.025)	-0.044* (0.023)	-0.043** (0.022)	-0.046** (0.021)	-0.048** (0.023)
Town Size	-0.022** (0.010)	-0.017* (0.009)	-0.011 (0.009)	-0.015 (0.009)	-0.011 (0.009)	-0.016* (0.010)	-0.014 (0.010)	-0.011 (0.010)
CPSU Membership	0.023 (0.046)	0.023 (0.045)	-0.013 (0.052)	0.017 (0.053)	-0.007 (0.058)	0.018 (0.046)	0.021 (0.049)	0.010 (0.045)
Economic Status	0.029** (0.012)	0.025** (0.012)	0.023* (0.013)	0.026** (0.013)	0.027** (0.013)	0.018 (0.012)	0.018 (0.012)	0.012 (0.013)
Education	0.004 (0.011)	-0.009 (0.010)	-0.018 (0.011)	-0.014 (0.011)	-0.018* (0.011)	-0.005 (0.010)	-0.005 (0.010)	-0.003 (0.010)
Social Org. Membership	0.035** (0.014)	0.029** (0.013)	0.025* (0.013)	0.036** (0.015)	0.033** (0.015)	0.027** (0.013)	0.025** (0.012)	0.027* (0.014)
Follow Politics		0.102*** (0.013)	0.104*** (0.014)	0.098*** (0.015)	0.099*** (0.015)	0.096*** (0.014)	0.102*** (0.013)	0.101*** (0.014)
Russia Democracy*Support Democracy					0.033 (0.041)			
Russia Democracy				0.030 (0.028)	-0.083 (0.125)			
Democracy Support			0.016 (0.019)		-0.000 (0.030)			
Putin Support						0.059*** (0.013)		-0.013 (0.037)
UR Support							0.027*** (0.005)	
Corruption Has Increased								-0.150** (0.063)
Corruption X Putin Support								0.027 (0.016)
Observations	1,809	1,807	1,480	1,456	1,297	1,787	1,776	1,658

Cell Entries are Average Marginal Effects. Standard errors clustered on region in parentheses
p<.1; **p<.05; ***p<.01

a duty. *Male* falls short of statistical significance in Model 1, but in all other models, which include controls for political interest and preference, it is negatively associated with the duty to vote. *Town Size* is negative and statistically significant in Model 1, but it is not always significant in models that contain political controls. *Economic Status*—a scale measuring income—is positively correlated with voting duty in Model 1, but falls short of significance in some models that include political controls.

Several other factors are more consistently associated with thinking of voting as a duty. Membership in social organizations (e.g. parties, unions, civil society organizations)—a common indicator of social capital—is positively correlated with the duty to vote. The other factor that is strongly correlated with the duty to vote is *Age*. It is significant in all models and has a large sub-

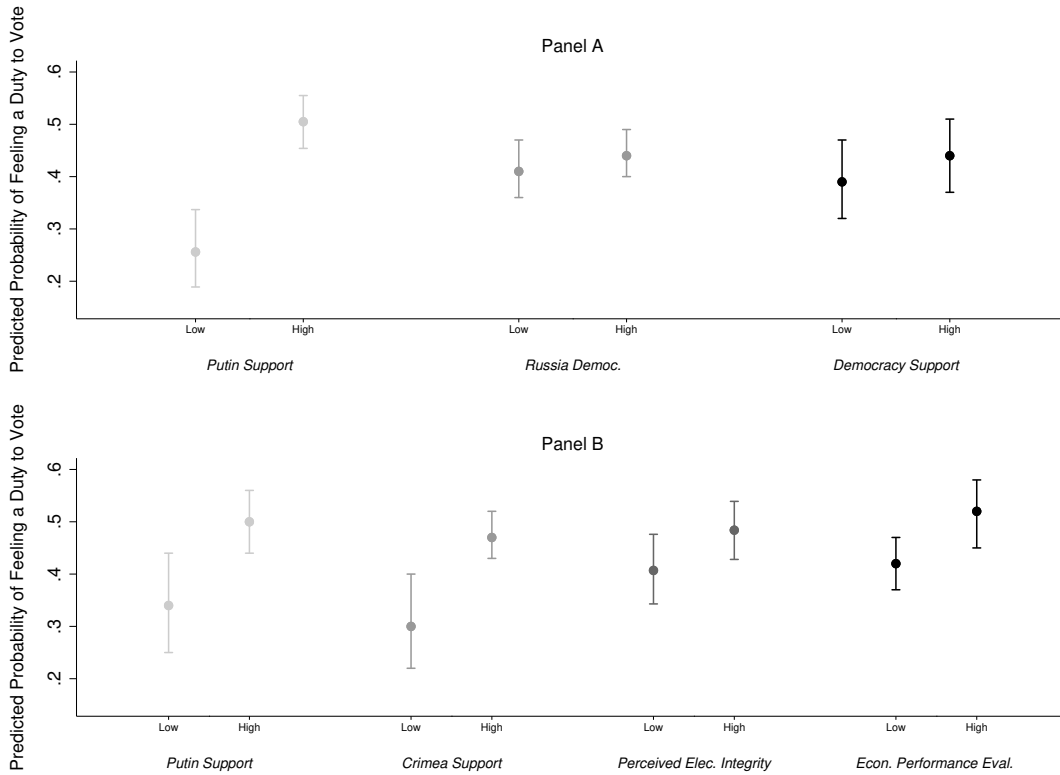
stantive effect. A number of works suggest that civic duty may become ingrained at a young age (Campbell 2008, Verba et al 1995). In the Russian context, the positive correlation between age and voting duty could be related to socialization under the Soviet regime during one's formative years. Deeper analysis (discussed in the appendix) appears to indicate that this effect is not simply due to a stark difference in political socialization before and after 1991, but it could still be the case that having more experience with Soviet political socialization or more family exposure to such norms, increases the duty to vote. Alternatively, age could be positively correlated with voting duty for some other reason. Either way, since this variable is correlated with support for the Putin regime, I include it in all subsequent analyses to account for potential confounding.

Having established the demographic predictors of the duty to vote, Models 2-7 turn to examine attitudinal covariates. Models 3-5 problematize the conventional view of voting duty. Neither *Support for Democracy* nor belief that Russia is a democracy (*Russia Democracy*) have an impact on the duty to vote. Model 5 checks to see whether the effect of these attitudes is conditional on the other. Perhaps it is the case that support for democracy only affects the duty to vote for those who believe that Russia is actually a democracy. In Model 5, I interact the two variables and find no evidence of an amplifying effect.

Models 6 and 7 turn to consider the main hypothesis in the paper: that the duty to vote is associated with regime support. Model 6 measures regime support with a five-point scale of support for Putin's activities as president. *Putin Support* has a positive and statistically significant effect on the duty to vote. As Panel A of Figure 1 shows, the substantive effect is substantial. While holding all other covariates at their means, the predicted probability of the respondent expressing a duty to vote is 25%. when *Putin Support* is equal to 1 (its minimum). When *Putin Support* equals 5 (its maximum) increases dramatically to 50%. Indeed, one's attitude toward the incumbent regime is the largest single determinant of reporting a duty to vote.

Model 7 shows similar findings using a different measure of regime support, support for the ruling party, United Russia, which is measured on a ten-point feeling thermometer scale. This is an slightly inferior measure of regime support since the regime is built around Vladimir Putin, not

FIGURE 1: LIKELIHOOD OF EXPRESSING A DUTY TO VOTE



Note: Quantities in Panel A are drawn from Models 3, 4, and 6 in Table 2. Panel B is drawn from Model 4 in Table 3.

the ruling party. Many people support Putin even if they are unenthusiastic about United Russia. Still, UR supporters are much more likely to report that they view voting as a duty. Taken as a whole, the findings suggest that regime supporters are more likely to evince a duty to vote.

I argue that the perceived fusion of state and regime underlies this gap in voting duty between regime supporters and the opposition. This link is difficult to observe directly, but one empirical implication is that the gap between supporters and opponents should be smaller for respondents who do not perceive or care about the regime's penetration of state institutions. Political corruption—the use of state resources for private or political gain—is one observable manifestation of this. Thus, we might expect that the effect of regime support will dissipate among those who do *not* perceive political corruption as a problem under the Putin regime.

To examine this, Model 8 interacts *Putin Support* with a variable that contains responses to

the question: “Over the 16 years since Putin became president in 2000, has corruption among state bureaucrats decreased, stayed the same, or increased?” The conditional effects from the interaction term are revealing. Among those who think that corruption has decreased, the marginal effect of *Putin Support* is small (.014) and is not statistically significant ($p=.542$). For those who think it has stayed the same or increased, the marginal effect is larger and significant (.041, $p=.003$), and for those who think that corruption has increased, the effect is larger still (.065, $p=.001$). In other words, the gap in voting duty between opponents and supporters mostly evaporates among those who think that the Putin government has engaged in less corruption. Presumably, these opponents of Putin dislike the regime for reasons aside from corruption, and they profess the same duty to vote as regime supporters do. Interestingly, this interaction effect does *not* exist for evaluations of socio-economic and foreign policy performance: the effect of *Putin Support* remains the same among those who rate the regime’s performance poorly on these measures. This suggests that there is something specific about corruption perceptions.

Another observable implication is that the gap in voting duty between regime and opposition should grow as the regime becomes more entrenched and the opposition becomes more disillusioned with the regime’s politicization of state institutions. The regime in Russia has, by most accounts, become more autocratic over time. In the early 2000s, the state was less politicized by the regime than it is today. Thus, I would expect that the duty gap between regime supporters and opponents would be smaller in the early 2000s than it is today. In order to test this, I was able to locate a nationally representative survey carried out in March 2000 by the Levada Center (then VtSIOM), which asked respondents the following open-ended question: “What motivates/could motivate you to vote?,” where civic duty (Гражданский долг) was one of the most commonly given responses. I was also able to locate another Levada survey carried out in July 2016 that asked the exact same question. Both surveys also contained questions on support for Putin and key demographics. As noted above, such open-ended questions are vulnerable to social desirability bias and have other problems of interpretation, but it is instructive to compare the effect of *Putin Support* in these two surveys over time. In appendix table [A7](#), I compare logistic regression models

across the two surveys and find that the marginal effect of *Putin Support* is three times larger (.15, $p=.001$) in 2016 than it was in 2000 (.054, $p=.022$). This suggests that the effect *Putin Support* in the main models rests in large part on the autocratic nature of the system.

In the discussion above, I outlined three additional mechanisms that emanate from my argument. I examine these here using mediation analysis. To measure legitimacy perceptions, I use a question that asks respondents whether they believe the 2016 State Duma elections were conducted honestly. This is a good measure because leaders in electoral authoritarian regimes claim legitimacy on the basis of elections. Whether because of differential exposure to propaganda or because of partisan biases, regime opponents are more likely to think elections are honest. In turn, because of the fusion between state and regime, opponents should be less likely to view the state as legitimate and less likely to feel duty-bound to participate in state-sanctioned elections.

To measure performance, I use a question that asks respondents: “Over the 16 years since Putin became president in 2000, has the quality of life for the population worsened, stayed the same, or improved?” Socio-economic development is central to most people’s lives and studies show that it is a key performance criteria for governments. This question is about socio-economic performance over the entirety of Putin’s time in power, which is appropriate because the proposed mechanism focuses on how long-term performance evaluations affect one’s fundamental attachments to the state.¹⁹ Surveys in Russia show that regime supporters take a rosier view of objective economic conditions. Of course, economic performance perceptions also drive support for Putin, in which case the inclusion of this variable serves to control for any potential confounding.

Finally, as a proxy for patriotic sentiment I use an index that measures support for the annexation of Crimea. Unfortunately, there is no direct question about patriotism in the 2016 RES. But the annexation of Crimea and the confrontation with Ukraine that followed was associated with a

¹⁹In appendix table A8, I also use short-term socio-tropic and ego-tropic evaluations, as well as other long-term performance measures and a composite index of long-term performance measures. Results indicate that both economic and foreign policy performance evaluations are correlated with the duty to vote and mediate the effect of *Putin Support*

massive upsurge in both patriotism and support for the regime (Hale 2018). Studies have found that the Crimea moment produced an increase in “emotional attachment” to the state (Greene and Robertson 2019). Those who already felt patriotic may have been more likely to support the annexation of Crimea, or the collective surge in pro-Russia feeling at that time may have led to increased support for annexation. Either way, this should be an adequate proxy, especially in a model that controls for regime support.²⁰ Surveys show that support for the Putin regime is strongly correlated with patriotic sentiments, especially in recent years (e.g. Hale 2018).

I examine these potential mechanisms in Table 3. Following convention, the basic methodological approach is to enter each potential mediator as a control into a series of regression models that include *Putin Support*. I then compare the coefficient on *Putin Support* in the reduced model(s) to the coefficient on *Putin Support* in the full model(s). The difference between the two coefficients is the amount of *Putin Support*’s effect that is mediated by the potential mediator(s). To deal with the rescaling bias that affects naive cross-model comparisons in nonlinear models, I use the decomposition method proposed by Karlson, Holm, and Breen (2012).²¹

The results are consistent with each of the proposed mechanisms, while also demonstrating that *Putin Support* has a direct effect on the duty to vote that is not accounted for by these variables. Each potential mediator reduces the size of the coefficient on *Putin Support* to a statistically significant degree. On its own, *Perceptions of Elec. Integrity* accounts for 20% of the effect of *Putin Support*, reducing its average marginal effect from .063 to .05. *Living Standards Better under Putin* and *Crimea Support* have roughly similar indirect effects. Model 4 enters all three variables

²⁰In appendix table A9, I analyze a different Levada survey from 2016 that includes an open-ended question about the duty to vote as well as more direct measures patriotic sentiments. Results are similar.

²¹Breen, Karlson, and Holm (2013) show that this method performs as well or better than the mediation methods proposed by Imai, Keele, and Tingley (2010). I use it here because it facilitates easy substantive interpretation of multiple mediators. Results are substantively and statistically the same using the Imai, Keele, and Tingley (2010) methodology.

TABLE 3: DECOMPOSING THE EFFECT OF *Putin Support*

VARIABLES	(1) Duty	(2) Duty	(3) Duty	(4) Duty	(5) Duty
Age	0.005*** (0.001)	0.005*** (0.001)	0.005*** (0.001)	0.005*** (0.001)	0.005*** (0.001)
Male	-0.031 (0.023)	-0.050** (0.021)	-0.054** (0.022)	-0.044* (0.024)	-0.051** (0.022)
Town Size	-0.014 (0.010)	-0.014 (0.010)	-0.013 (0.010)	-0.009 (0.011)	-0.015 (0.010)
CPSU Membership	0.007 (0.049)	0.015 (0.050)	0.015 (0.047)	0.005 (0.056)	0.025 (0.047)
Economic Status	0.012 (0.014)	0.014 (0.012)	0.021 (0.013)	0.009 (0.014)	0.018 (0.012)
Education	-0.000 (0.010)	0.000 (0.010)	-0.002 (0.010)	0.006 (0.011)	-0.005 (0.010)
Social Org. Membership	0.032** (0.015)	0.021 (0.014)	0.027* (0.014)	0.027 (0.017)	0.025* (0.014)
Follow Politics	0.099*** (0.013)	0.095*** (0.013)	0.096*** (0.014)	0.098*** (0.013)	0.097*** (0.014)
Putin Support	0.050*** (0.015)	0.053*** (0.014)	0.046*** (0.015)	0.036** (0.015)	0.057*** (0.013)
Perceived Elec. Integrity	0.024** (0.011)			0.018 (0.012)	
Living Standards Better under Putin		0.054*** (0.018)		0.043** (0.020)	
Crimea Support			0.056*** (0.019)	0.053*** (0.018)	
Ethnic Russian					-0.035 (0.036)
Putin Support in Reduced Model	.063*** (.014)	.062*** (.012)	.056*** (.014)	.061*** (.013)	.057*** (.013)
Difference: Reduced - Full	.012**	.01**	.01***	.025***	.001
Total Confounding Pct.	20%	15.25%	17.98%	41%	1.4%
- Perceived Elec. Integrity				14.3%	
- Living Standards Better under Putin				12.2%	
- Crimea Support				14.5%	
Observations	1,588	1,667	1,679	1,425	1,774

Cell Entries are Average Marginal Effects. Standard errors clustered on region in parentheses. All Results are from *full* models that include both *Putin Support* and the proposed mediator. Results from the reduced models are suppressed with the exception of *Putin Support* which is provided in the bottom section. The row *Difference: Reduced - Full* gives the difference between the coefficient on *Putin Support* in the reduced model versus the full model. Differences and standard errors are calculated using the KHB method described in the text. The marginal effect of *Putin Support* in the reduced model varies across models because of the rescaling adjustment used in the decomposition and because of the varying sample sizes that arise due to missing values on the mediators. *p<.1; **p<.05; ***p<.01

as mediators in the same model. The results show that the mediators jointly confound 41% of the effect of *Putin Support*, with each mediator contributing approximately equal shares to that decrease. In the fully specified model, 59% of the effect of *Putin Support* is direct. Substantive effects for all variables, drawn from Model 4, are found in Panel B of Figure 1.

One unanswered question is whether the findings on *Crimea Support* are attributable to ethnic Russian nationalism or a more civic form of patriotism. Several pieces of data cast doubt on the former. As column 5 indicates, there is no correlation between self-identifying as ethnically Russian and the duty to vote. And the variable does not mediate the effect of *Putin Support* on voting duty. This makes sense in light of Putin's ambiguous relationship with Russian ethnonationalism. While it is certainly true that Putin's discourse has become tinged with more Russian nationalist language since the annexation of Crimea, he generally avoids direct ethnonationalist appeals and frames Russia as a multi-ethnic state. As one analyst of Russian nationalism put it, Putin generally "rejects the idea of a Russian nation state in favor of the concept of a 'unique civilization'" (Torbakov 2015, 444). Indeed, the 2016 RES and other surveys indicate that Russian ethnicity is not positively correlated with support for Putin, and strong ethno-nationalist attitudes are negatively correlated with support for Putin (see appendix table A10). Moreover, the 2016 RES indicates that ethnic Russians were not, on average, more supportive of the annexation of Crimea, and other surveys show that ethnic Russians are no more likely than non-Russians to feel pride in their country (see appendix table A11). This, of course, does not mean that patriotic attachments to the country or civic nation do not matter for the duty to vote in Russia; it just implies that the duty to vote is not driven purely by narrow ethnic identifications.

Taken as a whole, these findings suggest that effect of *Putin Support* is mediated by perceptions of electoral integrity, state performance evaluations, and by patriotic sentiment. But it is also clear that support for the regime has a direct effect on the duty to vote. Of course, as with any observational study, causality is hard to pin down and these factors could independently effect both support for the regime and the duty to vote. But the results show that even while controlling for these factors support for the regime is still positively associated with the duty to vote. I have

argued that this dynamic is likely to be common under autocracy, where regime and state can become fused in the eyes of voters. When that happens the the incumbent regime can appropriate the morality of the state and receive electoral benefits from it.

6 Empirical Extensions

This section describes several empirical extensions that probe the robustness of the main findings. First, one might be concerned that the findings are driven by the content of the regime’s campaign appeals. If the regime targets its supporters with appeals that encourage them to think of voting as a duty, while opposition voters did not receive such appeals, then it could be that the findings are due to these differences in campaign emphasis. This interpretation begs the question of why the regime would succeed in convincing its supporters to view voting as a duty, while the opposition would fail to do so. The answer to this question could be rooted in the theory provided above.

Still, there are a number of reasons to doubt that this mechanism explains the findings. For one, in depth studies of the 2016 campaign do not indicate that appeals to civic duty were a major part of the Kremlin’s mobilizational strategy.²² Indeed, fearing that a politicized electorate might come out against the ruling party, the Kremlin sought to depress all turnout during the 2016 election.

But perhaps the regime’s resource advantages allow it to mount a more expansive duty voting campaign. In this case, the regime would need to micro-target such these appeals, such that duty-based appeals reached only its supporters without mobilizing the opposition as well. One possibility is that appeals to duty are micro-targeted through face-to-face appeals from party activists. In Russia, this notion is given some lie by the fact, that most Russians do not have with party activists during campaigns. Still, in order to probe this alternative explanation, Model 1 in Table 4 replicates the main findings for the subsample of respondents who reported that they had

²²See “Osobennosti predvybornoi agitatsii, imeneniya v sostave zaregistrovannykh kandida-
tov i partiinykh spiskov na regionalnykh i federalnykh vyborakh 18 sentyabrya 2016” Analytical Re-
port of the Committe for Civic Initiatives. <https://komitetgi.ru/analytics/2956/>

no contact with party activists during the campaign. These respondents could not have been micro-targeted with face-to-face appeals that encouraged them to think of voting as a duty. The results on *Putin Support* are substantively and statistically unchanged.

Another possibility is that the regime micro-targeted its supporters through social media. Model 2 replicates the main findings for the subsample of respondents who reported that they did not use social media platforms. Results are again unchanged. Finally, Model 3 checks for the possibility that television propaganda accounts for this relationship. While it is true that United Russia's 2016 campaign lacked an evident emphasis on civic duty, it could still be the case that regime surrogates talk about voting as a civic duty on state-run news channels. Since regime supporters are more likely to consume news on state-run channels, this could confound the results. Model 3 includes a variable equal to one if the respondent reported watching news programs on federal state-run television channels every day or almost every day. The variable is positively correlated with the duty to vote, but not quite significant. More importantly, the coefficient on *Putin Support* is unchanged. Similar results are obtained using a dummy variable that measures whether the respondent had viewed news programs on state-run television at any time within the past week.

Another important issue is the distinction between system and non-system opposition. In Russia, some parties and politicians are, officially or unofficially, prohibited from running in elections. While few in number, supporters of these parties may orient toward duty differently than do supporters of parties that participate in elections. Model 4 shows that the results remain unchanged when we exclude supporters of the prominent opposition activist Alexei Navalny as well as supporters of other non-system opposition movements, such as PARNAS.

Models 5-7 explore regional heterogeneity. Regional elites have long had an outsized impact on elections in Russia, so the dynamics that underly turnout and even voting duty could vary significantly across regions. All of the main models cluster standard errors at the region level to account for within-region error correlation. Model 5 uses fixed effects to account for unobserved heterogeneity at the region-level. Model 6 considers the possibility that the effect of *Putin Support* on the duty to vote might vary by region. It estimates a mixed effects logistic regression with a

TABLE 4: ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS AND ROBUSTNESS TESTS

VARIABLES	(1) Duty	(2) Duty	(3) Duty	(4) Duty	(5) Duty	(6) Duty	(7) Duty
Age	0.005*** (0.001)	0.004*** (0.001)	0.004*** (0.001)	0.005*** (0.001)	0.005*** (0.001)	0.005*** (0.001)	0.005*** (0.001)
Male	-0.045** (0.021)	-0.066** (0.033)	-0.049** (0.021)	-0.039* (0.023)	-0.035 (0.022)	-0.038 (0.024)	-0.044** (0.022)
Town Size	-0.018* (0.010)	-0.032** (0.015)	-0.017* (0.010)	-0.016* (0.010)	-0.013 (0.014)	-0.013 (0.009)	-0.017* (0.010)
CPSU Membership	-0.012 (0.046)	0.011 (0.050)	0.009 (0.045)	0.030 (0.048)	-0.000 (0.045)	0.009 (0.039)	0.019 (0.046)
Economic Status	0.017 (0.014)	0.027 (0.017)	0.015 (0.013)	0.017 (0.013)	0.022* (0.012)	0.020* (0.011)	0.017 (0.012)
Education	-0.005 (0.011)	-0.009 (0.014)	-0.005 (0.010)	-0.005 (0.010)	-0.004 (0.011)	-0.004 (0.009)	-0.006 (0.010)
Social Org. Membership	0.005 (0.013)	0.046** (0.023)	0.026* (0.015)	0.028** (0.014)	0.027** (0.014)	0.027** (0.012)	0.028** (0.014)
Follow Politics	0.094*** (0.016)	0.115*** (0.017)	0.090*** (0.015)	0.094*** (0.014)	0.098*** (0.014)	0.096*** (0.011)	0.096*** (0.014)
Putin Support	0.067*** (0.014)	0.041** (0.017)	0.058*** (0.013)	0.061*** (0.013)	0.057*** (0.013)	0.058*** (0.012)	-0.002 (0.065)
Reg. Competition							-0.006 (0.005)
Putin Support * Reg. Competition							0.001 (0.001)
Frequent State News			0.049 (0.031)				
Region Fixed Effects					✓		
Random Slope for <i>Putin Support</i>						✓	
var(<i>Putin Support</i>)						.006 (.009)	
var(Constant)						.088 (.126)	
Observations	1,494	926	1,739	1,745	1,777	1,787	1,787

Cell Entries are Average Marginal Effects. Standard errors clustered on region in parentheses.
*p<.1; **p<.05; ***p<.01

random slope for *Putin Support*. Interestingly, and perhaps surprisingly, the standard deviation of these random coefficients is less than one standard error from zero, indicating that there is not statistically significant region-to-region variation in the coefficient on *Putin Support*. A likelihood ratio test comparing this model to the random intercept model without random slopes confirms this inference and suggests that the random slope model does not improve model fit (p=.44).

Still, Model 7 explores regional heterogeneity further and looks at one important source of regional variation that may affect the the duty to vote—electoral competition. I interact *Putin Support* with United Russia’s 2016 regional PR vote share in the region where the respondent lives. The results indicate that the effect of *Putin Support* does increase as levels of competition

decline, but the modifying effect of competition falls short of statistical significance. In appendix table [A15](#), I explore how the effect of *Putin Support* varies according to levels of competition in SMD districts and find similar results. Since levels of competition were low in the 2016 Duma elections, future research could profit from cross-national comparisons.

The appendix also contains some additional models that probe the patriotism findings reported earlier. For instance, one might object that *Crimea Support* is actually just another measure of government support or performance. Thus, rather than showing evidence that patriotism is associated with voting duty, these findings might only show another side of either the regime support hypothesis or the state performance mechanism. If this counterargument is correct, we should expect to see that voting duty will be correlated with support for other decisions undertaken by the Kremlin. In appendix table [A12](#), I show a series of placebo tests that examine this notion. The findings suggest that, when controlling for *Putin Support*, voting duty is closely associated with support for the Crimea annexation, but not with other government policy decisions.

I also explore whether the basic findings apply in other time periods. The survey instrument used above does not reference a particular election, but it is possible that respondents in the 2016 survey had the 2016 elections in mind. I located four post-election Levada Omnibus surveys—2011 (parliamentary), 2012 (presidential), 2014 (regional), and 2018 (presidential)—that contained comparable questions on the duty to vote as well as questions about support for Putin. Each of these surveys asked voters an open-ended question about why they voted, and a plurality of respondents volunteered that it was because of civic duty. As noted above, such question formulations suffer from social desirability bias and other problems of interpretation, but regression models in appendix table [A14](#) show that regime supporters in all four surveys were more likely to claim that they voted because of duty. Although the basic logic of my theory should apply to all types of autocratic elections, future research could profit from a more systematic study of voting duty across different types of elections in different contexts.

Finally, the appendix also contains models that replicate the main results while holding constant reported turnout. I use sequential g-estimation to account for post-treatment bias and estimate the

direct effect of *Putin Support* while holding constant the decision to vote (Acharya, Blackwell and Sen (2016).

7 Implications and Conclusions

These findings suggest several conclusions about voting under autocracy. First, scholars should take non-instrumental motivations, such as civic duty, seriously. Civic duty can be a hard to pin down, but available evidence suggests that it is the primary driver of turnout in Russia. Given its importance as a determinant of voting, it is necessary to ask about the predictors of a duty to vote. I have shown that one's attitude toward the regime can help explain the duty to vote in Russia. This finding has important implications for how we think about authoritarian rule. It suggests an underappreciated source of incumbency advantage under autocracy. Regime supporters feel a bond with the state and, therefore, feel a much stronger duty to vote. This leads them to vote in large numbers. Opposition supporters by contrast feel alienated from the state and stay away from the polls.

Such a logic can help explain an important (and understudied) empirical phenomenon in electoral authoritarian regimes: regime supporters vote at higher rates than opposition supporters. Table 5 shows the turnout gap between regime and opposition supporters in recent elections for 14 electoral autocracies around the world. As the table shows, opposition turnout is considerably lower (approximately 8 percentage points, on average) than regime turnout in a range of settings (see also Klesner 2001 and Frantz 2018).

One possible explanation for this turnout imbalance is that opposition voters are deterred by fraud (e.g. Simpser 2013). They believe that the fix is in and, therefore, that voting is pointless. But this logic has several problems. For one, regime voters should also view voting as pointless. The outcome of authoritarian elections appears foreordained to everyone—regime and opposition alike—so neither type of voter should feel less pivotal than the other. In addition, research in democracies shows that turnout is overwhelmingly determined by expressive and duty-based motivations. Instrumental motivations play a decidedly lesser role (e.g. Enos and Fowler 2014). In

TABLE 5: THE TURNOUT GAP IN ELECTORAL AUTOCRACIES

Country	Survey	Election Year	Election Type	Opposition Partisan Turnout	Regime Partisan Turnout	Turnout Gap
Algeria*	Afrobarometer	2014	Presidential	52	73	21
Cambodia	Asian Barometer	2013	Parliamentary	81	85	4
Cameroon	Afrobarometer	2013	Parliamentary	65	70	5
Guinea	Afrobarometer	2013	Parliamentary	85	94	9
Kazakhstan	Radnitz (2017)	2015	Presidential	76	90	14
Malaysia	Asian Barometer	2013	Parliamentary	84	88	4
Mozambique	Afrobarometer	2014	Concurrent	75	85	10
Nicaragua	LAPOP	2011	Presidential	80	92	12
Nigeria	Afrobarometer	2011	Presidential	62	62	0
Russia	RES	2016	Parliamentary	55	67	12
Tanzania	Afrobarometer	2010	Concurrent	70	82	12
Togo	Afrobarometer	2013	Parliamentary	89	90	1
Uganda	Afrobarometer	2011	Concurrent	78	81	3
Zimbabwe	Afrobarometer	2013	Parliamentary	74	84	10
Mean				76.1	83	6.9

Note: See appendix for more information on this sample of countries. Regime turnout is the share of regime party (and allied party) supporters who reported turning out. Opposition turnout is the share of supporters of significant opposition parties (those who had the support of more than 2% of party identifiers) who reported turning out in the relevant election. "Turnout Gap" is the difference between the two. Since non-aligned voters are excluded, this comparison focuses on the difference between regime partisans and opposition partisans. A similar turnout gap emerges when using an alternative measure of regime support: trust in the ruling party/executive/president. See appendix for question wordings and survey details.

* Election with an electoral boycott by a minor opposition party. The boycotting opposition party was removed from the list of parties used to construct the opposition turnout measure.

Russia, a recent study by Pesiakhin et al (2018) found that opposition voters in Moscow were unswayed by turnout appeals that emphasized the closeness of local elections and hence the ability of voters to determine the outcome. These findings make sense in light of the arguments in this paper. Voters are rarely swayed by appeals to instrumental motivations in any setting, much less autocracies. Intrinsic motivations, such as the duty to vote, matter much more.

Thus, differences in feelings of civic duty may be an alternative explanation for this turnout gap. Regime supporters turn out at higher rates because they feel a stronger duty to vote. Furthermore, I show that this differential is not because regime supporters adhere more closely to norms of democratic citizenship. Indeed, the duty to vote does not appear to be associated with support for democracy at all. Incumbents enjoy a turnout differential not just because elections are undemocratic, but because the blending of state and regime under autocracy gives rise to differences in how regime and opposition voters orient toward the state. The former are proud citizens and thus feel the obligations of citizenship more strongly. The latter are more likely to feel estranged from the state and therefore feel less obligation to participate in state-sanctioned elections.

Nevertheless, this study leaves open a number of important questions. One concerns the role of competition. On the one hand, the concept of duty implies that these moral considerations should be unaffected by the type or quality of elections. On the other hand, some recent research suggests that the duty to vote may indeed vary with level of competition (Aytac and Stokes 2019). It could be that competition affects how individuals perceive the fairness of elections which in turn can impact perceptions of state legitimacy. Thus, future research might profit from examining how competition affects both the duty to vote and the gap in voting duty between regime and opposition. The type of election may also matter. Since levels of competition are usually higher in legislative elections than in presidential elections, the duty gap between regime and opposition supporters might be higher the former. Electoral rules might also play a role as voters might view low-waste proportional elections as more fair.

My framework also suggests that oppositions in certain types of settings will find it easier to mobilize their voters. First, compulsory voting should help nullify the turnout gap. Second, oppositions that are able to engender duty-based voting should be better at mobilizing. Oppositions will find it easier to do this in settings where the regime has not penetrated and subverted state institutions. Such a dynamic is common in most autocracies, but not assured. For example, in developmental states, where the regime avoids politicizing the state apparatus, the opposition may find it easier to instill a sense of civic duty in their voters. The ability of the opposition to draw on patriotic sentiment may also vary. Where feelings of patriotism are universal, long-standing, and deep-seated in the political culture, feelings of civic duty might persist among opposition voters. Opposition parties that draw on national-patriotic platforms may have an easier time mobilizing their supporters, but they will have a hard time doing so if they are unable to convince their followers that the state and the elections it holds are worthy of respect.

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Appendix

TABLE A1: QUESTION DESCRIPTIONS FOR MAIN MANUSCRIPT ANALYSES

Variable	Description
Male	Binary indicator for gender.
Age	Years of age.
Education	Eight-point scale increasing in the level of education acquired by the respondent.
Economic Situation	Seven-point scale increasing in self-reported ease of paying for household expenses.
Town Size	Six-point scale measuring the size of the respondent's population point.
CPSU Membership	Binary indicator for whether respondent is a member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.
Social Org. Membership	Count of number of different non-government organizations that the respondent is a member of.
Russia Democracy	Binary indicator measuring if the respondent believes Russia is a democracy.
Democracy Support	Four point scale measuring the extent the respondent believes that democracy is appropriate for Russia.
Follow Politics	Four-point scale of how closely respondent follows political events in Russia.
Putin Support	Five-point scale of the degree to which the respondent approves of President Putin's activities in office from 2012-2016.
UR Support	Ten-point scale of the degree to which the respondent supports the United Russia political party.
Corruption Has Increased	Three-point scale measuring whether respondent believes corruption has decreased, stayed the same, or increased under Putin.
Perceived Elec. Integrity	Five-point scale measuring the extent the respondent believes that the most recent parliamentary elections in Russia (2016) were honest.
Crimea Support	Four-point scale measuring the extent to which respondent supports the unification of Crimea and Russia.
Living Standards Better under Putin	Three-point scale measuring whether respondent believes that living standards have decreased, stayed the same, or increased under Putin.

TABLE A1: QUESTION DESCRIPTIONS FOR MAIN MANUSCRIPT ANALYSES

Variable	Description
Ethnic Russian	Binary indicator equal to one if the respondent identifies as ethnically Russian
Reg. Competition	United Russia Party List Vote Share in 2016 State Duma Elections
Frequent State News	Binary indicator equal to one if the respondent reports watching news programs on federal state-run television every day or almost every day

This is the Russian language version of the voting duty survey instrument used throughout the paper.

ЛЮДИ ПО-РАЗНОМУ ОТНОСЯТСЯ К УЧАСТИЮ В ГОЛОСОВАНИИ. ОДНИ СЧИТАЮТ ЭТО СВОИМ ГРАЖДАНСКИМ ДОЛГОМ И УВЕРЕНЫ, ЧТО ДОЛЖНЫ ГОЛОСОВАТЬ НА КАЖДЫХ ВЫБОРАХ КАК БЫ ОНИ НИ ОТНОСИЛИСЬ К КАНДИДАТАМ И ПАРТИЯМ. ДРУГИЕ СЧИТАЮТ, ЧТО У НИХ ЕСТЬ ПРАВО ВЫБОРА – ГОЛОСОВАТЬ ИЛИ НЕ ГОЛОСОВАТЬ НА ВЫБОРАХ, В ЗАВИСИМОСТИ ОТ ТОГО, КАК ОНИ ОТНОСЯТСЯ К КАНДИДАТАМ И ПАРТИЯМ. КАКАЯ ИЗ ЭТИХ ПОЗИЦИЙ ВАМ БЛИЖЕ? (один ответ)

1. Считаю, что у меня есть право выбора, голосовать или не голосовать на выборах
2. Считаю, что голосовать на выборах - это мой гражданский долг
3. З/О
4. ОТКАЗ

TABLE A2: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR MAIN MANUSCRIPT

VARIABLES	(1) N	(2) mean	(3) sd	(4) min	(5) max
Male	2,010	0.34	0.47	0	1
Age	2,005	47.4	17.3	18	94
Education	1,996	5.37	1.30	1	8
Town Size	2,010	2.89	1.63	1	6
CPSU Membership	2,010	0.093	0.29	0	1
Economic Status	1,952	3.50	1.11	1	7
Social Org. Membership	2,010	0.29	0.89	0	9
Corruption Has Increased	1,835	2.26	0.72	1	3
Living Standards Better under Putin	1,839	1.64	0.78	1	3
Ethnic Russian	1,983	0.87	0.34	0	1
Frequent State News	1,950	0.59	0.49	0	1
Follow Politics	2,008	2.78	1.04	1	4
Putin Support	1,983	3.73	0.96	1	5
UR Support	1,965	5.95	2.39	0	10
Perceived Elec. Integrity	1,757	3.34	1.30	1	5
Democracy Support	1,626	2.91	0.81	1	4
Russia Democracy	1,596	0.63	0.48	0	1
Crimea Support	1,845	3.56	0.73	1	4
Duty to Vote	1,868	0.43	0.50	0	1
Reg. Competition	2,046	49.5	13.2	35.2	96.3

TABLE A3: QUESTION DESCRIPTIONS FOR ADDITIONAL VARIABLES USED IN APPENDIX

Variable	Description
Putin Support (Binary)	Binary indicator for whether respondent supports President Vladimir Putin
Employed	Binary indicator for whether respondent was employed at time of survey.
Received Threat	Binary indicator equal to one if respondent reported that someone (an employer or party activist) threatened that there would negative consequences for them if they didnt vote.
Received Vote Buying Offer	Binary indicator equal to one if respondent reported that someone (employer or party activists) offered them a money, a gift, or reward for their vote.
Employer Asked to Vote	Binary indicator equal to one if respondent reported that employer asked them to vote.
Mobilized by Party	Binary indicator equal to one if respondent reported any of following encounters with a party activist: encouragement to vote, encouragement to vote for a specific candidate, threats, vote buying offers
Putin: Pos. Emotions	Binary indicator equal to one if respondent expressed “delight” or “affection”when asked to name the words that come to mind when they think about Putin
Putin: Neg. Emotions	Binary indicator equal to one if respondent expressed “disgust” or “antipathy”when asked to name the words that come to mind when they think about Putin
Social Pressure	Binary indicator equal to one if respondent reported that either coworkers, family, or friends would be upset if they found out that the respondent did not vote
Egotropic Econ. Eval.	Five-point scale measuring whether the respondent’s economic position has improved or worsened over past year.
Sociotropic Econ. Eval.	Five-point scale measuring whether the respondent’s believes the economy in Russia has improved or worsened over past year
Foreign Influence Better	Three-point scale measuring whether respondent believes that Russia’s influence in the world has decreased, stayed the same, or increased under Putin.
Caucasus Better	Three-point scale measuring whether respondent believes that political stability in the North Caucasus has decreased, stayed the same, or increased under Putin.

TABLE A3: QUESTION DESCRIPTIONS FOR ADDITIONAL VARIABLES USED IN APPENDIX

Variable	Description
Political Stability Better	Three-point scale measuring whether respondent believes political stability in Russia in general has decreased, stayed the same, or increased under Putin.
Inequality Better	Three-point scale measuring whether respondent believes that economic inequality has increased, stayed the same or decreased under Putin.
Performance Index	Additive index of <i>Inequality Better</i> , <i>Political Stability Better</i> , <i>Caucasus Better</i> , <i>Foreign Influence Better</i> , and <i>Living Standards Better under Putin</i>
Proud Patriot of My Country	Binary indicator measuring whether respondent considers “being a patriot” as one of the characteristics they are most proud of.
Proud Citizen of Russia	Four-point scale measuring whether respondent agrees with the slogan “Russia is for Russians”
Syria War Support	Four-point scale measuring the extent to which respondents supports Russian military intervention in Syria.
Anti-Gay Bill Support	Four-point scale measuring the extent to which respondent supports the bill on “protecting children from homosexual propaganda”
EU Food Ban Support	Four-point scale measuring the extent to which respondent supports the ban on EU foodstuffs.
Term Extension Support	Four-point scale measuring the extent to which respondent supports the extensions of the president’s term to six years.
Pension Support	Four-point scale measuring the extent to which respondents supports the reforms that changed how pensions were indexed .
Voted	Binary indicator measuring if the respondent voted in the 2016 parliamentary election.
SMD Winner Margin	Winner’s margin of victory in the 2016 State Duma elections in the SMD district where the respondent lives

TABLE A4: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR APPENDIX (VARIABLES FROM 2016 RUSSIAN ELECTION STUDY ONLY)

VARIABLES	(1) N	(2) mean	(3) sd	(4) min	(5) max
Male	2,010	0.34	0.47	0	1
Age	2,005	47.4	17.3	18	94
Employed	2,008	0.53	0.50	0	1
Education	1,996	5.37	1.30	1	8
Town Size	2,010	2.89	1.63	1	6
CPSU Membership	2,010	0.093	0.29	0	1
Economic Status	1,952	3.50	1.11	1	7
Social Org. Membership	2,010	0.29	0.89	0	9
Egotropic Econ. Eval.	1,960	2.63	0.90	1	5
Sociotropic Econ. Eval.	1,900	2.56	0.80	1	5
Living Standards Better under Putin	1,839	1.64	0.78	1	3
Ethnic Russian	1,983	0.87	0.34	0	1
Follow Politics	2,008	2.78	1.04	1	4
Putin Support	1,983	3.73	0.96	1	5
Putin: Neg. Emotions	1,963	0.018	0.13	0	1
Putin: Pos. Emotions	1,963	0.46	0.50	0	1
UR Support	1,965	5.95	2.39	0	10
Perceived Elec. Integrity	1,757	3.34	1.30	1	5
Social Pressure	1,776	0.11	0.32	0	1
Employer Asked to Vote	1,966	0.077	0.27	0	1
Mobilized by Party	1,947	0.14	0.34	0	1
Received Vote Buying Offer	2,010	0.035	0.18	0	1
Received Threat	2,010	0.023	0.15	0	1
Pension Reform Support	1,658	1.64	0.90	1	4
Anti-Gay Bill Support	1,866	3.65	0.70	1	4
Term Extension Support	1,547	2.80	1.05	1	4
Syria War Support	1,568	2.61	1.07	1	4
EU Food Ban Support	1,654	3.05	0.96	1	4
Crimea Support	1,845	3.56	0.73	1	4
Voted	1,919	0.56	0.50	0	1
Duty to Vote	1,868	0.43	0.50	0	1
Inequality Better	1,878	1.44	0.60	1	3
Political Stability Better	1,804	2.31	0.70	1	3
Foreign Influence Better	1,833	2.58	0.65	1	3
Caucasus Better	1,641	2.42	0.67	1	3
Performance Index	1,478	10.4	2.15	5	15
SMD Winner Margin	2,095	0.32	0.19	-0.043	0.90

Table A5 shows estimates from a series of logistic regressions that model the predictors of reported turnout in the 2016 Duma Elections. Data are from the 2016 Russian Election Study.¹ As column 1 indicates, explicit threats have no impact on turnout. Vote buying offers are positively correlated with turnout, but as noted in the text, this practice is rare, affecting three percent of voters.

More implicit types of coercion, especially in the workplace, are much more common. Employers in Russia often ask, suggest, or encourage their employees to vote, leaving the consequences of not voting to the imagination. In 2016, 15% of employed voters (8% of respondents) reported this type of mobilization. Rates of workplace mobilization were significantly higher in 2011, affecting 25% of employed voters, which was 14% of all voters (Frye, Reuter, and Szakonyi 2014). As Column 2 indicates this type of workplace mobilization is positively correlated with turnout, though not all those who receive these inducements vote for this reason. Given the fact that most voters are not exposed to such inducements, it cannot be considered the primary driver of turnout.

In sum, it is understandable that clientelism and intimidation have received so much attention in the literature on authoritarian voting. These practices are much more prevalent in autocracies than they are in democracies. Moreover, these tactics can swing individual elections and help autocrats pad their vote totals. But it is hard to conclude that threats and vote-buying are the primary reason that most citizens vote. We must look elsewhere to find the main driver of turnout under autocracy.

Another candidate is mass mobilization. In democracies, partisan mobilization is one of the strongest predictors of turnout (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). In the Soviet Union (and other post-totalitarian societies) the regime engaged in perpetual agitation and propaganda. Friedgut estimates that as much as 5% of the adult population served as an agitator at election time (1981, 98).

Among contemporary autocracies, however, this level of mobilization is extremely rare. In Russia, parties mobilize during campaigns, but the extent of these efforts pales in comparison to the Soviet period. During the 2016 State Duma campaign, 14% of respondents reported some type of mobilizational contact with a political party. In the Soviet Union by contrast, CPSU agitators were tasked with visiting *every* home prior to election day (Friedgut 1979, 101)

Mobilization does seem to be associated with turnout. As Column 3 in Table A5 shows, those respondents who were contacted by a political party were more likely to report turning out. Still, since most voters are not contacted by party activists, partisan mobilization cannot be the main reason that most people vote in Russia.

¹
The findings in this section rely on an analysis of survey-reported turnout, which is known to be higher than actual turnout (DeBell et al 2018). This turnout gap appears almost unavoidable in surveys, but several things helped minimize the gap in this survey. First, to reduce recall error the survey was conducted immediately after the election, and, second, interviews were conducted face-to-face, which has been shown to reduce the gap (DeBell et al 2018). Indeed, the gap between reported turnout (56%) and actual turnout (48%) was considerably lower in this survey than in most surveys done in the American context (DeBell et al 2018). Any bias that this gap produces is unlikely to alter the primary substantive message in this section, because the main findings are large in magnitude.

TABLE A5: PREDICTORS OF VOTING IN 2016 STATE DUMA ELECTIONS

VARIABLES	(1) Voted	(2) Voted	(3) Voted	(4) Voted	(5) Voted	(6) Voted	(7) Voted	(8) Voted
Age	0.006*** (0.001)	0.006*** (0.001)	0.006*** (0.001)	0.005*** (0.001)	0.005*** (0.001)	0.005*** (0.001)	0.005*** (0.001)	0.003*** (0.001)
Male	-0.065** (0.026)	-0.071*** (0.026)	-0.062** (0.026)	-0.054** (0.025)	-0.040 (0.025)	-0.041 (0.026)	-0.057** (0.027)	-0.051* (0.028)
Town Size	-0.034*** (0.012)	-0.035*** (0.011)	-0.034*** (0.012)	-0.033*** (0.011)	-0.032*** (0.011)	-0.030** (0.012)	-0.031*** (0.010)	-0.031*** (0.011)
CPSU Membership	0.108** (0.042)	0.115*** (0.042)	0.099** (0.042)	0.092** (0.043)	0.080* (0.046)	0.080* (0.045)	0.076 (0.049)	0.081 (0.052)
Economic Status	0.029*** (0.011)	0.027** (0.011)	0.028** (0.011)	0.018 (0.012)	0.012 (0.012)	0.012 (0.012)	0.018 (0.012)	0.019 (0.012)
Education	-0.001 (0.010)	-0.002 (0.009)	-0.002 (0.010)	0.000 (0.009)	0.005 (0.009)	0.007 (0.009)	0.000 (0.010)	0.002 (0.010)
Social Org. Membership	0.018 (0.013)	0.012 (0.013)	0.011 (0.012)	0.005 (0.013)	0.007 (0.014)	0.005 (0.013)	0.005 (0.013)	-0.001 (0.012)
Follow Politics	0.108*** (0.009)	0.107*** (0.010)	0.108*** (0.009)	0.107*** (0.009)	0.088*** (0.010)	0.095*** (0.010)	0.087*** (0.010)	0.068*** (0.008)
Received Threat	0.035 (0.093)							
Received Vote Buying Offer	0.117** (0.058)							
Employed		0.043 (0.029)						
Employer Asked to Vote		0.095** (0.047)						
Mobilized by Party			0.179*** (0.035)	0.181*** (0.035)	0.169*** (0.036)	0.170*** (0.037)	0.130*** (0.038)	0.086*** (0.033)
Living Standards Better under Putin				0.033* (0.018)	0.007 (0.018)	0.008 (0.017)	-0.000 (0.019)	-0.011 (0.020)
Putin Support					0.043*** (0.016)		0.039** (0.017)	0.028* (0.016)
Perceived Elec. Integrity					0.030*** (0.009)	0.030*** (0.009)	0.026*** (0.010)	0.025** (0.010)
Putin: Pos. Emotions					0.070** (0.033)	0.084*** (0.031)	0.076** (0.035)	0.068* (0.035)
Putin: Neg. Emotions					0.150 (0.096)	0.162 (0.100)	0.067 (0.100)	0.134 (0.091)
UR Support						0.015** (0.006)		
Social Pressure							0.257*** (0.052)	0.202*** (0.045)
Duty to Vote								0.250*** (0.025)
Observations	1,855	1,825	1,806	1,680	1,458	1,452	1,322	1,257

Cell Entries are Average Marginal Effects. Standard errors clustered on region in parentheses
p<.1; **p<.05; ***p<.01

Another possible explanation is state performance. Theories of contractual citizenship argue that political participation increases when voters feel that the state is holding up its end of the bargain by providing certain benefits. Economic development is one such benefit. Indeed, one study of turnout under autocracy links turnout with economic growth, arguing that citizens signal their approval of government performance by turning out (Miguel, Jamal, and Tessler 2015). In Model 4, I include a variable that taps respondents' assessment of long-run socio-economic performance under Putin. It is positively correlated with reported (significant at the .1 level), but loses significance in Models 5-8. Similar results (sometimes weakly correlated, but not robust) are found with other performance measures, including short-term egotropic and sociotropic economic evaluations and other measures of domestic and foreign policy performance.

Another explanation is partisan expressive voting. Many have argued people vote because they derive a consumption benefit from the very act of expressing a preference for one party or another (e.g. Fiorina 1976, Schuessler 2000). Brennan and Buchanan (1984) make the analogy to a sporting event. Fans show up because they derive pleasure from cheering on their team (or booing their opponents). Under this view, voters know they cannot influence the outcome, but they derive a psychological benefit from registering approval for their side.

Table 1 suggests that expressive voting happens in Russia. Among those who voted, "the desire to express my political position (even if it won't help my candidate win)" was the fourth most frequently cited reason for voting. Moreover, the results in Column 4 of Table A5 also shows results that are consistent expressive voting. Many scholars argue that expressive voting should be viewed as an emotional, as opposed to rational, compulsion (Cebula 2004, Kan and Yang 2001). Following Kan and Young (2001) I proxy emotional attachment to the regime by using a question that asks respondents to indicate the words that best signify their attitude to Vladimir Putin. I code those who indicated "Delight" or "Affection" for Putin as having a positive emotional attachment to the regime. The reference category is respondents who answered "I can't say anything bad about him" "Neutral/Indifferent," "Wary/Watchful", and "I can't say anything good about him" Those who indicated "Disgust" or "Antipathy" are coded as having a negative emotional attachment to the regime. As Column 5 indicates, those with a positive emotional attachment to the regime are more likely to vote, although those with a negative emotional attachment are not any more or less likely to vote.

These results hold while controlling for measures of political preference intensity and perceptions of electoral integrity, which are themselves of interest. The positive coefficient on *Perceived Elec. Integrity* indicates that respondents who think that the elections were honest were more likely to turnout.

The regressions also show that regime supporters are more likely to vote than regime opponents. Whether measured as support for Putin (Model 5) or support for United Russia (Model 6), regime supporters are significantly more likely to turn out.

Finally, another prominent explanation for voting is social pressure. Empirical studies in democracies show that the threat of social sanction for not voting can significantly increase turnout (e.g. Gerber, Green and Larimer 2008). While such arguments are best tested experimentally, the observational evidence in Russia suggests that social pressure plays a role. Nine percent of respondents said that they voted at least in part because it is customary in their social circle. The survey also asked respondents if their friends, coworkers, or loved ones would be disappointed in them if they did not vote. Ten percent of respondents answered yes. And while such perceptions are endogenous to many other factors, the positive and significant coefficient on *Social Pressure* in

Column 7 of Table [A5](#) suggests that such perceptions could be an important driver of turnout. And yet there is little to suggest that this motivation dominates the turnout decision under autocracy, and in any case, the existence of social pressure only begs the question of why such a voting norm would exist. This topic is addressed in the paper.

Finally, Model 8 adds the duty vs choice survey instrument to the models (discussed in the text). Unsurprisingly, civic duty is strongly correlated with turnout and has a large substantive effect.

TABLE A6: AGE AND SOVIET POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION

VARIABLES	(1) Duty	(2) Duty	(3) Duty	(4) Duty
Male	-0.024 (0.022)	-0.001 (0.046)	-0.021 (0.022)	-0.021 (0.022)
Town Size	-0.022** (0.010)	-0.013 (0.017)	-0.022** (0.010)	-0.022** (0.010)
CPSU Membership	0.042 (0.046)		0.022 (0.047)	0.023 (0.046)
Economic Status	0.027** (0.012)	-0.000 (0.021)	0.029** (0.012)	0.029** (0.012)
Education	0.002 (0.011)	0.014 (0.022)	0.004 (0.011)	0.004 (0.011)
Social Org. Membership	0.032** (0.015)	-0.010 (0.022)	0.035** (0.014)	0.035** (0.014)
6-15 in 1991	0.087*** (0.032)			
16-22 in 1991	0.150*** (0.041)			
23-40 in 1991	0.219*** (0.032)			
Older than 40 1991	0.339*** (0.042)			
Age		0.015*** (0.006)	0.006* (0.004)	0.015 (0.012)
Age Squared			0.000 (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)
Age Cubed				0.000 (0.000)
Observations	1,813	441	1,809	1,809

Cell Entries are Average Marginal Effects. Standard errors clustered on region in parentheses. Reference category in Model 1 is those who were 6 or younger (or unborn) in 1991. Model 2 is restricted only to those 6 or younger (or unborn) in 1991. *p<.1; **p<.05; ***p<.01

Table A6 shows several models that further probe the association between age and the duty to vote in Russia. Data are from the 2016 RES. Model 1 looks to see whether there are discrete effects of Soviet political socialization. It does not appear that there are. Rather it appears that the effect of age is linear. Age groups that would have experienced political socialization during their formative years under the Soviet regime are more likely to think voting is a duty than those who did not, but this difference is no larger than the differences between other age cohorts. In other words, the effect of age is still positive *within* the age group that experienced Soviet political socialization and *within* the age group that experienced no Soviet political socialization (see Model 2 for the latter). As Models 3 and 4 show, the effect of age simply appears linear. Of course, this should not be taken as evidence that Soviet political socialization does not matter. This just shows that if it has effects, they are cumulative (and potentially intergenerational), rather than discrete.

TABLE A7: COMPARISON OF RESULTS IN 2000 AND 2016

VARIABLES	(1) 2000 Levada Omnibus: Duty	(2) 2016 Levada Omnibus: Duty
Age	0.004*** (0.001)	0.004*** (0.001)
Male	-0.015 (0.035)	-0.024 (0.026)
Town Size	0.022 (0.021)	-0.025 (0.019)
Economic Status	-0.010 (0.018)	0.030 (0.020)
Education	0.045*** (0.010)	0.009 (0.008)
Putin Support (Binary)	0.055** (0.023)	0.149*** (0.046)
Observations	1,410	1,590

Cell Entries are Average Marginal Effects. Standard errors clustered on region in parentheses

*p<.1; **p<.05; ***p<.01

Table A7 examines how the basic relationship between *Putin Support* and the duty to vote has changed between 2000—when Putin first became president—and 2016. It uses data from two Levada Center (VTsIOM in 2000) omnibus surveys; the first in March 2000, and the second in July 2016. Note that the 2016 July Levada Omnibus survey is different from the 2016 RES survey analyzed in the paper.

Both omnibus surveys included the following open-ended question: “What motivates/could motivate you to vote?” This question was given to all respondents, and civic duty (Гражданский долг) was one of the most commonly given responses. The dependent variable is one if the respondent listed civic duty as their (possible) motivation for voting, and zero if not. Such open-ended questions are imprecise because they allow respondents to self-define civic duty and are vulnerable to social desirability bias. But comparing effect sizes over time can be revealing. As the models show, the effect of *Putin Support* is almost three times higher in 2016 than it was in 2000, when the Putin regime was first being established. The differences between 2000 and 2016 are instructive, but note that it is not appropriate to precisely compare the effect sizes here with those in the main text. Aside from the different dependent variable, *Putin Support* is measured here as a dichotomous variable rather than the 5-point scale used in the text. Note also that not all control variables used in the main text are available in these surveys.

Table A8 Shows a series of models that replicate Model 2 in Table 3 in the main text, using different performance evaluation measures. I use the same decomposition methodology as in the text. None of the measures outperform the long-term performance measure used in the main text, although other short-term economic performance evaluations have a similar effect (Models 1 and 2). Among other performance measures, only foreign influence mediates the effect of *Putin Support*. The composite index of all performance measures (Model 7) mediates the effect of *Putin Support* but its effect is no larger than the stand alone economic performance measures.

TABLE A8: ALTERNATIVE MEASURES OF PERFORMANCE MEDIATOR

VARIABLES	(1) Duty	(2) Duty	(3) Duty	(4) Duty	(5) Duty	(6) Duty	(7) Duty
Age	0.005*** (0.001)	0.005*** (0.001)	0.005*** (0.001)	0.004*** (0.001)	0.005*** (0.001)	0.005*** (0.001)	0.005*** (0.001)
Male	-0.038* (0.022)	-0.040* (0.023)	-0.036 (0.022)	-0.028 (0.021)	-0.044** (0.021)	-0.048** (0.022)	-0.040* (0.021)
Town Size	-0.013 (0.010)	-0.012 (0.009)	-0.013 (0.009)	-0.011 (0.010)	-0.011 (0.009)	-0.014 (0.010)	-0.014 (0.010)
CPSU Membership	0.002 (0.048)	0.022 (0.048)	0.014 (0.044)	0.014 (0.045)	0.020 (0.048)	0.025 (0.048)	0.009 (0.048)
Economic Status	0.013 (0.013)	0.007 (0.014)	0.018 (0.012)	0.008 (0.012)	0.010 (0.013)	0.016 (0.013)	0.011 (0.013)
Education	-0.006 (0.010)	-0.005 (0.010)	-0.007 (0.010)	-0.007 (0.010)	-0.008 (0.011)	-0.005 (0.010)	-0.006 (0.011)
Social Org. Membership	0.027* (0.014)	0.026** (0.013)	0.024* (0.014)	0.028* (0.015)	0.028** (0.014)	0.025* (0.014)	0.022 (0.015)
Follow Politics	0.099*** (0.013)	0.096*** (0.014)	0.099*** (0.013)	0.108*** (0.013)	0.100*** (0.013)	0.097*** (0.014)	0.110*** (0.014)
Putin Support	0.047*** (0.014)	0.054*** (0.013)	0.056*** (0.014)	0.056*** (0.013)	0.058*** (0.013)	0.058*** (0.014)	0.042*** (0.016)
Sociotropic Econ. Eval.	0.051** (0.021)						
Egotropic Econ. Eval.		0.039** (0.015)					
Foreign Influence Better			0.049** (0.021)				
Caucasus Better				0.015 (0.021)			
Political Stability Better					0.028 (0.018)		
Inequality Better						0.012 (0.022)	
Performance Index							0.018** (0.008)
Putin Support in Reduced Model	.06** (.012)	.061*** (.013)	.063*** (.013)	.058*** (.013)	.061*** (.012)	.058*** (.013)	(.053)*** (.013)
Difference: Reduced - Full	.014**	.008**	.008**	.002	.004	.001	.008**
Total Confounding Pct.	23%	12%	12%	3%	6%	2%	17%
Observations	1,712	1,767	1,661	1,497	1,638	1,698	1,357

Cell Entries are Average Marginal Effects. Standard errors clustered on region in parentheses. All Results are from the *full* models that include both *Putin Support* and the proposed mediator. Results from the reduced models are suppressed with the exception of *Putin Support* which is provided at the bottom of the table. The row *Difference: Reduced - Full* gives the difference between the *Putin Support* coefficient in the reduced model and the full model shown in the table. Differences and standard errors are calculated using the KHB method described in the text. The marginal effect of *Putin Support* in the reduced model varies across models because of the rescaling adjustment used in the decomposition and because of the varying sample sizes that arise due to missing values on the mediators.

*p<.1; **p<.05; ***p<.01

TABLE A9: ALTERNATIVE MEASURES OF PATRIOTISM

VARIABLES	(1) 2016 Levada Omnibus: Duty	(2) 2016 Levada Omnibus: Duty
Age	0.004*** (0.001)	0.004*** (0.001)
Male	-0.029 (0.026)	-0.021 (0.026)
Town Size	-0.028 (0.019)	-0.030* (0.018)
Economic Status	0.025 (0.021)	0.022 (0.021)
Education	0.009 (0.008)	0.008 (0.008)
Putin Support (Binary)	0.139*** (0.044)	0.118*** (0.044)
Proud Patriot of My Country	0.119** (0.052)	
Proud Citizen of Russia		0.161*** (0.029)
Observations	1,515	1,515

Cell Entries are Average Marginal Effects. Standard errors clustered on region in parentheses
*p<.1; **p<.05; ***p<.01

Table A9 examines the main argument in the paper using an alternative, more direct measure of patriotism. The difficulty with testing alternative measures of patriotism was the need to locate a survey that asked about both patriotism and the duty to vote (and support for Putin). I was able to locate one such survey: the July 2016 Levada Omnibus (referenced above and in the text). This survey included the following question: “Which of the following are characteristics that you have and are most proud of? What more than anything gives you self-respect?” Respondents were given a list of 26 characteristics with options such as, “I am a father,” “I am a believer (in God),” “I am a veteran,” and “I am a liberal”. Two items directly concerned patriotism: “I am citizen of Russia” and “I am a patriot of my country.” The survey also included the following open-ended question. “What motivates/could motivate you to vote?” This question was given to all respondents, and civic duty (Гражданский долг) was one of the most commonly given responses. The dependent variable is one if the respondent listed civic duty as their motivation for voting, and zero if not. Such open-ended questions are imprecise because they allow respondents to self-define civic duty and are vulnerable to social desirability bias, but we can have more confidence in our results if the basic findings identified on the 2016 RES hold in other surveys with different measures.

In Model 1, I include a dummy variable equal to one if the respondent chose “Patriot of my country” as one of the characteristics they are proud of. Model 2 includes a dummy variable equal to one if the respondent chose “Proud Citizen of Russia” as one of the characteristics they are proud of. Both are positively correlated with the duty to vote, and the effect of *Putin Support* remains positive, significant, and large in models that control for these alternative patriotism measures. The direction and statistical significance on the coefficients is instructive, but note that it is not appropriate to precisely compare the effect sizes of *Putin Support* here with the effect in the main text. Aside from the different dependent variable, *Putin Support* is measured here as a dichotomous variable rather than the 5-point scale used in the text. Note also that not all control variables used in the main text are available in these surveys.

TABLE A10: RUSSIAN ETHNICITY, ETHNONATIONALISM, AND PUTIN SUPPORT

VARIABLES	(1) 2014 FRS: Putin Support	(2) 2016 RES: Putin Support	(3) 2014 FRS: Putin Support
Ethnic Russian	0.001 (0.023)	-0.058 (0.045)	
Age	0.001*** (0.000)	0.004*** (0.001)	0.001*** (0.000)
Male	-0.038*** (0.012)	-0.071*** (0.026)	-0.038*** (0.012)
Town Size	-0.007 (0.006)	-0.007 (0.010)	-0.007 (0.005)
Economic Status	0.022** (0.009)	0.070*** (0.013)	0.022** (0.009)
Education	0.006** (0.003)	-0.010 (0.010)	0.007** (0.003)
Supports 'Russia for Russians'			-0.010 (0.007)
Observations	3,847	1,898	3,820

Cell Entries are Average Marginal Effects. Standard errors clustered on region in parentheses
 *p<.1; **p<.05; ***p<.01

Table A10 shows some simple regressions that correlated support for Putin with Russian ethnicity. Russian ethnicity is not positively correlated with *Putin Support* in the 2016 RES (Model 2). Unfortunately, many Russian surveys lack a question on ethnicity, but I was able to locate at least one other survey that did so. Model 1 uses survey data from an original survey of 4200 respondents carried out by Frye, Reuter, and Szakonyi (2019) in September 2014, which included such a question. It confirms the results from Model 2. That survey also included a question designed to tap ethno-nationalist attitudes. A popular slogan of ethnonationalists in Russia is “Russia is for the Russians” (Россия для русских). The operative term in this slogan is “the Russians (russkiye).” In the Russian language, the term “*russkiye*” usually refers to those with Russian ethnicity. Citizens of Russia, whatever their ethnicity, are “*rossiyanye*.” Thus, this slogan avers that Russia should be for ethnic Russians. As Model 3 shows, those who hold to this notion are actually slightly less likely to support Putin (though the effect is not significant)

TABLE A11: RUSSIAN ETHNICITY AND PATRIOTISM

VARIABLES	(1)	(2)
	2016 RES: Crimea Support	2014 FRS: Feel More Patriotic than Most
Ethnic Russian	0.021 (0.067)	0.061 (0.048)
Age	0.003** (0.001)	0.011*** (0.001)
Male	0.033 (0.042)	0.062* (0.032)
Town Size	-0.010 (0.017)	-0.026 (0.018)
Economic Status	0.006 (0.024)	0.051* (0.029)
Education	-0.020* (0.012)	0.028*** (0.006)
Constant	3.532*** (0.127)	
Observations	1,780	3,603
R-squared	0.007	

Cell Entries are OLS Regression Coefficients. Standard errors clustered on region in parentheses

*p<.1; **p<.05; ***p<.01

Table A11 looks at the relationship between Russian ethnicity and patriotic sentiment. Column 1 shows that ethnic Russians were not more likely to support the annexation of Crimea. The state patriotic fervor that swept through Russia during that period extended to non-Russians as well. Column 2 uses as the dependent variable a question that asks respondents whether they feel that they are more patriotic than most. The question is from the 2014 Frye, Reuter, and Szakonyi (2019) survey referenced above. Ethnic Russians are not more likely to say they feel more patriotic.

TABLE A12: PLACEBO TESTS FOR PATRIOTISM FINDINGS

VARIABLES	(1) Duty	(2) Duty	(3) Duty	(4) Duty	(5) Duty
Age	0.005*** (0.001)	0.005*** (0.001)	0.005*** (0.001)	0.005*** (0.001)	0.005*** (0.001)
Male	-0.045* (0.025)	-0.051** (0.025)	-0.053** (0.023)	-0.052** (0.024)	-0.055** (0.027)
Town Size	-0.015 (0.009)	-0.017* (0.010)	-0.013 (0.009)	-0.011 (0.010)	-0.013 (0.011)
CPSU Membership	0.036 (0.045)	0.025 (0.050)	0.018 (0.047)	0.002 (0.050)	-0.009 (0.047)
Economic Status	0.019 (0.013)	0.016 (0.014)	0.021 (0.013)	0.024* (0.014)	0.026* (0.014)
Education	-0.002 (0.010)	-0.001 (0.010)	-0.004 (0.010)	-0.004 (0.011)	-0.007 (0.010)
Social Org. Membership	0.026* (0.014)	0.023 (0.014)	0.024* (0.013)	0.028* (0.016)	0.028* (0.015)
Follow Politics	0.104*** (0.016)	0.092*** (0.015)	0.096*** (0.014)	0.093*** (0.016)	0.103*** (0.014)
Putin Support	0.052*** (0.014)	0.049*** (0.015)	0.057*** (0.013)	0.049*** (0.018)	0.068*** (0.015)
EU Food Ban Support	0.032** (0.016)				
Syria War Support		0.018 (0.016)			
Anti-Gay Bill Support			0.023 (0.019)		
Term Extension Support				0.012 (0.017)	
Pension Reform Support					-0.014 (0.017)
Observations	1,506	1,428	1,683	1,408	1,504

Cell Entries are Average Marginal Effects. Standard errors clustered on region in parentheses

*p<.1; **p<.05; ***p<.01

Table A12 shows the results of the placebo tests discussed in the Empirical Extensions section of the text. As the table shows, the duty to vote is not well correlated with support for most other recent policy decisions taken by the Putin government. The correlation with pension reform is negative and there is no correlation with support for extending the length of the presidential term or with the Russian military operation in Syria. Interestingly the only significant correlation is with support for the ban on food imports from the EU, which was viewed by many as a righteous response to Western sanctions and was enacted in the midst of the patriotic upswell following Crimea. On the whole, the findings suggest that the duty to vote is closely associated with support for the Crimea annexation (and the “patriotic” ban on EU foodstuffs), but not with other government policy decisions.

TABLE A13: CONTROLLING FOR 2016 TURNOUT

VARIABLES	(1) Duty	(2) Duty	(3) Duty	(4) Duty	(5) Duty
Age	0.004*** (0.001)	0.004*** (0.001)	0.004*** (0.001)	0.004*** (0.001)	0.003*** (0.001)
Male	-0.025 (0.022)	-0.032 (0.025)	-0.021 (0.023)	-0.031 (0.023)	-0.021 (0.022)
Town Size	-0.004 (0.008)	-0.004 (0.009)	-0.000 (0.009)	-0.002 (0.010)	-0.003 (0.008)
CPSU Membership	-0.002 (0.047)	-0.008 (0.054)	-0.024 (0.055)	-0.025 (0.060)	-0.005 (0.048)
Economic Status	0.013 (0.012)	0.018 (0.013)	0.014 (0.013)	0.019 (0.013)	0.009 (0.012)
Education	-0.007 (0.009)	-0.013 (0.009)	-0.015 (0.010)	-0.016 (0.010)	-0.005 (0.009)
Social Org. Membership	0.023** (0.011)	0.030** (0.013)	0.020* (0.011)	0.027** (0.013)	0.022** (0.011)
Voted	0.319*** (0.022)	0.310*** (0.023)	0.300*** (0.026)	0.301*** (0.026)	0.308*** (0.023)
Follow Politics	0.062*** (0.013)	0.060*** (0.014)	0.071*** (0.014)	0.065*** (0.015)	0.060*** (0.013)
Democracy Support			-0.001 (0.019)	-0.008 (0.029)	
Russia Democracy		0.016 (0.025)		-0.040 (0.111)	
Russia Democracy*Support Democracy				0.018 (0.037)	
Putin Support					0.040*** (0.012)
Observations	1,736	1,403	1,423	1,253	1,717

Cell Entries are Average Marginal Effects.
Standard errors clustered on region in parentheses
*p<.1; **p<.05; ***p<.01

Another possible concern with the analyses in the text is that the civic duty measure could be contaminated by post-hoc rationalization. Respondents who voted might then rationalize their decision by claiming that they feel an obligation to vote even if they do not actually do so (Galais and Blais 2016). And indeed, in order to avoid biasing turnout responses, the civic duty instrument came after the question on turnout in the 2016 RES. One way to address this could be to simply hold constant reported turnout. Table A13 replicates the main results table from the text and shows that all the main results are robust when reported turnout is included as a control.

Sequential G-Estimation

Table A13 estimates the association between key variables and *Civic Duty* while holding constant turnout (*Voted*). However, one problem with simply including *Voted* as a control in these models is that it is clearly caused by other key variables in the model, such as *Putin Support*. Thus, its inclusion in the model is likely to induce post-treatment bias, a type of selection bias that occurs when one controls for variables that are realized after (and possibly caused by) key independent variables. The direction of such bias cannot be known. In order to adjust for this type of bias, I employ a technique introduced to political science by Acharya, Blackwell and Sen (2016) called sequential g-estimation, which allows for the estimation of a variable's direct effect on the dependent variable when the potential post-treatment mediator (*Voted*) is held at a particular value. This quantity is called the controlled direct effect. With this approach one first demediates the dependent variable by removing from it the effect of the mediator. In the second step, one estimates the effect of the variables of interest on this demediated outcome. The resultant estimate is called the controlled direct effect and can be interpreted as the effect of the treatment when the potential mediator is fixed at a particular level. Since sequential g-estimation is not valid for logistical models, both stages are modeled with linear probability models.

In our case, the dependent variable is, as above, *Civic Duty*. The potential mediator is *Voted*, and *Putin Support* is the treatment variable. In the first stage of the procedure I estimate an equation that predicts *Civic Duty* as a function of *Voted* and all variables that are plausibly post-treatment to *Putin Support*. I then take the estimated coefficient on *Voted* and multiply it by the observed values of *Voted* for each observation and subtract that from *Civic Duty*. This is the demediated version of *Civic Duty*. In the second stage of the procedure, I predict this demediated version of *Civic Duty* as a function of all plausibly pre-treatment variables and *Putin Support*. The resulting coefficient on *Putin Support* is the estimate of the controlled direct effect for that variable. In order to calculate correct standard errors the entire process is bootstrapped. Using this procedure, the estimated coefficient on *Putin Support* is 0.04, with a standard error of .01 ($p=.001$). Thus, the main findings on *Putin Support* are robust using this method.

TABLE A14: REGIME SUPPORT AND THE DUTY TO VOTE IN DIFFERENT ELECTIONS

VARIABLES	(1) 2011 Levada Omnibus: Duty	(2) 2012 Levada Omnibus: Duty	(3) 2014 Levada Omnibus: Duty	(4) 2018 Levada Omnibus: Duty
Age	0.003*** (0.001)	0.003*** (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	0.002 (0.001)
Male	-0.037 (0.026)	-0.020 (0.032)	-0.005 (0.042)	0.000 (0.032)
Town Size	-0.012 (0.020)	0.004 (0.017)	0.005 (0.029)	-0.012 (0.014)
Economic Status	0.012 (0.025)	-0.054*** (0.017)	-0.050 (0.031)	0.009 (0.019)
Education	0.014* (0.007)	0.006 (0.008)	0.016 (0.011)	0.004 (0.008)
Putin Support(Binary)	0.150*** (0.036)	0.132*** (0.036)	0.268** (0.106)	0.322*** (0.062)
Observations	1,088	1,178	612	1,198

Cell Entries are Average Marginal Effects. Standard errors clustered on region in parentheses

*p<.1; **p<.05; ***p<.01

Table A14 examines whether *Putin Support* is correlated with the duty to vote in other election types and time periods. We are constricted in this endeavor by data availability, but I was able to locate four post-election Levada Omnibus surveys that asked about the duty to vote. I located two post-presidential election surveys (2012 and 2018), one survey carried out after the 2014 regional elections, and an additional post-parliamentary survey (2011). Each of these surveys asked voters an open-ended question about why they voted. The dependent variable is one if the respondent listed civic duty as their reason for voting, and zero if not. Such open-ended questions are imprecise because they allow respondents to self-define civic duty and are vulnerable to social desirability bias. But we can have more confidence in our main results if the basic relationship between regime support and the duty to vote holds across multiple elections and time periods. In all four surveys, there is a positive and significant correlation between the duty to vote and *Putin Support*. Note that *Putin Support* is measured here as a dichotomous variable rather than the 5-point scale used in the text. Note also that not all control variables used in the main text are available in these surveys.

TABLE A15: SMD DISTRICT HETEROGENEITY

VARIABLES	(1) Duty	(2) Duty
Age	0.005*** (0.001)	0.005*** (0.001)
Male	-0.035 (0.024)	-0.041* (0.022)
Town Size	-0.028** (0.013)	-0.018* (0.010)
CPSU Membership	0.073* (0.042)	0.018 (0.045)
Economic Status	0.025** (0.012)	0.017 (0.012)
Education	-0.002 (0.010)	-0.006 (0.010)
Social Org. Membership	0.029** (0.012)	0.027** (0.012)
Follow Politics	0.090*** (0.012)	0.096*** (0.014)
Putin Support	0.068*** (0.012)	0.033 (0.027)
SMD Winner Margin		-0.490 (0.310)
Putin Support * SMD Winner Margin		0.081 (0.074)
Observations	1,695	1,787

Cell Entries are Average Marginal Effects. Standard errors clustered on region in parentheses
 *p<.1; **p<.05; ***p<.01

Table A15 examines geographic heterogeneity at the level of Russia’s 225 SMD districts. In the 2016 State Duma elections, there was some variation in levels of competitiveness across district races, with United Russia even losing in three districts. It could be that the duty to vote varies according to the competitiveness of these races and this may confound some results. To address this issue, I matched respondents in the 2016 RES with their 2016 SMD district. In Model 1, I include a fixed effect for SMD district. The results on *Putin Support* remains statistically and substantively unchanged. Model 2 tests whether the effect of *Putin Support* varies by the level of competition in each district. Competition is measured as the winner’s margin of victory, which is negative in the districts where United Russia lost. I then interact *SMD Winner Margin* with *Putin Support* to see whether the effect varies across levels of competition. The results indicate that the effect of *Putin Support* is indeed stronger at lower levels of competition, which could indicate some support for the idea that the regime-opposition turnout gap dissipates in high competition contests. However, the difference is not quite statistically significant.

TABLE A16: ADDITIONAL SURVEY DETAILS FOR TABLE 5

Country	Survey	Survey Year	Sample Size
Algeria	Afrobarometer	2015	1200
Cambodia	Asian Barometer	2015	1200
Cameroon	Afrobarometer	2015	1182
Guinea	Afrobarometer	2015	1200
Kazakhstan	Radnitz (2017)	2017	1000
Malaysia	Asian Barometer	2014	1207
Mozambique	Afrobarometer	2015	2400
Nicaragua	LAPOP	2012	1686
Nigeria	Afrobarometer	2014	2400
Russia	RES	2016	2010
Tanzania	Afrobarometer	2014	2386
Togo	Afrobarometer	2013	1200
Uganda	Afrobarometer	2015	2400
Zimbabwe	Afrobarometer	2014	2400

The following pages contain technical details on Table 5 in the text. The sample of countries was constructed as follows. I first identified all electoral autocracies (multiparty regimes with Freedom House Political Rights scores greater than 3) existing since 2010. For each country, I then selected the most recent available survey that met the following criteria: 1) the survey contained a question on turnout, 2) the survey contained a question on party preference (not vote choice), 3) pro-regime parties were distinguishable from pro-opposition parties, 4) no major parties (i.e. first or second largest opposition party) boycotted the election, and 5) the election did not have compulsory voting. Criteria 3 led to the exclusion of elections in Morocco (2011) and Mali (2013). Criteria 4 led to the exclusion of elections in Burundi (2010), Cote d'Ivoire (2011), Gabon (2011), and Sudan (2015).

Survey Question Formulations for Table 5

AfroBarometer

- Turnout (*Q21, Round 6*): Understanding that some people were unable to vote in the most recent national election in [20xx], which of the following statements is true for you? (0= You were not registered to vote 1= You voted in the elections 2= You decided not to vote 3=You could not find the polling station 4=You were prevented from voting 5= You did not have time to vote 6= You did not vote because you could not find your name in the voters' register 7= Did not vote for some other reason 8= You were too young to vote)
- Party Support (*Q90A-B, Round 6*): Do you feel close to any particular political party? If so, which party is that?

Asian Barometer

- Turnout (*33, Round 4*): In talking to people about elections, we often find that a lot of people were not able to vote because they were away from home, they were sick or they just didn't have time. How about you? Did you vote in the election [the most recent national election, parliamentary or presidential] held in [year]? 1=Yes, 2=No
- Party Support (*53, Round 4*): Among the political parties listed here, which party if any do you feel closest to?

Radnitz (2017) (Kazakhstan)

- Turnout (*B33*): Did you vote in the last presidential elections held in 2015? 1=Yes, 2=No
- Party Support (*B34-B35*): Do you share the views of any specific political party? If yes, which party is that?

Russian Election Study

- Turnout (*Q77*): Did you vote in the State Duma elections held on September 18 of this year? 1=Yes, 0=No
- Party Support (*Q62*): Imagine a scale from 0 to 10, where 10 means that you support the party with all your heart and 0 means that you absolutely do not support the party and 5 means that you are indifferent. Using this scale, please tell us how much you support the party "United Russia"

LAPOP

- Turnout (*VB2*): Did you vote in the last presidential elections held in 2011? 1=Yes, 2=No
- Party Support (*VB10-11*): Do you currently identify with a political party? If yes, which party do you identify with?

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