

# ELECTIONS, APPOINTMENTS, AND HUMAN CAPITAL: THE CASE OF RUSSIAN MAYORS

NOAH BUCKLEY

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, HIGHER SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

GUZEL GARIFULLINA

HIGHER SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

ORA JOHN REUTER

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN, MILWAUKEE

HIGHER SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

ALEXANDRA SHUBENKOVA

HIGHER SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

**Abstract:** A growing body of literature suggests that the personal characteristics of public officials have an effect on policy outcomes. But scholars differ as to which of the two primary methods for selecting public officials – elections and appointments – are more likely to produce high quality officials. Using original data on the backgrounds of Russian mayors between 2000 and 2012, we examine how the biographies of elected and appointed mayors differ. We find that differences

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Noah Buckley is Ph.D. Candidate in Political Science at Columbia University, IAB 7th floor, Columbia University, New York, NY 10025, e-mail: nmb2137@columbia.edu. Guzel Garifullina is Junior Research Fellow at the International Center for the Study of Institutions and Development at the Higher School of Economics, 103074, Moscow, Slavyanskaya square 4/2, room 508, e-mail: ggarifullina@hse.ru. Ora John Reuter is Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, Bolton, Room 670, 3210 N. Maryland Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53211, USA, e-mail: reutero@uwm.edu. Alexandra Shubenkova is Junior Research Fellow at the Laboratory for Political Research, Higher School of Economics, 101000, Moscow, Myasnitskaya St. 20, Office 527, e-mail: ashubenkova@hse.ru.

between the two types of officials are modest, but noteworthy. On the one hand, elected mayors have more experience holding elected office and are more educated, which could indicate that they are of higher quality. Moreover, elected mayors turn over at a much lower rate, which indicates lower levels of political instability. Yet appointed mayors have more executive governing experience and are less likely to come from business backgrounds, which may indicate that elections provide more opportunities for business capture. Overall, our findings indicate that Russia's flawed elections may be a double-edged sword when it comes to the selection of quality officials.

Are officials chosen through elections more likely to make good public policy than those who are appointed or anointed? Implicitly or explicitly, this is the key question in debates about the effects of democracy on political and economic development.<sup>1</sup> Most research attempts to answer this question by pointing to the career incentives that elected offices create. In order to be re-elected, elected officials must be responsive to voters, in turn making it more likely that policy outcomes will approximate the preferences of the median voter.<sup>2</sup> Such accountability mechanisms have been associated with a range of positive outcomes in political economy, such as economic growth,<sup>3</sup> public goods provision,<sup>4</sup> and constraints on corruption and patronage.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, some work points to ways

<sup>1</sup> We gratefully acknowledge financial support for this project from the Basic Research Program of the National Research University Higher School of Economics.

<sup>2</sup> James Madison and United States Constitutional Convention. 1987. *Notes of Debates in the Federal Convention of 1787*. New York: W W Norton & Company Incorporated; Anthony Downs. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper; David R. Mayhew. 1974. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. New Haven: Yale University Press; Allen E. Buchanan and Daniel W. Brock. 1989. *Deciding for Others: The Ethics of Surrogate Decision Making*. New York: Cambridge University Press; G. Bingham Powell. 1989. "Constitutional design and citizen electoral control." *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 1.2 (1989): 107-130.

<sup>3</sup> Robert J. Barro. 1998. *Determinants of Economic Growth: A Cross-Country Empirical Study*. Boston, MA: MIT Press; Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, and James A. Robinson. 2001. "The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation." *The American Economic Review* 91 (5): 1369-1401.

<sup>4</sup> Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Alastair Smith, Randolph Siverson, and James Morrow. 2003. *The Logic of Political Survival*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press; Timothy Besley and Masayuki Kudamatsu. 2008. *Making Autocracy Work. Institutions and Economic Performance*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

<sup>5</sup> Barbara Geddes. 1994. *Politicians' Dilemma: Building State Capacity in Latin America*. Berkeley: University of California Press; Herbert Kitschelt and Steven I. Wilkinson. 2007. *Patrons, Clients and Policies: Patterns of Democratic Accountability and Political Competition*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

that competitive elections can stymie economic development. Voters, it is argued, may demand policies that are inflationary, inefficient, and focused on narrow constituencies.<sup>6</sup> According to this logic, unelected technocrats are better positioned to constrain government spending and make growth-oriented economic policy.

A much smaller strain of literature focuses not on the incentives created by elections, but on the quality of officials selected. Arguments in this vein rest on two propositions. First, the intrinsic traits or characteristics of officials affect political and economic outcomes. Second, officials selected under elections are of a higher quality than those selected via non-democratic selection rules, such as appointment, inheritance, tradition, or force.

There is ample evidence in political science for the first proposition. Theorists of descriptive representation have long argued that representatives who are similar to their constituents will be more likely to govern in their interest,<sup>7</sup> and empirical scholars have confirmed that descriptive similarities between elector and elected increases the chances that the latter will represent the former.<sup>8</sup> Characteristics of public officials have been shown to matter in other ways as well. Carnes finds that businessman legislators are more politically conservative.<sup>9</sup> Both Besley et al. and Congleton and Zhang find that educated heads of state are associated with higher growth rates.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, bureaucrats with technocratic backgrounds are thought to be better at generating good governance than unskilled political cronies.<sup>11</sup> In the business world, older CEOs are found to be more conservative.<sup>12</sup> In China, regional party secretaries with ties to their home region have

<sup>6</sup> Alex Cukierman, Sebastian Edwards, and Guido Tabellini. 1992. "Seigniorage and Political Instability." *American Economic Review* 82 (2): 537-555; John D. Griffin and Brian Newman. 2005. "Are voters better represented?." *Journal of Politics* 67.4 (2005): 1206-1227; Peter Evans. 1995. *Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Transformation*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

<sup>7</sup> Brutus. 1787. In Storing, Herbert J., ed. *The complete anti-federalist*. Vol. 1. University of Chicago Press, 2008; Hanna F. Pitkin. 1967. *The Concept of Representation*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

<sup>8</sup> Lena Wängnerud. 2009. "Women in Parliaments: Descriptive and Substantive Representation." *Annual Review of Political Science* 12: 51-69.

<sup>9</sup> Nicholas Carnes. 2012. "Does the Numerical Underrepresentation of the Working Class in Congress Matter?" *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 37.1 (2012): 5-34.

<sup>10</sup> Timothy Besley, Jose G. Montalvo, and Marta Reynal-Querol. 2011. "Do Educated Leaders Matter?" *The Economic Journal* 121.554 (2011): F205-227; Robert Congleton and Yongjing Zhang. 2010. "Is It All about Competence? The Human Capital of US Presidents and Economic Performance." *Constitutional Political Economy* 24: 2, 108-24.

<sup>11</sup> Peter Evans and James E. Rauch. 1999. "Bureaucracy and Growth: A Cross-National Analysis of the Effects of 'Weberian' State Structures on Economic Growth." *American Sociological Review* 64 (5): 748-765.

<sup>12</sup> Marianne Bertrand and Antoinette Schoar. 2003. "Managing with Style: The Effect of Managers on Firm Policies." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 118 (4): 1169-1208.

been found to be superior at providing public goods and are less predatory toward business.<sup>13</sup> Glynn and Sen show that among judges with one child, those with a daughter are more likely to rule in favour of women's issues than judges with a son.<sup>14</sup>

Evidence for the second proposition is both more limited and more contradictory. On the one hand political thinkers from Harrington to Madison have argued that voters will naturally select those with wisdom and virtue. In support of this argument, Besley et al. find that democratically elected heads of state have higher levels of education than heads of state in autocracies.<sup>15</sup> At lower levels of government, Galasso and Nannicini, and Veronese both find that political competition leads to the selection of candidates with higher levels of education and more governing experience.<sup>16</sup> In China, Luo finds that elected village heads have more years of schooling than appointed village heads.<sup>17</sup> In Russia, Shurchkov finds that regions where "new-elite" governors came to power via centralized appointments had less small business development than regions with "old-elites" who won power through elections.<sup>18</sup>

On the other hand, other scholars have pointed out that democracy may in fact lead to the selection of unqualified officials. Scholars of populism and nationalism point to a strong "anti-elite" sentiment in most electorates, which can sometimes result in the election of outsiders or demagogues.<sup>19</sup> In a similar vein, scholars of state-led development argue that appointed officials are more likely to have the skills and training necessary to make efficient economic policy.<sup>20</sup> There is also the danger that election outcomes will not reflect the preferences of the median voter, in which case elected offices may be captured by narrow interest groups

<sup>13</sup> Petra Persson and Ekaterina Zhuravskaya. 2011. "Elite Capture in the Absence of Democracy: Evidence from Backgrounds of Chinese Provincial Leaders." SSRN Working Paper.

<sup>14</sup> Adam Glynn and Maya Sen. 2012. "Identifying Judicial Empathy: Does Having Daughters Cause Judges to Rule for Women's Issues?" Working paper.

<sup>15</sup> Timothy Besley, Jose G. Montalvo, and Marta Reynal-Querol. 2011. "Do Democracies Select More Educated Leaders?" *American Political Science Review* 105 (3): 552-66

<sup>16</sup> Vincenzo Galasso and Tommaso Nannicini. 2011. "Competing on Good Politicians". *American Political Science Review* 105 (1): 79-99; Barbara Veronese. 2004. "How do Institutions Shape Policy Making? The Transition from Parliamentarism to Presidentialism in Italian Local Governments." In by Fabio Padovano and Ricardo Riciuti, eds. *Italian Institutional Reforms: A Public Choice Approach*. London: Springer.

<sup>17</sup> Mi Luo. 2010. *Do Village Elections Select More Competent Leaders: Meritocratic Selection in China's Grassroots Democracy*. Beijing, China: Ms. Peking University.

<sup>18</sup> Olga Shurchkov. 2012. "New Elites and their Influence on Entrepreneurial Activity in Russia." *Journal of Comparative Economics* 40: 240-55.

<sup>19</sup> Jack L. Snyder. 2000. *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict*. New York Norton; Cas Mudde. 2007. *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>20</sup> Peter Evans. *Embedded Autonomy*.

whose backgrounds and innate preferences lead them to make socially suboptimal decisions regarding public policy.<sup>21</sup> Of particular concern is the possibility that elected officials will be captured by business interests who choose to extract rents for themselves.<sup>22</sup>

Evidence for these propositions is harder to find. Buckley et al. find that the backgrounds and characteristics of Russia's elected governors are broadly similar to the backgrounds of Russia's appointed governors.<sup>23</sup> However, they also find that appointed governors are more likely to have technocratic types of education and advanced degrees and that they are less likely to hail from the region they govern. Luo finds that elected village heads in China are more likely to have a career history in business.<sup>24</sup>

This article examines the second proposition: do the traits of elected officials differ in important ways from the traits of appointed officials? We compare the backgrounds of Russian mayors who are elected with the backgrounds of those who are appointed. Russia is an excellent laboratory for examining how elected and appointed officials differ because some cities in Russia elect their mayors and some appoint them. Until the mid-2000s, most Russian cities elected their chief executive, but, beginning in 2005, federal initiatives to recentralize power resulted in the cancellation of direct elections in just under half of all cities. Thus, cities with elected mayors and cities with appointed mayors coexist simultaneously in contemporary Russia.

To examine differences between appointed and elected officials we draw on an original dataset that includes biographical information on the mayors of all Russian regional capitals and cities with populations over 75,000 in the period from 2000-2012. This dataset includes information on the educational backgrounds, career trajectories, demographic characteristics, modes of selection, and party affiliations of mayors in Russia's 207 largest cities. Our dataset also includes original information on national and regional election results at the municipal level, mayoral election results, and the partisan composition of city councils. Along with examining the differences between elected and appointed mayors, we use

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<sup>21</sup> Pranab Bardhan and Dilip Mookherjee. 2000. "Capture and Governance at Local and National Levels." *The American Economic Review* 90 (2): 135-139; Gene M. Grossman and Elhanan Helpman. 2002. *Interest Groups and Trade Policy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

<sup>22</sup> Olivier Blanchard and Andrei Shleifer. 2000. *Federalism with and without Political Centralization: China Versus Russia*. No. w7616. National Bureau of Economic Research; Irina Slinko, Evgeny Yakovlev, and Ekaterina Zhuravskaya. 2005. "Laws for Sale: Evidence from Russia." *American Law and Economics Review* 7 (1): 284-318.

<sup>23</sup> Noah Buckley, Timothy Frye, Guzel Garifullina, and Ora John Reuter. 2013. "The Political Economy of Russian Gubernatorial Election and Appointment." Forthcoming in *Europe-Asia Studies*.

<sup>24</sup> Mi Luo. *Do Village Elections Select More Competent Leaders*.

this original data to provide a systematic portrait of Russia's municipal executives.

Our descriptive findings indicate that Russia's elected and appointed mayors differ on several important dimensions. Elected mayors are more likely to have built their careers in business or in legislative posts. By contrast, appointed mayors are slightly more likely to come from the local or regional executive branch. Elected mayors are more likely to have experience holding elected office and they are more likely to have been Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) members. Elected and appointed mayors are equally likely to come from the security services. In fact, contrary to popular belief, very few Russian mayors have experience in the security services.

Elected and appointed mayors are remarkably similar in their post-tenure career trajectories, with only a few differences noted. Elected mayors are more likely to become governor, but overall our data reveals that a mayorship is usually the peak of career position in Russia. One important difference of note, however, is that elected mayors are much more likely to leave office under arrest than are appointed mayors. In addition, the rate of turnover among appointed mayors is much higher than the rate of turnover among elected mayors.

Appointed mayors are, peculiarly, more likely to have ties to the city they govern, although the difference is small and the vast majority of Russia's mayors have ties to their city. Educational differences are also moderate. Elected mayors have slightly more education and are more likely to have been educated in Moscow or St. Petersburg, but appointed mayors are more likely to be educated in fields that are relevant to the task of governing a modern city. Finally, we find that women are more likely to be appointed mayor than they are to be elected, although over 95% of mayors are men. We also find that appointed mayors are younger.

Our analyses show some seemingly important differences in the personal characteristics of elected and appointed Russian mayors, but they must be treated with caution when it comes to causality. The decision to cancel mayoral elections is far from random and is likely endogenous to the political constraints and preferences of local and regional powerbrokers. It is possible that the decision to cancel elections is motivated by social, economic, or political factors that also independently affect the decision to select certain types of mayors. But if these findings do reflect real differences that are produced by different selection mechanisms, then they highlight the potentially ambiguous relationship between elections and the quality of elected officials. On the one hand, it does appear that elected officials are slightly more educated, perhaps because voters value high quality candidates. On the other hand, appointed mayors are more likely to have experience governing in the executive. And while elected mayors

are more likely to have elected experience, which might indicate that they have experience working as instruments of popular rule, it also appears that elected governors are more likely to exhibit antiquated human capital in the form of CPSU experience and Soviet-style educations. Furthermore, appointed mayors turn over at a much higher rate, increasing levels of political instability and uncertainty for investors.

The widespread concern about the capture of Russian local government by business interests is also confirmed in this paper.<sup>25</sup> Many mayors come from business backgrounds and it appears that elected mayors are more likely to have business experience. This suggests that elections may actually undermine good governance if they make it easier for local government to be captured by narrow interests. Indeed, this points to the more general conclusion that elections may only lead to positive political and economic outcomes if they are free and fair. Many of Russia's local elections in the 1990s and 2000s were neither.

We discuss the significance of these differences in the conclusion. As we note, the key obstacle to interpreting these findings is that there is no scholarly consensus on what constitutes a "good type" of official. For example, business-connections may indicate capture, or they may indicate know-how. A similar ambivalence bedevils expectations about the effect of local ties, which may increase both knowledge of local conditions and the likelihood that officials will be beholden to narrow interests. Similar concerns can be sketched for other attributes. Future research should do more to uncover how the human capital of officials affects policy outcomes.

### **Russia's Mayors and Their Selection: An Overview**

An increasing number of scholars are turning to subnational data to examine the relationship between elections and public policy outcomes. A large number of studies have focused on how the introduction of municipal elections influenced public goods provision in China.<sup>26</sup> To our knowledge,

<sup>25</sup> Olivier Blanchard and Andrei Shleifer. 2000. *Federalism with and without Political Centralization: China Versus Russia*. No. w7616. National Bureau of Economic Research.

<sup>26</sup> Xiaobo Zhang, Shenggen Fan, Linxiu Zhang, and Jikun Huang. 2004. "Local Governance and Public Goods Provision in Rural China." *Journal of Public Economics* 88 (12): 2857-2871; Renfu Luo, Linxiu Zhang, Jikun Huang, and Scott Rozelle. 2007. "Elections, Fiscal Reform and Public Goods Provision in Rural China." *Journal of Comparative Economics* 35 (3): 583-611; Ren Mu and Xiaobo Zhang. 2011. "The Role of Elected and Appointed Village Leaders in the Allocation of Public Resources.;" Mi Luo. *Do Village Elections Select More Competent Leaders*; Loren Brandt and Matthew A. Turner. 2007. "The Usefulness of Imperfect Elections: The Case of Village Elections in Rural China." *Economics & Politics* 19 (3): 453-480; Edmund J. Malesky, Cuong Viet Nguyen, and Anh Tran. 2012. *The Economic Impact of Recentralization: A Quasi-Experiment on Abolishing Elected Councils in Vietnam*. Mimeo. October 23; Timothy Besley and Robin Burgess. 2001. "Political Agency, Government Responsiveness and the Role of the Media." *European Economic Review* 45 (4):

all such studies have focused on the incentive effect of elections. None have looked at how elections might influence policy outcomes by determining the “type” of official selected.

In Russia, there are exceedingly few studies that consider how local executive selection mechanisms might affect policy outcomes. This is perhaps surprising given the voluminous literature on democratization at the local level in Russia.<sup>27</sup> This neglect is also unfortunate given the significant empirical advantages that the Russia case offers. Russia is a useful case because Russia’s mayors are selected via a number of different mechanisms. Moreover, as we describe in further detail below, this variation obtained over a relatively short period of time.

During the Soviet period, local self-government was under party control. Local councils (*sovety*), elected through non-competitive elections, selected from their membership an executive organ (*ispolkom*) and a head of the *ispolkom*. In turn, the *ispolkom* was under the strict supervision of local party committees. In 1990, the first competitive elections to local councils were held, but the practice of selecting a chief executive from among the members of the council did not change. The new law on self-government passed in July 1991 asserted the independence of local authorities, laid the groundwork for the municipal reform, and introduced the position of the head of local administration.<sup>28</sup> However, direct elections of heads of administrations were put on hold in 1991 and in the wake of the standoff between President Yeltsin and the Supreme Soviet (*Verkhovny Sovet*) all local councils were disbanded. According to emergency presidential decrees issued shortly after, heads of local administration were to be appointed by the regional governors or by the president himself.<sup>29</sup>

This temporary state of affairs persisted until a new law on local self-government was passed in August 1995. The law granted regional authorities significant discretion in dealing with organs of local self-government while simultaneously codifying their inviolable independence. According to provisions of the law, municipal councils were allowed to determine whether the local head of administration would be elected or appointed, and most municipalities chose to elect their chief executive.

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629-640 for studies outside China.

<sup>27</sup> Olga Bychkova and Vladimir Gel'man. 2010. “Economic Actors and Local Regimes in Large Russian Cities.” *Neprkosvennyi Zapas* (2): 70; Michael Ross. “Oil and democracy revisited.” *Preliminary Draft*. Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Department of Political Science—*Unpublished 2* (2009); Vladimir Gel'man and Sergei Ryzhenkov. 2011. “Local Regimes, Sub-National Governance and the ‘Power Vertical’ in Contemporary Russia.” *Europe-Asia Studies* 63 (3): 449-465; Olivier Blanchard and Andrei Shleifer. 2000. *Federalism with and without Political Centralization: China Versus Russia*. No. w7616. National Bureau of Economic Research.

<sup>28</sup> See the corresponding law (Law N 1550-1 ‘On Local Self-Government in RSFSR’, July 6, 1991)

<sup>29</sup> See Peter Kirkow. 1997. “Local self-government in Russia: Awakening from slumber?” *Europe-Asia Studies* 49 (1): 43-58.



In the early 2000s, concerns over efficiency led to a new round of municipal reforms, and in 2003 a new law on local self-government was adopted.<sup>30</sup> The provisions of the law, which came into force on January 1, 2006, systematized the models of local self-government that could be adopted by municipalities. Both before and after the reform a city could choose between directly electing its mayor and several models of appointment (though there were more options of appointment before the reform). But to unify local models of government, new federal law introduced a strict distinction between the function of the “head of municipality” and the function of the “head of administration,” often called a city manager. Those functions could now be carried out by two different people or by a single person. If councils choose to have a single person fulfill this role, then the mayor must be elected.

Table 1 provides details on the types of models that Russian municipalities used to select their chief executives since 1996.

It is important to note that the law itself did not lead directly to the cancellation of direct mayoral elections. Just as in the 1990s, Federal Law #131 gave municipalities a choice between elected and appointed models. Nonetheless, the mid-2000s witnessed a wave of transitions from directly elected, unified local chief executives (Model 1 in Table 1) to the institution of dual executives in which city managers bore the responsibility for almost all important policy-making decisions (Models 2 and 3 in the table above). The cancellation of these mayoral elections was broadly seen as part of Vladimir Putin’s recentralization efforts.<sup>31</sup> Observers noted that the cancellation of gubernatorial elections could make it hard for governors who had lost their direct popular mandate to control elected mayors, so some saw the cancellation of mayoral elections as “compensation” for the governors’ loss of their elected mandates.<sup>32</sup>

In order to change how the chief executive of a city is selected, the city council must make amendments to the charter (*ustav*) of the city. However, in the mid-2000s city councils were increasingly coming under the control of the newly emerged dominant party, United Russia. According to most Russian observers, regional governors, using their influence on local party branches, began to play a key role as initiators of

<sup>30</sup> The reform was introduced by Federal Law #131 “On the main principles of organization of the municipal self-governance in Russian Federation” dated October 6, 2003.

<sup>31</sup> Michael Ross. “Oil and democracy revisited.” *Preliminary Draft. Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Department of Political Science—Unpublished 2* (2009); Cameron Ross, and Adrian Campbell, eds. *Federalism and Local Politics in Russia*. Routledge, 2008; Vladimir Gel’man. “The Political Aspects of the Municipal Reform” (“Politicheskiye aspekty reform mestnogo samoupravleniya”), <http://ru-90.ru>; Aleksei Makarkin. 2007. “Mayors: The Battle for Independence” *Pro Et Contra* 11(1): 26-27.

<sup>32</sup> Dmitry Furman, Alexander Morozov, Vladimir Prybylovskii, Nikolai Petrov, Yurii Korgonyuk, and Alan Bloom. 2004. “On the Political System of Russia after the Putin Reforms” *Neprikosvennyi Zapas* (6): 38.

**Table 1: Mayors' appointment and local executive power organization models, 1996-present**

Models	Head of municipality ("mayor")	Head of administration ("city manager")	Years applicable
1.	One person; Popularly elected; Responsible for all policy decisions.		1996-present
2.	One person; Appointed by a higher level authority (governor/regional president <sup>1</sup> or Russian president directly <sup>2</sup> ); Responsible for all policy decisions.		1996-2006
3.	One person; Appointed in some other way (by local / regional legislature); Responsible for all policy decisions.		1996-2006
4.	- Popularly elected, becomes Chair of local legislature; - Powers restricted mostly to the legislature, representing the region in external relations, etc.	- Appointed on a competitive basis by a special commission <sup>3</sup> ;  - Responsible for most policy decisions.	2006-present
5. <sup>4</sup>	- Elected by the local legislative council from its members, heads a local legislature; - Powers restricted mostly to the legislature, representing the region in external relations, etc.	- Appointed on a competitive basis by a special commission;  - Responsible for most policy decisions.	2006-present

**Notes:** 1. Mostly in national republics. 2. Federal cities, exceptional cases (Grozny). 3. City manager is appointed by a Competition Commission. 1/3 of the seats in the commission are taken by governor's representatives (the list is approved by regional legislature at the proposal of a governor), 2/3 of seats are taken by City Council deputies (article 37 paragraph 5, Federal law #131).

the cancellation decision.<sup>33</sup>

The municipal reform did, however, have an effect on the cancellation of mayoral elections by increasing the financial dependence of local authorities on regional governments. Even before the reform most local budgets were heavily subsidized by regional and federal budgets, but the reform deprived local budgets of several additional income sources<sup>34</sup> and gave regional administrations greater discretion in determining the size of subsidies they allocate to the municipalities in a given region.<sup>35</sup> Simultaneously, municipalities were saddled with more obligations than before. As estimated by the Accounts Chamber,<sup>36</sup> in the first few years after the reforms came into force, municipal spending exceeded municipal revenues by almost 100%. As of 2012, only 2.5% of municipalities could finance all their activities from their own revenues. Thus, as municipal budgets grew more dependent on subsidies and transfers from regional administrations, governors gained additional influence over municipal authorities, making it easier for governors to secure the cancellation of mayoral elections.

For the analysis in this article, we treat Models 2, 3, 4, and 5 in Table 1 as instances of “appointed mayors.” This is because the appointed city manager is the key policy-making authority in cases when there are two executives. Figure 1 shows the percentage of cities in our database that had such appointed mayors on January 1 of each year. Figures 2 and 2b show the appointment systems in place for all cities in our database.

As these figures show, the general tendency has been toward the cancellation of direct mayoral elections, but there was a small subset of cities (about 10%) that never introduced direct elections to begin with. There is an even smaller number (e.g. Orel, Ussuriysk) that transitioned

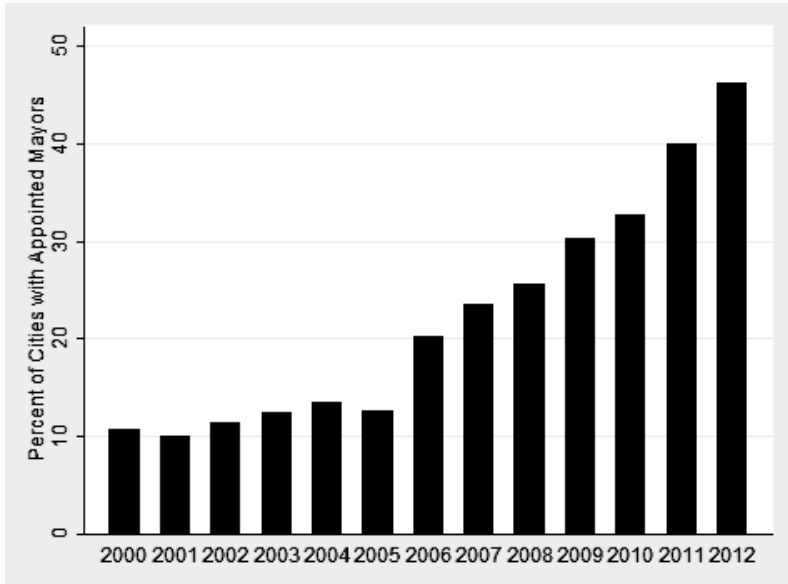
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<sup>33</sup> Vladimir Gel'man. 2008. “Political Reform in Russian Cities: Mayors, City Managers, and Local Democracy. *Sravnitel'noye Konstitutsionnoye obozrenie* (6): 143-152; Aleksei Makarkin. 2007. “Mayors: The Battle for Independence” *Pro Et Contra* 11(1): 26-27.

<sup>34</sup> For example, the advertising tax, inheritance tax and local licensing fees, see Institute for Contemporary Development. Analytic Report: “Russian Local Self-Government: the Results of the 2003-2008 Reform.”

<sup>35</sup> The same report notes that in 2005, the first year of the reform's implementation, the share of total budget revenues from local budgets was lower than it had been in any of the previous ten years.

<sup>36</sup> Accounts Chamber of the Russian Federation. Analytic Report: “Analysis of the Condition of and Problems with the Income Potential of Subjects of the Russian Federation and Budgets of Municipal Districts in 2006-2007.”

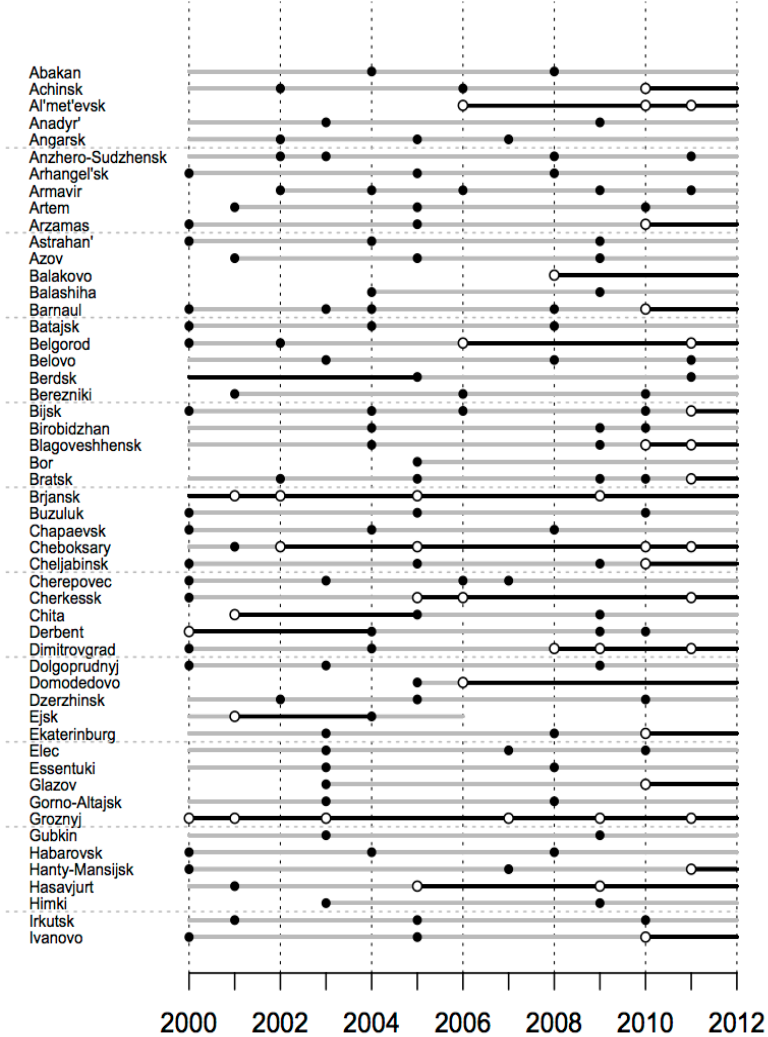
**Figure 1: Share of Appointed Mayors Over Time**

from an appointment scheme to an election scheme in the 2000s. However the most important conclusion to be drawn from these figures is that by 2012, almost half of Russia's sitting mayors were appointed.

Of course, in Russia's dominant party regime, the *de facto* process leading to the "selection" of an elected mayor can sometimes closely resemble the appointment process. Over 75% of the mayors in our sample were United Russia members and in Russia's competitive authoritarian regime, the ruling party often plays a larger role in deciding who will become mayor than voters do. At the same time, Russia's mayoral elections are much more competitive than Russia's regional legislative elections. One quarter of mayoral elections held between 2001 and 2012 were decided by less than 15 percentage points. Indeed, in many notable instances, opposition mayoral candidates have been able to defeat United Russia candidates, although many of those opposition mayors were subsequently arrested.<sup>37</sup> In any case, even in those cases when the winning candidate is *de facto* chosen by higher-ups in the ruling party it is likely that the decision about the type of candidate to select will be affected by the fact that the candidate must face voters and secure a favorable election result. For these reasons, we believe that that these *de jure* selection methods can be analyzed separately, and we undertake such an analysis below.

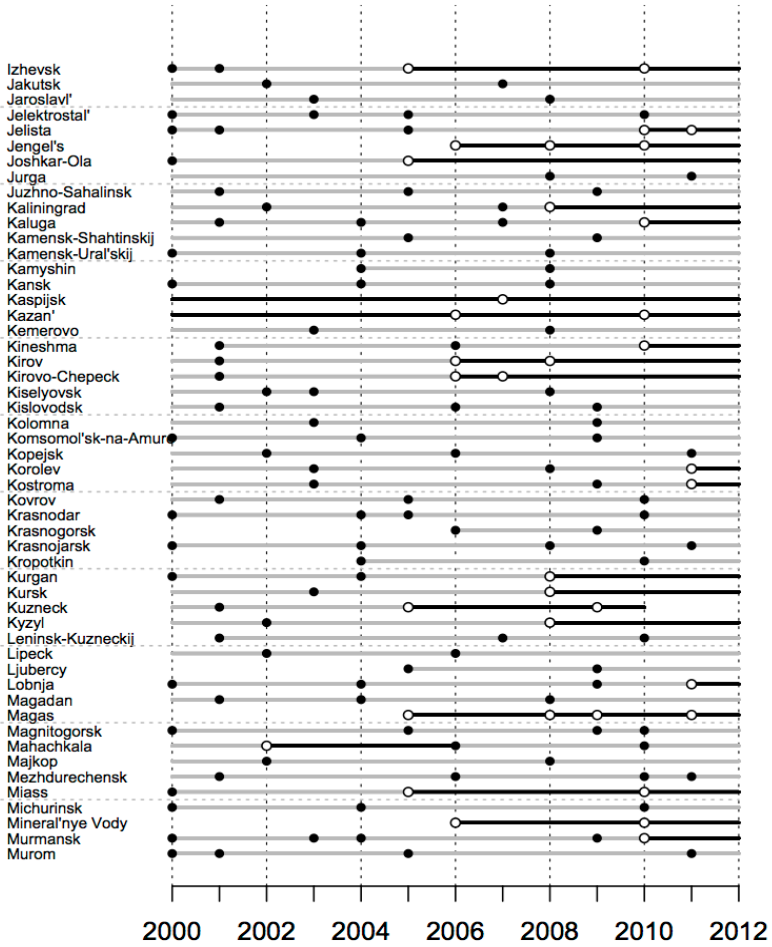
<sup>37</sup> See <http://echo.msk.ru/blog/tulsky/826429-echo/>

Figure 2a. Mayoral Elections and Appointments in Russian Cities



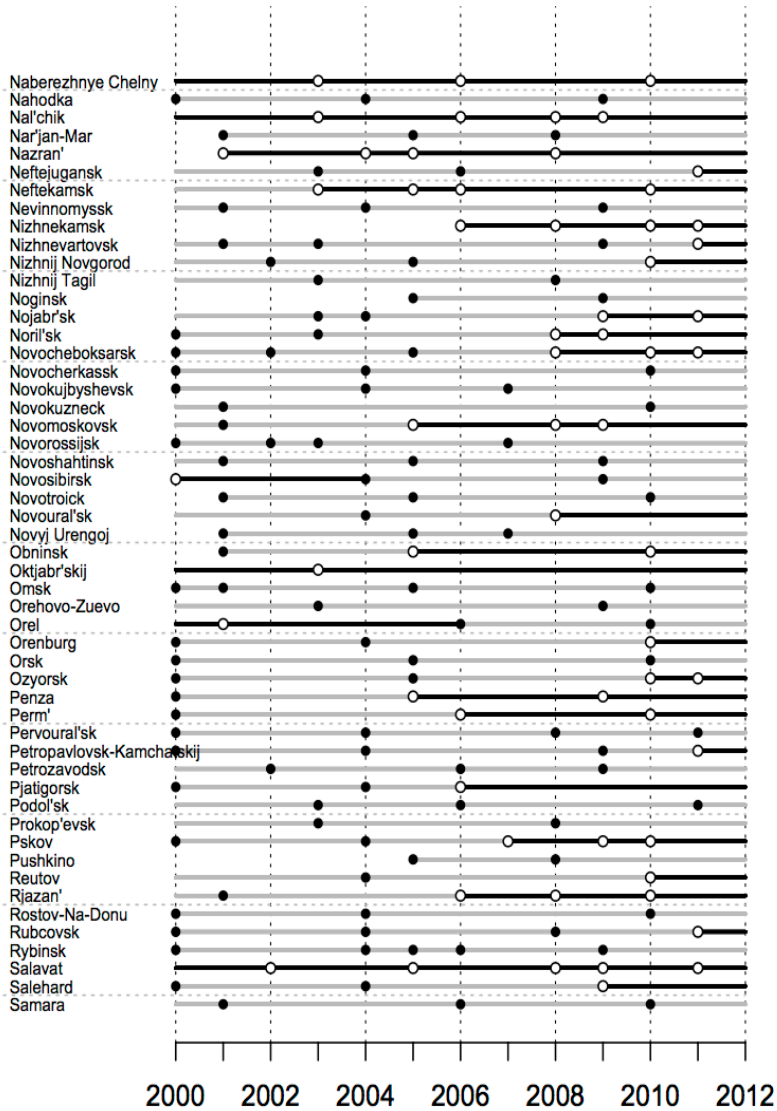
**Note:** Gray areas indicate years of direct elections, black areas indicate years of appointments. Open circles are appointment events. Closed dots are elections. The first year of appointment is the year in which the first appointed mayor (city manager) is appointed.

Figure 2b. Mayoral Elections and Appointments in Russian Cities



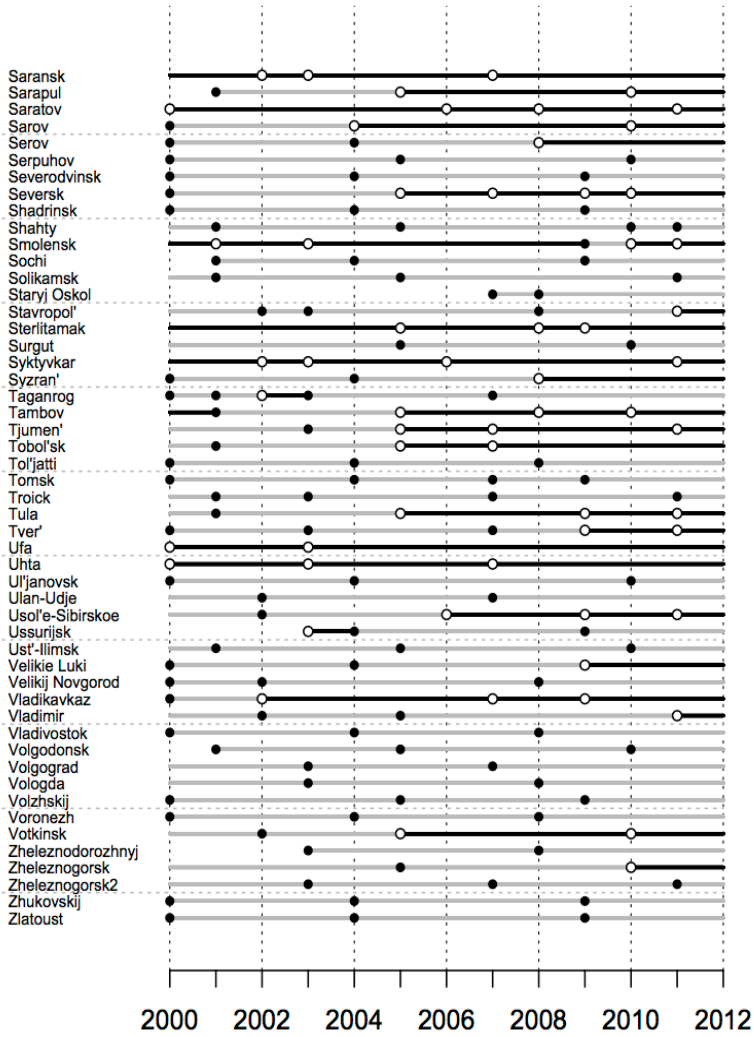
**Note:** Gray areas indicate years of direct elections, black areas indicate years of appointments. Open circles are appointment events. Closed dots are elections. The first year of appointment is the year in which the first appointed mayor (city manager) is appointed.

Figure 2c. Mayoral Elections and Appointments in Russian Cities



**Note:** Gray areas indicate years of direct elections, black areas indicate years of appointments. Open circles are appointment events. Closed dots are elections. The first year of appointment is the year in which the first appointed mayor (city manager) is appointed.

**Figure 2d. Mayoral Elections and Appointments in Russian Cities**



**Data Overview**

In this article we introduce and exploit a novel dataset of Russia’s mayors. This data includes detailed political and biographical indicators on 828 unique heads of 221 Russian regional capitals and cities with a population of 75,000 and above within the period from 2000 to 2012. The data was collected from a wide variety of sources, including the Russian State Statistics Agency (Rosstat), the Central Election Commission website,



Russian city and media websites, the Labyrinth database, and Wikipedia. Research assistants from the Higher School of Economics in Moscow were instructed in data collection and cross-checking procedures. To our knowledge, this is the first comprehensive dataset of Russia's municipal chief executives.

The complexity of municipal administration structures in Russia both enriches and complicates our time-series cross-sectional data. As the previous section highlights, the position of chief executive in Russian cities is sometimes split between two positions: a head of administration (often informally referred to as "city manager") and the head of the municipality. As noted, the former is usually responsible for most policy decisions. Our dataset contains information on both heads of administration and heads of municipality when a dual executive exists. But since heads of administration (i.e., city managers) control most policy decisions, we analyze only their characteristics when there is a dual executive. Thus, as we analyze differences between appointed and elected mayors, we are comparing appointed heads of administration (under the dual system) to elected mayors that sit atop a unified executive branch. For ease of exposition, we refer to these individuals informally throughout this paper as "mayors," regardless of their formal title.

We collected and coded a wide array of biographical information on each mayor in our dataset. Included are career histories, educational profiles, political experience such as party membership and electoral results, and demographics.

**Table 2. General Description of the Data set**

	N
Number of mayors in database	828
Number of mayors in current analysis*	563
Number of elections	578
Number of appointments	260
Number of cities	221

\* We have 828 mayors in the full dataset, but we only analyze 563 in the article. In instances, where there is a dual executive (Models 4 and 5 in Table 1), we only analyze the characteristics of the appointed city-manager (see text for justification).

Moscow and Saint Petersburg are not included in the sample due to their special status as subjects of the Russian Federation. Our sample covers 41.5% of the Russian population (as of the last general census of 2010) and 65.1% of the urban population. In Table 2 we show some general characteristics of our dataset. As one can see from Table 2, mayors were

much more likely to be elected than appointed in the time period under consideration.

In each table below, we present the proportion of elected mayors and appointed mayors who have each characteristic, with characteristics listed in rows. With only a few exceptions, the characteristics we consider are dichotomous, so the “Elected” and “Appointed” columns correspond to proportions of the elected and appointed mayoral corpus with that characteristic. We then show the *t* statistic from a simple difference-in-means test on whether these proportions are statistically different from each other. In other words, a *t* statistic larger than 1.96 in absolute value indicates that elected and appointed mayors are statistically significantly different from each other in terms of the given characteristic, at the conventional 5% level of significance. In the last column of each table we show an analogous *t* statistic from bivariate regressions that control for the year in which the appointment or election took place.

## Comparing Elected and Appointed Mayors

### *Career Experience*

We begin by examining differences in the career experience of elected and appointed mayors. Career experiences shape the outlook, skill set, ideology, and interests of officials. In a study of congressional voting behaviour, Carnes finds that businessmen and farm owners are more conservative than workers, lawyers, or service-based professionals.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, Sovietologists were convinced that officials with economic management experience took a different approach to their jobs than those whose background was in party work.<sup>39</sup> The discourse of Russian authorities between 2002 and 2006 held that abolishing mayoral elections was necessary because it would help to exclude incompetent candidates from local political races. Indeed, the special commissions charged with selecting city managers are tasked specifically with selecting candidates on the basis of competence and experience. If the state-led development literature is to be believed, these non-political commissions, which need not respond to popular demands, will be apt to choose technocratic candidates with significant governing experience.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Nicholas Carnes. 2012. “Does the Numerical Underrepresentation of the Working Class in Congress Matter?” *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 37.1 (2012): 5-34.

<sup>39</sup> Jerry Hough. 1969. *The Soviet Prefects: The Local Party Organs in Industrial Decision-Making*. Cambridge: Harvard UP; Peter Rutland. 1993. *Reds and Experts: The Politics of Economic Stagnation in the Soviet Union*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>40</sup> Alex Cukierman, Sebastian Edwards, and Guido Tabellini. 1992. “Seigniorage and Political Instability.” *American Economic Review* 82 (2): 537-555; Peter Evans. *Embedded Autonomy*.

Table 3 looks at whether elected and appointed mayors have any career experience in a range of professional categories. Columns 2 and 3 show the proportion of mayors in each category who ever worked in a given sphere. Column 4 shows the t statistic for the difference in means between the two groups. Since appointments were more likely in the late 2000s than in the early 2000s, we also include the t statistics from regressions that include the binary elected-appointed indicator on the right-hand side and add a control for year. Our analysis shows that the two groups differ significantly on several key dimensions.

**Table 3: Work Experience of Mayors**

Any work experience in... (binary)	Elected	Appointed	Diff-in-means t value	t value controlling for year
regional administration	0.189	0.262	2.32**	1.96**
local administration (same city)	0.442	0.485	1.12	1.69*
local administration (diff city)	0.067	0.122	2.61**	2.35**
local legislature (same city)	0.196	0.227	0.99	1.14
local legislature (diff city)	0.025	0.017	-0.72	-0.57
regional legislature (diff region)	0.014	0.004	-1.24	-1.05
regional legislature (same region)	0.225	0.110	-3.81**	-3.68**
State Duma	0.025	0.000	-2.47**	-2.49**
private business	0.385	0.321	-1.73	-2.16**
state-run business	0.356	0.356	-0.01	-0.09
Federation Council	0.018	0.013	-0.54	-0.26
federal government	0.034	0.059	1.62	1.61
social or political org incl. party	0.134	0.102	-1.25	-0.60
force structures	0.077	0.081	0.14	0.00

First, elected mayors are slightly more likely to have private

business experience than are appointed mayors. This may be because business activities provide resources for financing election campaigns. For this and other reasons, businessmen may find it easier to win elections than they do to gain appointment. This finding confirms the widespread concern about the capture of local government in Russia by business interests.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, it suggests that, whatever its faults, the appointment system may have reduced the propensity for state capture by business in Russia's localities. It should be noted that the figures in Table 3 surely understate the true extent of business capture because it only reflects the share of business-connected candidates who had full time positions in the business world. It does not include the number of mayors who held large stakes in businesses.

Second, appointed mayors are significantly more likely to have experience in the regional administration of their city's region. This should be interpreted as a practical consequence of the appointment process. Under the new appointment scheme, governors obtained significant influence over the appointment of city managers. In turn, it appears that governors used their influence to install clients from their own administrations as mayors.

Appointed mayors also have a significantly greater likelihood of having experience in the local administration of another city. Appointments seem to have induced higher levels of cross-regional mobility among municipal officials. This provides expanded opportunities for career advancement among local officials, which could act to increase the levels of political loyalty among municipal officials.

We also find that elected mayors are much more likely to have experience in regional legislatures. As we note below, this may be due to the fact that experience running and winning election campaigns gives formerly elected politicians a special advantage in mayoral races. Voters may exhibit a prior preference for such candidates or these experiences may help such candidates convince voters to vote for them. Either way, the advantage of having held elected office seems to disappear when mayoral hopefuls are seeking appointment to the position.

There is no significant difference between appointed and elected mayors in having work experience in state companies, the Federation Council, local administrations, the federal government, or social/party organizations. There is a statistically significant difference in terms of State Duma experience, but mayors very rarely have experience there. We should also note that there are no cases where a former governor takes a mayoral office.

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<sup>41</sup> Olivier Blanchard and Andrei Shleifer. *Federalism with and without Political Centralization*; Olga Bychkova and Vladimir Gel'man. 2010. "Economic Actors and Local Regimes in Large Russian Cities." *Neprkosvennyi Zapas* (2): 70.

There is no difference between elected and appointed mayors concerning their experience in so-called “force structures.” Contrary to popular narratives about the militarization of the political elite under Putin,<sup>42</sup> the appointment system has not resulted in an increase in the share of security service personnel at the local level. Indeed, the total share of mayors with experience in the security services is quite low. It should also be noted that mayors’ force structure experience was usually obtained in the late Soviet period and then followed by some other professional step in the post-Soviet period.

In Table 4, we use the binary variables in Table 3 to create new categories that focus specifically on the political experience of mayors. First, it is worth noting that despite the trend toward appointments, the mayoral corps still contains a large number of officials who once held elected office. Indeed, many mayors who were appointed have had some experience of being elected. But, again, we see that elected mayors are more likely to have held elected office.

**Table 4: Political Experience of Mayors**

	Elected	Appointed	Diff-in-means t value	t value controlling for year
Elected office (most recent place of work)	0.247	0.192	-1.75*	-1.76*
Ever held elected office	0.400	0.315	-2.34**	-1.96**
Rate of Turnover	0.040	0.135	5.07**	4.43**
Member of CPSU	0.273	0.141	-3.67**	-3.43**

Elected mayors are significantly more likely to have been members of the CPSU. This finding is intriguing given that it remains robust when controlling for time. One possible explanation is that many elected mayors owed their electoral victories to nomenklaturist ties in the regions, while appointed mayors are technocrats, selected without reference to “old elite” ties. However, we know very little about levels of turnover in local elites after the fall of the Soviet Union. If mayors are anything like governors, some of their machines were built on the basis of nomenklaturist ties, while others were built anew on the basis of post-Soviet political networks. Without further data on the composition of mayoral machines in Russia, we hesitate to draw a firm conclusion.

Another finding of note is that rates of turnover are much higher

<sup>42</sup> Olga Kryshnanovskaya and Stephen White. 2005. “Inside the Putin Court: A Research Note.” *Europe-Asia Studies* 57 (7): 1065-1075; Olga Kryshnanovskaya and Stephen White. 2010. “The Sovietization of Russian Politics”. *Post-Soviet Affairs* 25 (4): 283-209.

among appointed mayors than among elected mayors. Studies have found that the uncertainty induced by frequent government turnover can have negative effects on investment.<sup>43</sup> Thus, even if we believe that appointed mayors are more technocratic than elected mayors, the policy uncertainty created by their constant rotation may have negative effects on economic development. At the same time, the appointment system clearly makes it easier to remove underperforming officials.

**Table 5: Most Recent Place of Work**

	Elected	Appointed	Diff-in-means t value	t value controlling for year
Academia	0.007	0.000	-1.34	-1.46
Business (private)	0.107	0.065	-1.92*	-2.33**
Business (state-owned enterprise)	0.119	0.108	-0.49	-0.36
Federal Government (ministries and agencies)	0.017	0.023	0.56	0.60
Federation Council	0.009	0.000	-1.50	-1.48
Force Structures	0.010	0.008	-0.37	-0.52
Local Administration (different city)	0.029	0.042	0.96	0.55
Local Administration (same city)	0.306	0.346	1.15	1.90*
Local Legislature (diff. city)	0.002	0.004	0.58	0.67
Local Legislature (same city)	0.078	0.154	3.39**	3.31**
Other	0.007	0.000	-1.34	-1.13
Regional Administration (not governor)	0.106	0.131	1.07	0.71
Regional Legislature	0.154	0.035	-5.04**	-4.96**
Social/Political Organization (including party work)	0.005	0.000	-1.16	-1.24
State Duma	0.014	0.000	-1.91*	-1.99**
Missing	0.029	0.085	3.53**	3.22**

<sup>43</sup> Edmund J. Malesky and Krislert Samphantharak. 2008. "Predictable Corruption and Firm Investment: Evidence from a Natural Experiment and Survey of Cambodian Entrepreneurs." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 3: 227-267; Thomas Kenyon and Megumi Naoi. 2010. "Policy Uncertainty in Hybrid Regimes: Evidence from Firm-Level Surveys." *Comparative Political Studies* 43 (4): 486-510.

In Table 5, we look at the place of work of the mayor in the year immediately prior to his or her taking office as mayor.<sup>44</sup> This table shows that most mayors come from bureaucratic or political backgrounds. The most popular entry point to the mayor's office is from the local administration of the city where the mayor serves. There is also a sample of mayors with analogous career experience in local self-governance (both executive and legislative) but in a different city. Normally this move happens within their region.

We note again with special interest the lack of evidence for mayors of either stripe originating in "force structures." The proposition that elites with roots in the force structures have taken top positions in the Russian bureaucracy is not borne out at the local level. Almost no mayors came to their post directly from the security services.

Two thirds of the seats in mayoral selection committee are filled by the city council, thus increasing the likelihood that appointed mayors come directly from local legislatures. And indeed our findings show that appointed mayors are more likely to come directly from the local legislature. It appears that local legislatures – to the extent that they influence the selection process – prefer to select one of their own as city manager.

Finally, consistent with our findings above, elected mayors are also more likely to come directly from business. About 11% of elected mayors and 7% of appointed mayors counted businesses as their primary place of work just before they took office

### *Post-Tenure Fate*

Another important task is to situate mayoral positions within the broader hierarchy of political positions. A mayoral post could be a "waystation" on the path to higher office, or it may be a peak-of-career position. One way of placing the mayor position within the hierarchy is examining the career trajectories of mayors once they have completed their tenure as municipal heads. If many mayors advance to positions in regional or federal power centers then mayors may be focused on impressing superiors who hold the keys to doors further along the career path. By contrast, if most mayors retire from politics, move into the private sector, or otherwise disappear from public view after leaving office, then their focus should be merely on staying in office and, if elected, pleasing their constituents. We present the post-tenure positions of Russian mayors in Table 6.

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<sup>44</sup> The most recent place of work for incumbent mayors is still their place of work immediately prior to their first term as mayor.

**Table 6: Post-Tenure Fate of Russian Mayors**

	Elected	Appointed	Diff-in-means t value	t value controlling for year
Academia	0.019	0.014	-0.46	-0.30
Business (private)	0.071	0.066	-0.25	-0.00
Business (state-owned enterprise)	0.055	0.038	-0.92	-0.78
Federal Government (federal ministries and agencies)	0.026	0.028	0.15	0.46
Federation Council	0.013	0.009	-0.38	0.01
Governor	0.026	0.005	-1.84*	-1.71*
Local Administration	0.029	0.042	0.80	0.81
Local Legislature	0.013	0.009	-0.38	-0.42
Regional Administration (not governor)	0.117	0.127	0.34	0.62
Regional Legislature	0.032	0.033	0.02	0.38
Retired	0.036	0.019	-1.14	-0.80
Social/Political Organization (including party work)	0.016	0.023	0.59	0.91
State Duma	0.023	0.014	-0.71	-0.36
Under Arrest	0.101	0.038	-2.70**	-2.57**
Deceased	0.019	0.028	0.65	0.98
Still in Office	0.286	0.357	1.72*	0.50
Other	0.039	0.028	-0.66	-0.49
No data*	0.078	0.122	1.68*	1.51



Overall the data illustrate that mayorships are peak of career positions in Russia. The data shows that that elected mayors are more likely to become governor after leaving office, but this is the only statistically significant difference in post-mayoral career trajectories. Perhaps the most interesting finding in this table is that elected mayors are much more likely to leave office in handcuffs. Fully 10% of elected mayors leave office under arrest, compared to 4% of appointed mayors. This difference may be a product of the close ties between “insider” elected mayors and local business. Such ties increase the opportunities for professional wrongdoing, but they also create more opportunities for authorities to fabricate politicized criminal cases. Criminal cases are a political tool used against many mayors in Russia. Indeed, 85% of the mayors arrested in our sample were from the opposition or were independents. Since members of the opposition are almost never appointed as mayor, this method is infrequently used against appointed mayors. These officials have already been vetted by the authorities.

Moreover, if regional authorities did want to remove an appointed mayor, there are other, simpler methods of achieving this goal. The municipal reform of 2003-2006 (Federal Law #131) gave city councils the ability to unseat appointed mayors. Article 72 states that appointed mayors can be replaced by the city council with a supermajority vote if this effort is supported by the governor. This procedure can be initiated at the governor’s initiative or with 1/3 of city council votes.

### *Insider/Outsider Status*

Which type of mayor—elected or appointed—is more likely to have ties to the city? This question is important because officials’ ties to their communities affect how they govern. Some argue that insiders have better knowledge of local conditions, which may help them make efficient economic policy.<sup>45</sup> This perspective aligns with the traditional view of local self-government’s stated purpose in Russia: to facilitate the devolution of authority away from Moscow and toward local decision-makers with local interests and knowledge. Others suggest that locally sourced officials may be less competent, and that national-level bureaucrats are more likely to have the skills and expertise necessary to make efficient economic policy.<sup>46</sup> Still others have suggested that outsiders are less likely to be captured by

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<sup>45</sup> Friedrich Hayek. 1945. “The use of Knowledge in Society.” *The American Economic Review* 35 (4): 519-530.

<sup>46</sup> Vito Tanzi. 1996. “Fiscal Federalism and Decentralization: A Review of some Efficiency and Macroeconomic Aspects.” In *Annual Bank Conference on Development Economics*, 295-316. Washington D.C.: The World Bank; Shahid Burki, Javed, Guillermo E. Perry, and William R. Dillinger. 1999. *Beyond the Center: Decentralizing the State*. Washington: World Bank Publications.

local business interests and thus more likely to make pro-growth economic policy.<sup>47</sup> This reflects many of the arguments that Russian policymakers have made against the current system of local self-government in Russia. To the extent that Russian policymakers sought, through the cancellation of elections, to reform local self-government along these lines, we should expect appointees to be outsiders. Indeed, the dominant assumption made by observers of local and regional politics in Russia has been that the appointment of mayors would result in a shift towards outsider mayors. This was supposed to be the case for one of two reasons. Voters may prefer familiar, local mayors, making it more likely that insiders will win elections. Or higher-level officials may exhibit a preference for outsiders who are not beholden to (or empowered by) narrow, local interests. Buckley et al. find that outsider governors were slightly more common in the era of gubernatorial appointment, but that the majority of all governors, appointed and elected, did have ties to their region.<sup>48</sup> Do the same findings hold for Russian mayors?

The results are presented in Table 7, where we examine insider-outsider status along three dimensions: (1) place of birth, (2) place of getting first higher education and (3) career experience.

The table indicates several differences of note. Unexpectedly, elected mayors are more likely to be born outside of the region and educated outside of their city. However, given the high levels of labor mobility in the Soviet Union, we do not make much of these findings. We find it more meaningful to evaluate the insider-outsider status of mayors from their most recent place of work. As described above, half of mayors come to office from the local bureaucracy (executive and legislative), which indicates a high level of inclusion in local affairs for both groups. The table does indicate that appointed mayors are slightly more likely than elected mayors to be working in their city prior to taking office; however, unlike Russian governors, true outsiders are extremely rare. Only 2% of mayors never worked in the region where the city is located and only 4.5% did not work in the region immediately prior to taking office. In general, insider-outsider differences between elected and appointed mayors are not large enough to indicate substantial variation in local knowledge or ties.

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<sup>47</sup> Alexander Libman and Andre Schultz. 2011. *Is there a Local Knowledge Advantage in the Federations? Evidence from a Natural Experiment*. Working paper.

<sup>48</sup> Noah Buckley, Timothy Frye, Guzel Garifullina, and Ora John Reuter. 2013. "The Political Economy of Russian Gubernatorial Election and Appointment." Forthcoming in *Europe-Asia Studies*.

**Table 7: Insider-Outsider Status**

	Elected	Appointed	Diff-in-means t value	t value controlling for year
Born in the city	0.224	0.241	0.52	0.35
Born in the region (but not city)	0.258	0.362	2.86**	2.80**
Educated in the city	0.271	0.367	2.66**	2.82**
Educated in region (but not city)	0.230	0.221	-0.26	-0.53
Ever worked in the city	0.920	0.937	0.85	1.12
Ever worked in the region (but not city)	0.057	0.042	-0.87	-1.15
Most recent place of work in region (but not city)	0.136	0.097	-1.53	-1.96**
Most recent place of work in city	0.812	0.874	2.12**	2.49**
local administration (same city)	0.442	0.485	1.12	1.69*
Local Administration (same city)	0.306	0.346	1.15	1.90*

### *Education*

In Table 8 we examine the educational backgrounds of mayors. Previous studies have identified a link between the educational backgrounds of officials and economic performance, so the question is not unimportant.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Besley, et al. 2011. "Do Educated Leaders Matter?"; Congleton and Zhang. 2010. "Is It All about Competence?"

**Table 8: Educational Background**

	Elected	Appointed	Diff-in-means t value	t value controlling for year
Higher edu in Moscow or SPb	0.405	0.333	-1.70*	-1.98**
Postgraduate degree	0.273	0.215	-1.59	-1.70*
Agricultural	0.014	0.023	0.96	0.98
Economics or management	0.102	0.096	-0.26	-0.36
Humanities	0.026	0.023	-0.25	-0.66
Legal	0.024	0.062	2.70**	2.36**
Military	0.038	0.050	0.80	0.42
Pedagogical	0.045	0.035	-0.69	-0.68
Technological or engineering	0.628	0.527	-2.77**	-2.31**
Medical	0.000	0.012	2.59**	2.50**
Physical Sciences	0.014	0.019	0.58	0.65
No Data*	0.109	0.154	1.83*	1.81*

\*11.52% of mayors' education data is missing

The mean age of the mayoral corps in Russia in the observed period is 49, so most Russian mayors got their higher education in the Soviet period. The educational profile of mayors shows that the overwhelming majority of them have technological or engineering educations. Educational priorities in the Soviet period focused on the mass production of talent in technology and engineering for use in industry, which explains the preponderance of this kind of education among Soviet-educated mayors. The second largest group graduated with their first degree in economics, finance, or management, which are perhaps more appropriate for a career in public administration.

Elected mayors are more likely than appointed mayors to be educated in Moscow or Saint Petersburg. This demonstrates a higher potential for elected mayors to build networks in federal political centers and lends support to the notion that elected mayors are stronger politically than are appointed mayors. Additionally, elected mayors more often have advanced degrees than do appointed mayors.<sup>50</sup> This may be because elected mayors

<sup>50</sup> In 1997, the number of people receiving the candidate of science degree was 14,000. By 2010, that figure had risen to 30,000. See Interview with Chairman of the Russian Academy of Sciences, M.D. Kirpichnikov, January 24, 2011. Accessed on February 24, 2012 at

**Table 9: Demographics**

	Elected	Appointed	Diff-in-means t value	t value controlling for year
Age	50.27	47.77	-4.24**	-4.77**
Male	0.99	0.97	-1.69*	-1.49

need to have an attractive profile to succeed in public election campaigns.

Finally, we examine some basic demographics in Table 9. We find that appointed mayors are significantly younger than elected mayors. They are also more likely to be female, but these differences are superficial since only 1.8% of Russian mayors are women.

## Conclusion

In this article we have focused on how different selection mechanisms are associated with the personal characteristics of Russian subnational leaders. Our findings are mixed. On the one hand there are several similarities between the two groups (e.g., both groups have little experience in the security services, similar levels of experience in the federal government, and do not vary significantly in their ties to the city/region). These and other similarities may be due to the uncompetitiveness of Russia's local elections. When the ruling United Russia party selects a candidate that is all but assured victory, the process of elections may come to resemble the process of appointments.

In spite of this, we do find some important differences of note. It appears that elected mayors have more education and are more likely to have held elected office. Rates of turnover are also much lower under elections. However, appointed mayors have more executive governing experience, are less likely to have CPSU experience, have more relevant educational profiles, are slightly younger, and are less likely to be representatives of local business. Thus, while there are differences, it is difficult to make general claims about the ability of elections (or appointments) to produce "better" quality officials.

One difficulty in interpreting these findings is the general lack of agreement about what constitutes a "good type" of politician. Is executive governing experience a good thing? Maybe so, unless that experience is in a Soviet-type bureaucracy. Are younger officials better? They are less

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<http://www.ras.ru/news/shownews.aspx?id=5e4a5d25-73d7-4a91-b157-5ddc570c7a05>. This should bias the percent of elected mayors with advanced degrees downward, since appointed mayors spent more of their lives in the post-Soviet period.

likely to have antiquated human capital, but they are also less experienced. Is post-graduate education an indicator of leader quality? Probably so, but what if that education is purchased or obtained via plagiarism, as was common in Russia in the 1990s? Even business experience may be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, business experience may indicate that an official has been captured by local business interests. On the other hand, business experience may provide leaders with the know-how necessary to pursue pro-growth policies.

Finally, the traits analyzed here tell us relatively little about how representative or accountable a given mayor might be. And while there are clear theoretical expectations that would lead us to believe that elected politicians should be more representative and accountable, there is little theory about how the human capital of officials affects their ability to fulfill these democratic roles. However, one might expect that officials with elected experience will have an advantage in this regard. More research is needed on this front. Further research is also needed on how the quality of leaders affects outcomes. This will help scholars develop empirically-grounded expectations about what constitutes a “good” type of politician.

More research is also needed on how certain selection mechanisms are chosen. This would allow for the construction of a more complete explanatory model, linking selection mechanisms to leader quality and leader quality to policy outcomes. Fortunately, the dataset used in this article is well suited for such analyses. The staggered cancellation of mayoral elections between 2000 and 2012 will allow researchers to precisely identify the independent effects of elections and appointments on a number of outcomes. Previous research has explored how public goods provision varies under elections and appointments, but the causal mechanisms remain underspecified. With the dataset in this article, it is possible to investigate whether the differences produced by different selection mechanisms are generated by divergent career incentives or by divergent leader types.