CHAPTER 4

Public Spending and Regional Voting

Chapter 3 uncovered a puzzling logic in the way that central authorities allocated fiscal transfers among Russia's 89 regions. Redistributing resources from the loyal to the rebellious would seem to risk merely feeding the fires that some thought threatened the federation's cohesion. To observers like Boris Fyodorov, the finance minister, rewarding the assertively disobedient governors appeared a strategy calculated to encourage a broader revolt. And yet it did not. This chapter and the next attempt to explain why.

The answer I suggest has to do with the consequences of fiscal transfers when they filtered through into higher rates of public spending. When government spending increased in a region, this apparently influenced how residents voted in elections and referenda. Where regional government spending increased relatively more, the vote was subsequently higher for Yeltsin and his reformist allies, controlling for the previous level of regional support for them. Thus, larger central transfers, when they boosted spending, appear to have bought votes for central incumbents. This chapter presents the evidence for this claim. It shows that the relationship between spending and votes held in a series of different elections and years, even controlling for the various other possible causes of regional voting patterns.

Patterns of Regional Voting

To look at maps of how Russia voted in the early 1990s is to see a political society taking form. Before 1989, Russias regions voted more or less alike. In the 1984 Supreme Soviet election, for example, more than 99.9 percent of voters nationwide endorsed the single list of approved candidates—a total that leaves little room for regional variation (White, Rose, and McAllister 1996, 21). But as Gorbachev's experiment with competitive elections pried the ballot boxes loose from the party's embrace, new patterns started to emerge. First in the Soviet Union, then in Russia itself, geography began to impose itself on the electoral returns. Different regions expressed different political identities.

Trying to make sense of the evolving patterns has much in common with waiting for a Polaroid photograph to develop. The first nationwide poll that offered Russian voters a clear choice between divergent candidates was the pres-

idential election of June 1991. Boris Yeltsin, promising radical economic reform and greater autonomy from the Soviet center, easily defeated a field of candidates that ranged from communist apparatchiks to one hypernationalist extremist. The results showed major regional differences, but no clear geographical pattern (see fig. 4.1). Some of Yeltsin's greatest successes—78 percent of the valid vote in Chelyabinsk Oblast, for instance—came in regions adjacent to his relative failures—48 percent in Bashkortostan. In general, he did slightly better in the west than the east, and about equally well in north and south.[1]

By the next nationwide poll—a referendum held in April 1993 on support for Yeltsin or the parliament—a far clearer pattern had emerged (see fig. 4.2). Almost all the president's strongest supporters now lay to the north of the 60th parallel, while the heavily anti-Yeltsin regions lay to the south, in a band crossing from Smolensk and Dagestan to Amur Oblast in Siberia. The change is even more strikingly visible in figure 4.3, which shows the regions where the *drop* in support for Yeltsin was greatest. Most of these regions lie in a more or less contiguous band to the south and southwest of Moscow, stretching from Bryansk to Novosibirsk.

The same north-south split occurred in party-list voting in the December 1993 parliamentary election (see fig. 4.4).[2] The three most clearly pro-reform blocs among the 13 running—Russia's Choice, Yabloko, and the Russian Movement for Democratic Reforms—together polled highest in the north and Far East, and lowest in the same crescent crossing the southwest and south. Again in the 1995 parliamentary election, the most pro-reform blocs did best in the north and the Communists in the south; and the same division appeared in the voting for president in July 1996 (see figs. 4.5 and 4.6).

In brief, a dramatic polarization occurred in the geography of support for Yeltsin and his allies in the years following his election as president of Russia. A growing number of voters in the south and southwest began to desert pro-reform groupings and seek out more conservative or populist alternatives. But voters in the north and east became ever more attached to the radical reformers.

Explaining Regional Voting

What can explain this emerging variation? Why are southern voters so much more conservative than their northern compatriots?[3] Why within both north and south do some regions give much higher and others much lower votes to the reformers? Once again, the statistical technique of multiple regression can be used to seek an answer.[4] The hypothesis of this chapter is that interregional differences in regional government spending—themselves the result in part of differences in central transfers—explain part of the variation. Voters support in-
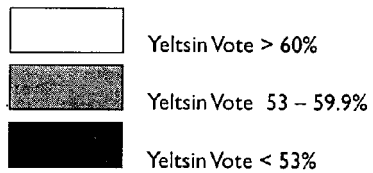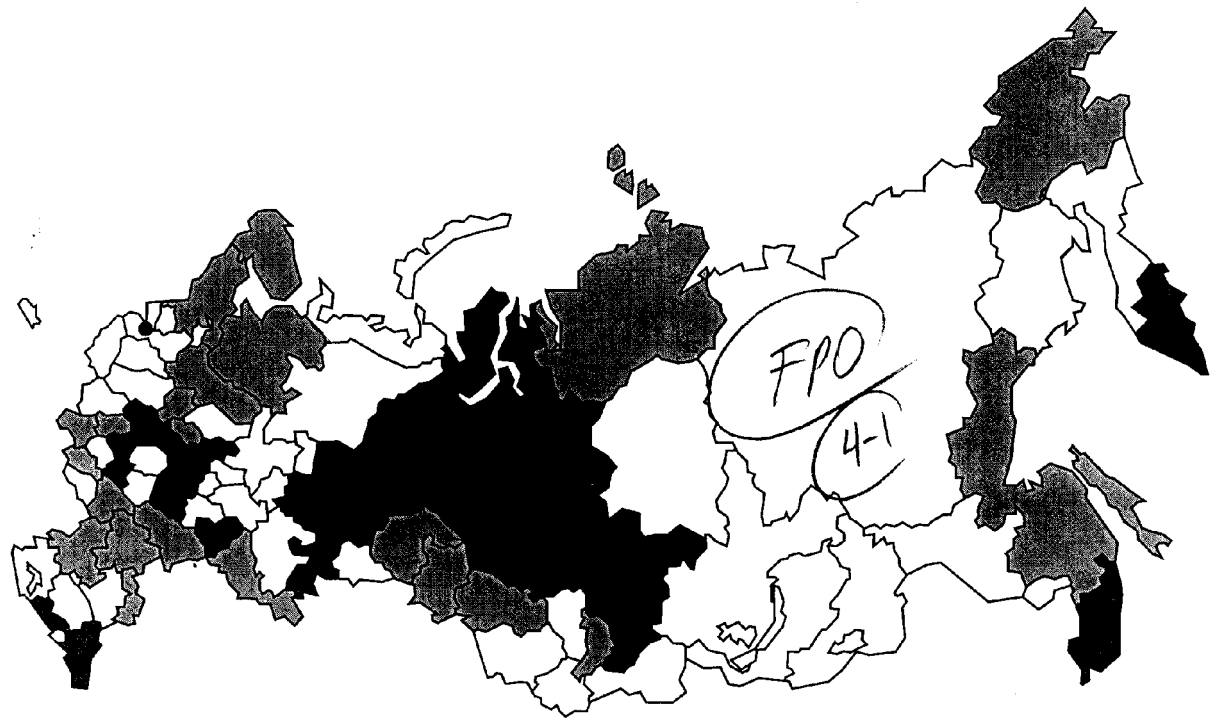
Fig. 4.1. Regional vote for Yeltsin in 1991 presidential election. (Data from McFaul and Petrov 1995, 655–56.)
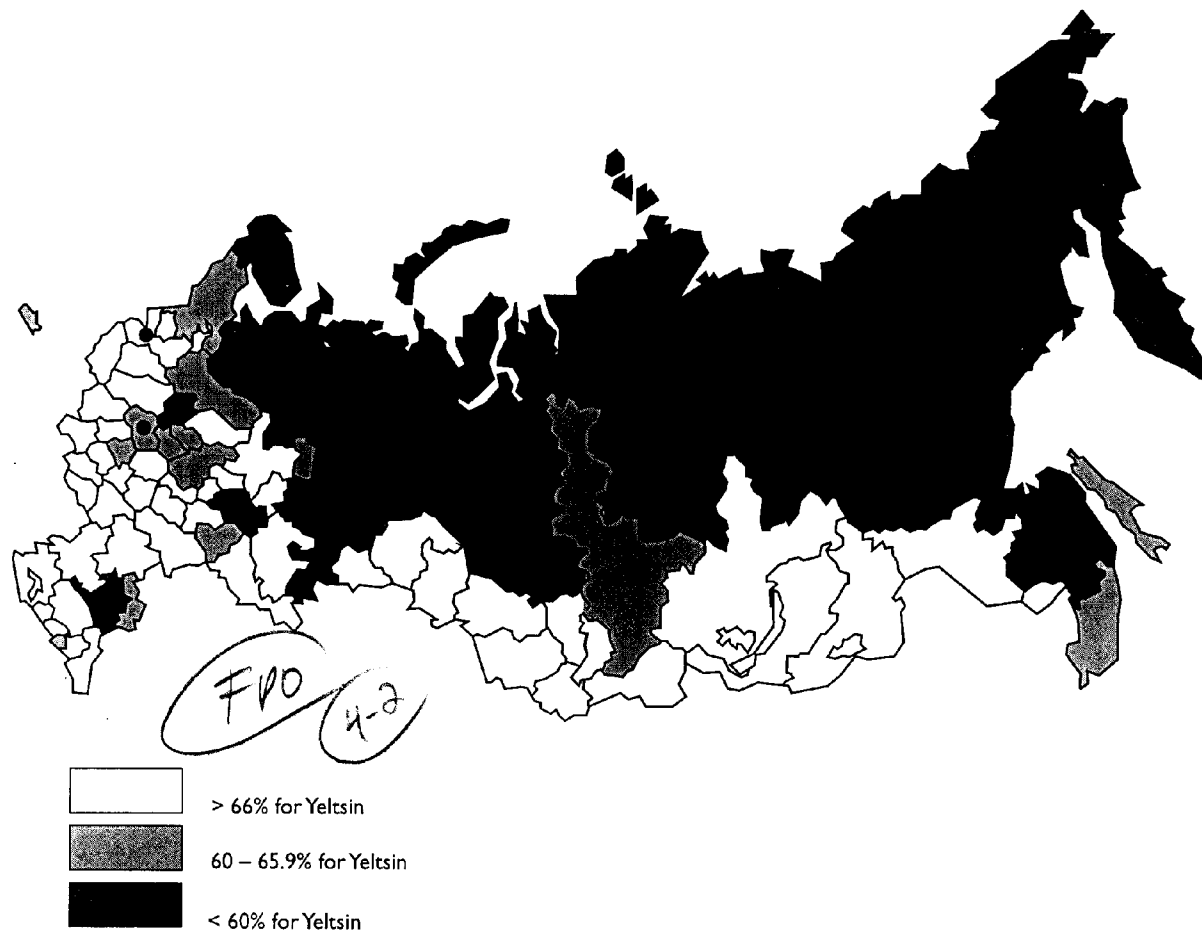
Fig. 4.2. Vote of trust in Yeltsin, April 1993 referendum. (Data from McFaul and Petrov 1995, 657–58.)
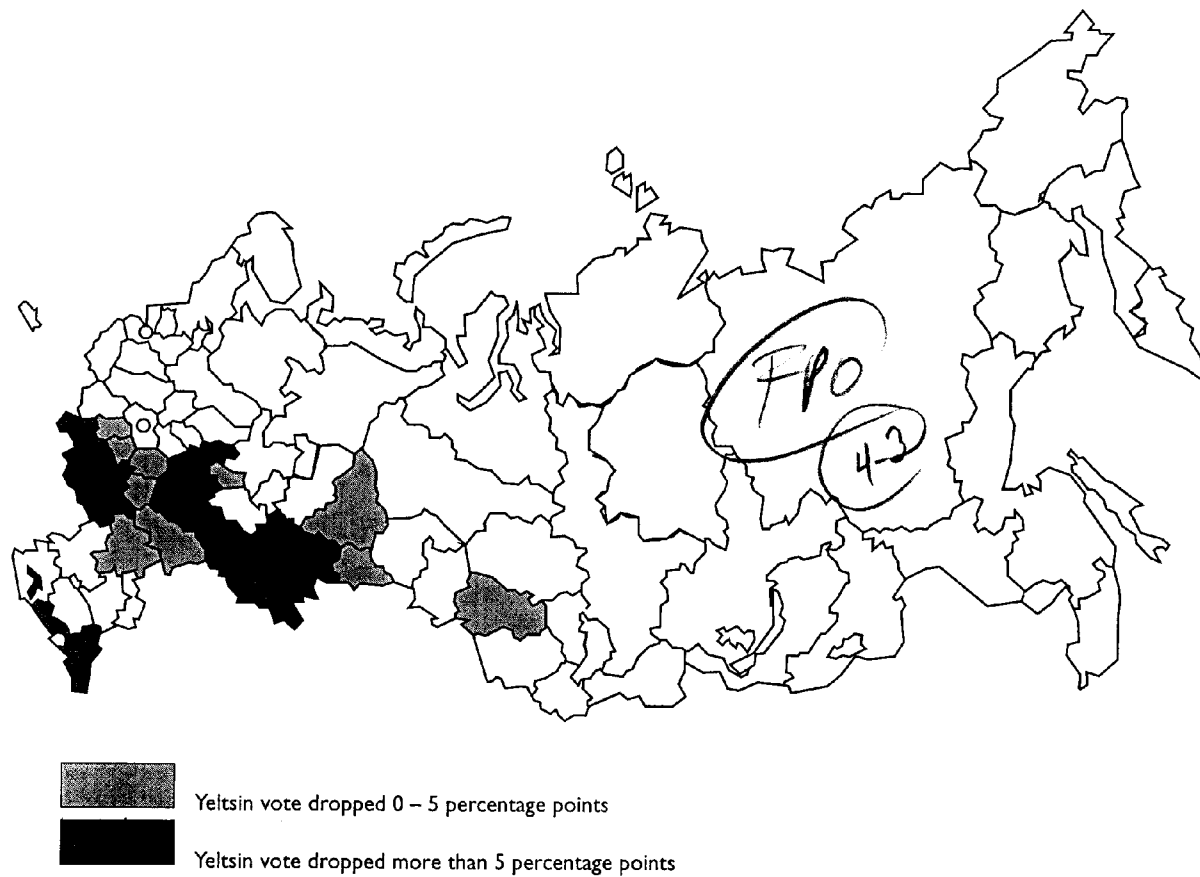
Fig. 4.3.   Change in regional vote for Yeltsin, 1991 election to April 1993 referendum. (Data calculated from McFaul and Petrov 1995.)
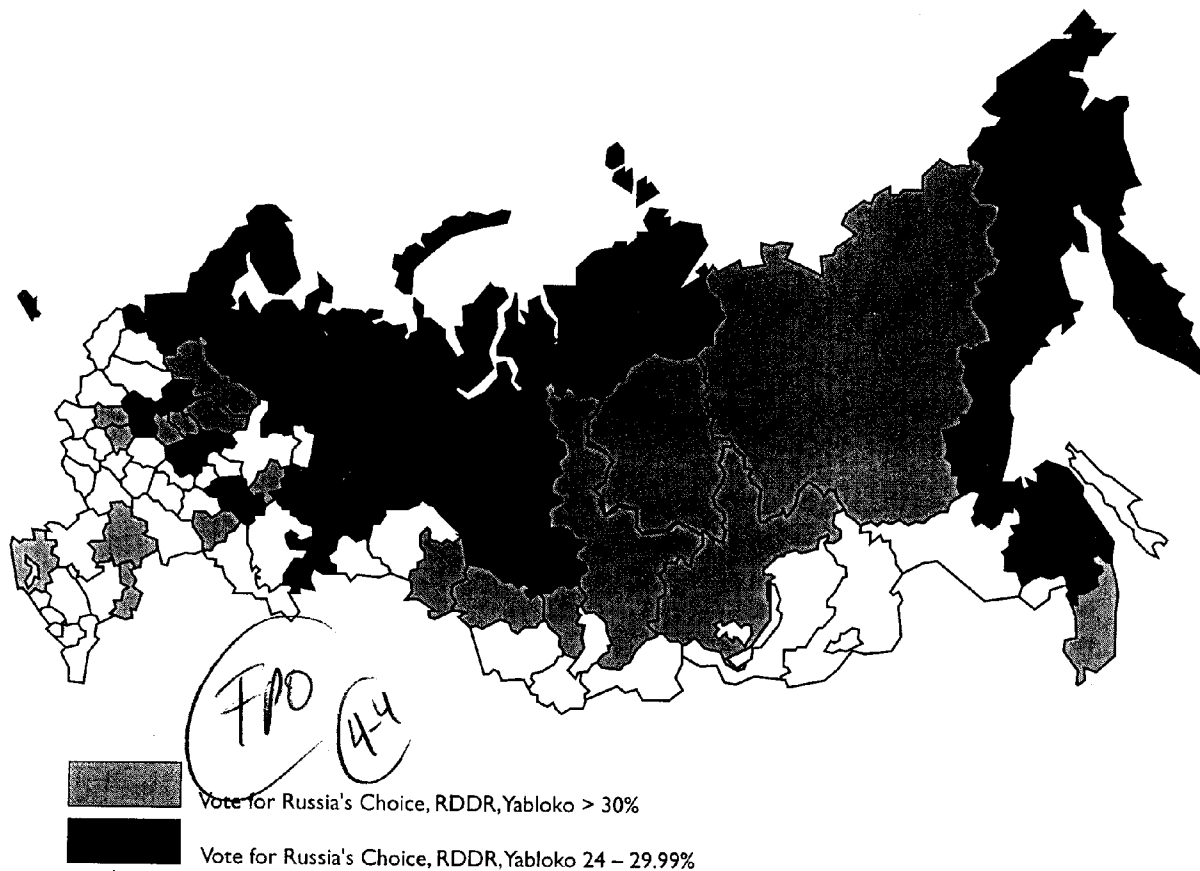
Fig. 4.4. Vote for the three most pro-reform blocs in December 1993. (Data from McFaul and Petrov 1995.)

Legend:

- Vote for Russia's Choice, RDDR, Yabloko > 30%
- Vote for Russia's Choice, RDDR, Yabloko 24 – 29.99%

Fig. 4.5.   Vote for major pro-reform blocs and for Communists, December 1995. (Data from *Transition,* Feb. 23, 1996.)
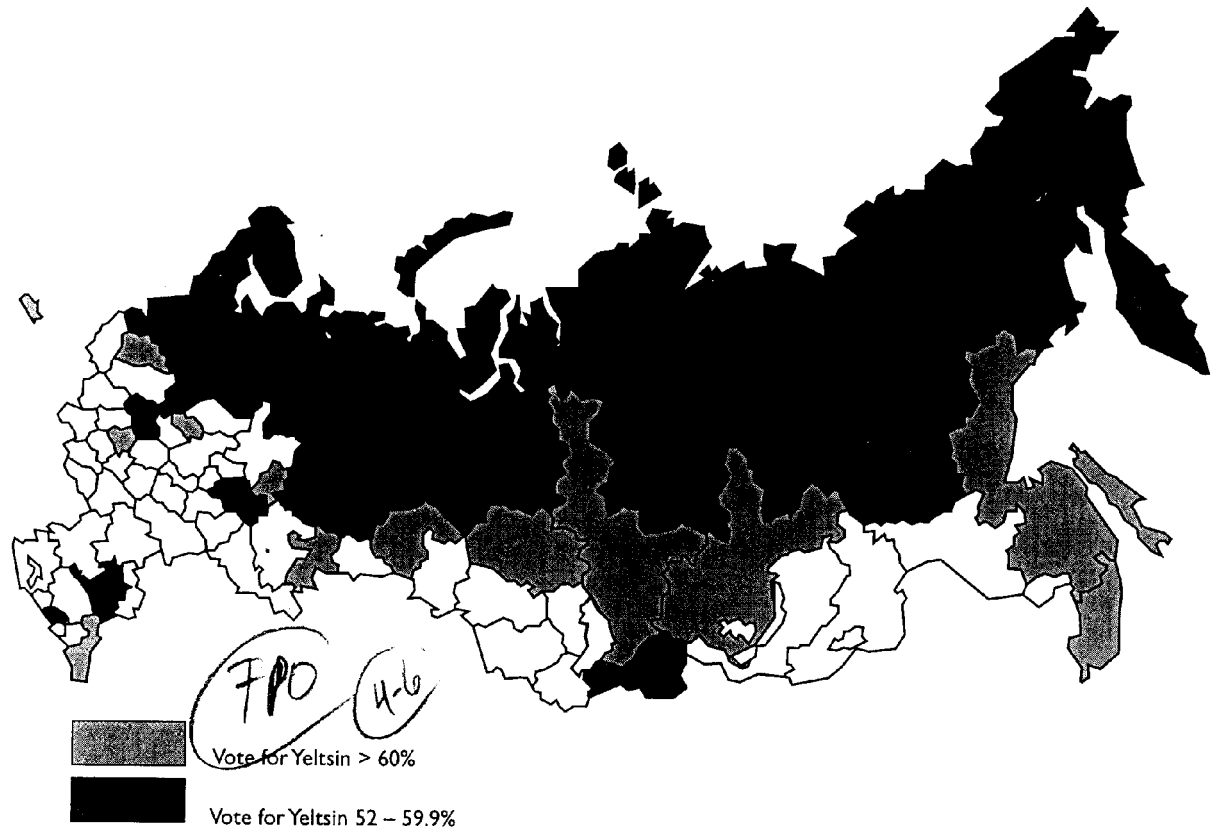
Fig. 4.6.   Second-round vote for Yeltsin in 1996 presidential election. (Data from Central Electoral Commission, Moscow.)

cumbents at higher rates when spending is relatively high or increasing. This hypothesis is tested against a number of alternative theoretically plausible explanations for why different regions might exhibit different electoral preferences. Below I discuss what such explanations are.

Regional Economic Performance

Some theories of voting behavior in Western democracies suggest that election outcomes are heavily influenced by "retrospective" voting on economic issues (see Fiorina 1981; Lew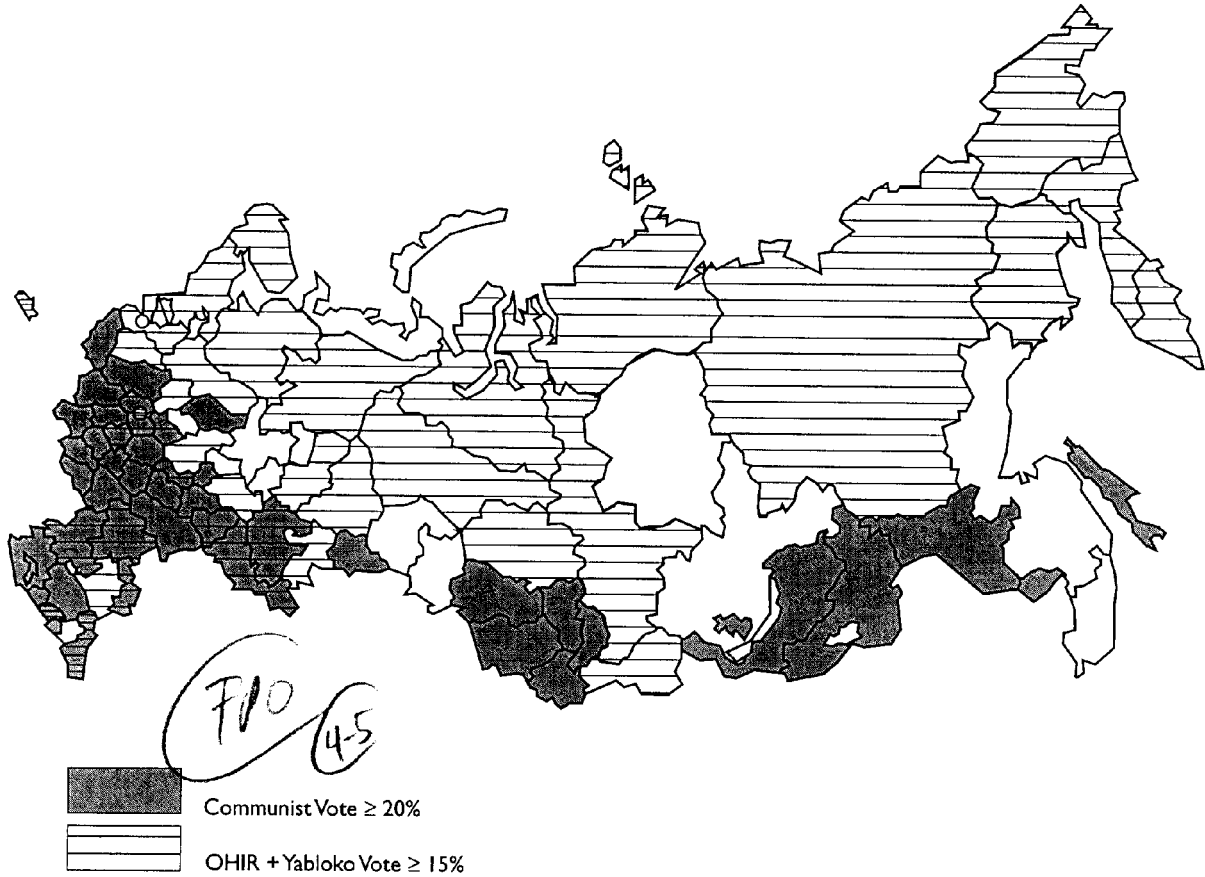is-Beck 1988; Kiewiet 1983; Key 1966). Voters reject incumbents and favor their opponents when they perceive macroeconomic conditions—either in society as a whole or as they impinge on the individual or subgroup—to be bad or deteriorating. Economic variables to which voters might respond include levels of or changes in unemployment, real income, and inflation (Lewis-Beck 1988; Kiewiet 1983).

The early 1990s witnessed depression, high inflation, and growing unemployment throughout Russia. However, performance did vary substantially from place to place. While officially recorded industrial output dropped 61 percent in Ust-Orda Autonomous Okrug between 1990 and 1993, in Ulyanovsk Oblast the drop was only 2 percent (Goskomstat Rossii 1994, 613–15). As of mid-1993, one in 14 enterprises in Moscow or Moscow Oblast was insolvent; in Chukotka, the figure was one in two. Inflation also varied: while nationwide, the consumer price index rose by 26 times between December 1991 and December 1992, the regional increase ranged from 12 times (in Volgogradskaya Oblast) to 53 times (in Magadan) (Goskomstat 1995). Finally, regions differed not just in the level of average wages and other incomes but in whether those wages were paid on time—and, if not, in the length of delay. As of June 1996, as voters went to the polls to elect a new president, workers in Karachaevo-Cherkessia were owed on average only about 25,000 rubles each. In Magadan, the average was 1.8 million rubles per worker.

Thus, a plausible first hypothesis is that levels of support for Yeltsin and his allies varied with regional economic performance. Where inflation, enterprise insolvency, unemployment, and wage delays were highest, and where real income growth was lowest, one might expect the drop in support for Yeltsin and the reformers to be greatest.

Regional Impact of Reform

However good or bad a region's macroeconomic performance, voters might be influenced by the degree to which economic reform had brought—or could be expected to bring—concrete benefits to them. A common assumption in discussions of postcommunist politics is that support for incumbent reform-

ers tends to fall as voters experience the costs of reform. "Even when people do support the radical treatment at the outset . . . this support erodes, often drastically, as social costs are experienced" (Przeworski 1991, 167). Ambivalence about democratic and free-market institutions may increase over time as a result of social learning about the costs of reform (Whitefield and Evans 1994).

This might affect regional voting in two ways. First, it might interact with regional economic specialization. Over time, voters may realize that their region does not occupy a favored niche in the political economy of the future and may grow more reluctant to embrace free-market liberalism. Considerable evidence suggests that economic reform in Russia improved conditions for the raw materials sector, while exacerbating problems of agriculture.[5] Thus, more agricultural regions might be expected to vote against the reformers more frequently, and raw-materials-producing regions to vote for them. Another possibility, which unfortunately data were not available to test, is that regions concentrated on the defense industries might turn antireform as the sector lost state orders and hope for the future.

Second, particular reforms may proceed at a different pace and have a different impact in different regions. Where more enterprises and apartments are privatized, there may be more property-owners with a stake in the system.[6] Regions producing exportable goods will have more to gain from foreign trade liberalization. The level of support for central reformers may therefore be higher in regions where privatization is more advanced and where exports are sizable.

Social and Cultural Characteristics

A third possibility is that variation in regional voting reflects underlying variation in political culture, civic organization, and religious or ethnic traditions. Some have argued that voting behavior is determined largely by social identities, forged in the heat of particular historical conflicts and perpetuated by intergenerational and organizational mechanisms of socialization (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). According to Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet, "a person thinks, politically, as he is, socially. Social characteristics determine political preference" (1968, 27). To Harrop and Miller, "a cross on the ballot is an implicit statement of social identity" (1987, 173).

Russian regions vary widely in their ethnic composition, religious heritage, and level of modernization. They also have histories of different patterns of social relations, dating from the imperial era to the late Soviet epoch, with which some scholars have associated distinctive subcultures. Divergent patterns of voting might mirror geographical divisions in the cultural attachments of voters, or the attitudinal consequences of different patterns of informal organization and socialization.[7] Such cleavages might take some time after the

introduction of authentic elections to be fully expressed because of the lag necessary for public confidence to grow that anti-incumbent voting would no longer be punished.

What particular sociocultural divisions might shape political loyalties in Russia? Lipset and Rokkan, in a well-known article, suggested that the social identities that structure political competition emerged in epochs of revolutionary conflict. Cleavages between opposing subgroups of the population were created by the nation-building and industrial revolutions, and then preserved by the organizations, parties, and socialization mechanisms the competing subgroups created (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). Others suggest virtuous and vicious cycles that sustain "civic" or "uncivic" forms of social capital through long periods (Putnam 1993). According to Putnam, informal patterns of interaction, cooperative norms, and levels of social trust may be self-reinforcing even without any organized socialization mechanism and may survive for centuries despite macroinstitutional changes.

Unfortunately, neither Lipset and Rokkan nor Putnam explain why some historical conflicts yield lasting social identities in a specific context while others do not. Some parties, churches, traditions, and organizational forms die out, while others persist. Thus, any selection of hypotheses based on social and cultural identities, present and past, risks excluding important ones.

Some of Lipset and Rokkan's four cleavages, elaborated in the context of Western Europe, are clearly relevant to contemporary Russia. First, the country's imperial and Soviet history suggests the importance of the cleavage between the "central nation-building culture" and "ethnically, linguistically, or religiously distinct subject populations in the peripheries" (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). Ethnicity and religion are plausible causes of variation in political attitudes in Russia, a multinational state with three major faiths. Second, the division between agricultural and industrial interests that Lipset and Rokkan associate with the industrial revolution might be expected to be salient in a late-industrializing country such as Russia.[8]

A second source of political orientations of post-Soviet citizens is, of course, the experience of the Soviet era. Many scholars have described the efforts of successive Soviet regimes to inculcate a new set of values and beliefs in the population, while repressing social organizations that could support independent cultural orientations (e.g., Fitzpatrick 1978). But since the regime generally employed universalistic mobilization strategies, appealing to all Soviet citizens against hypothetical class enemies, it is not clear how this in itself could explain *regional* variations in citizens' political attitudes. Others have suggested that beneath the surface of Soviet society, social divisions were created by modernization (Lewin 1988; Hough 1990). Such cleavages might be reflected, again, in different patterns of voting among regions with different balances of agriculture and industry and with more and less educated popula-

tions. Finally, various scholars have suggested the importance of generational shifts in political attitudes, forged by the different historical experiences of each age cohort (Jennings and Niemi 1981; Bahry 1987b). The war and the Stalin era may have left a particular mark on generations then coming of age in Russia. Patterns of voting might, therefore, differ across regions depending on the age distribution of their populations.

To summarize, one might hypothesize a greater frequency of pro-reform voting in regions that were more industrialized and urbanized, and where the population was younger or better educated. One might expect to see different patterns of voting in peripheral regions with larger non-Russian or non-Christian populations, but the precise implications for voting are less clear.

Quality of Life

Political geographers suggest that, besides income, other more subtle determinants of the "quality of life" or "standard of living" in a region may affect how people vote. Such aspects of the quality of life often include measures of health, nutrition, education, work conditions, employment, consumption, transportation, housing, recreation, social security, and human freedom.[9] In Russia, one might expect a higher rate of anti-incumbent voting where environmental pollution or crime created greater hazards and where life expectancy had recently dropped sharply. In addition, voters in regions suffering a larger influx of refugees from other former Soviet republics or war zones might be less favorably inclined toward the central powers. Some scholars have suggested that the presence of refugees kindled support for the ultranationalistic Vladimir Zhirinovsky in parliamentary and presidential elections.

Public Spending and Special Benefits

Finally, as previously hypothesized, voters might make their choices based not so much on local economic performance, local costs and benefits of reform, social identity, cultural values, or quality of life, as on the perceived performance of the government. Are public services provided adequately, at rates increasing or at least not too sharply decreasing? Are roads built, hospitals and schools funded, pensions paid on time? Falling support for incumbent reformers might constitute a protest against the drop in real public spending associated with stabilization programs.

Unfortunately, data are not available about the regional breakdown of federal state spending. But by 1992, most of the government spending programs likely to affect voters directly were under the aegis of regional governments. While regional spending constituted more than 40 percent of total budget spending (rising to about 50 percent by 1996), the regional governments were

responsible for 66 percent of spending on education and 89 percent of health-care expenditures (see chap. 3).

Geographically, levels of per capita regional budget spending varied considerably. In 1991, expenditure ranged from 663 rubles per capita (in Checheno-Ingushetia) to 4,488 in Chukotka. The era of rapid economic reform saw these disparities widen. While in Magadan Oblast real per capita spending dropped 80 percent between 1991 and 1992, in Khanty-Mansiisky Autonomous Okrug it increased by an estimated 41 percent. The coefficient of variation for per capita regional spending increased from .50 in 1991 to more than .80 in 1992 (Le Houerou 1993, Annex 5, tables 1, 2). Since property was still not a source of income for most voters, and most government revenues came from taxes on industry, reluctance to pay tax was unlikely to constrain voters' demand for public services. And since the ability to fund such regional public services depended not just on the level of taxation in the region but also on the proportion of tax the region succeeded in retaining and on central fiscal transfers, regional spending varied with the region's ability to extract redistributive benefits from Moscow. As table 4.1 shows, regional spending levels were very closely associated with the tax revenue retained by the region and the level of central transfers in the early 1990s. In each year, between 85 and 100 percent of the variation in regional spending could be explained by these two variables. The estimated real change in direct federal transfers between 1993 and 1994

TABLE 4.1. Relationship between Central Transfers and Regional Budget Spending (OLS regression coefficients; dependent variable is per capita regional budget spending, 1,000 Rs per cap)

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Tax revenues retained by region[a] (1,000 Rs per cap)	.91*** (.03)	1.19*** (.13)	1.01*** (.03)	.90*** (.06)	1.00*** (.02)
Total central transfers[b] (1,000 Rs per cap)	1.42*** (.06)	1.44*** (.04)	1.01*** (.03)	1.28*** (.08)	2.33*** (.07)
Constant	−.00 (.63)	−1.57 (22.47)	−124.07*** (23.69)	108.03 (112.99)	−311.39*** (75.22)
R^2	.944	.943	.973	.856	.974
Adjusted R^2	.942	.942	.972	.852	.974
N	87	87	85	86	86

Note: standard errors in parentheses. Total transfers do not include indirect transfers via additional tax breaks, since these are captured in the regional tax revenue figures.

[a]For 1992, total regional revenues.

[b]For 1992, subventions per capita.

*p < .05   **p < .01   ***p < .001

was significantly correlated with the change in estimated real regional spending between the two years (at $r = .66$, $p < .000$).

Helping to boost public spending in a region is not the only way that the central government might impress the region's voters and political elite that it has their interests at heart. Other techniques, used most notably during the 1996 presidential election campaign, include signing special agreements with the regional government or decrees promising additional economic aid. Bilateral power-sharing agreements were signed with more than 20 regions before the 1996 election, in almost all cases conferring some economic or other benefit.

Multiple regression offers a way to see how well each of these hypotheses fits the actual evidence of regional voting. Table 4.2 shows the results of regressing dependent variables measuring the regional vote for central incumbents and progovernment blocs on a range of indicators derived from the hypotheses discussed above. (For details of sources and operationalization, see appendix C.) The first two columns show regressions of the percentage of regional voters that voted "Yes" on the first question of the April 1993 referendum. (This question asked: Do you have confidence in the President of the Russian Federation Boris Yeltsin?) The next two columns show regressions of the regional vote for "Russia's Choice," the progovernment bloc headed by Yegor Gaidar, in December 1993.[10] The next regressions are of the regional vote for the "Our Home Is Russia" (OHIR) bloc of Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin in the December 1995 parliamentary election. (Of the 43 blocs running this time, OHIR was the one most clearly associated with Yeltsin and his policies.) The final two columns show regressions of the first-round vote for Yeltsin (against nine other contenders) in the presidential election of 1996.

Each coefficient listed in the table estimates the size of a change in the pro-reform or pro-incumbent vote associated with a one-unit change in the given independent variable, holding constant all the other independent variables included in the regression.[11] A positive coefficient suggests that an increase in the independent variable is associated with an increase in the dependent variable—for example, a high pro-Yeltsin vote in the previous election was associated with a higher vote of trust in Yeltsin in April 1993. A negative coefficient suggests a negative relationship—for example, the greater the proportion of a region's population comprised of people under age 16, the lower was the vote of trust in Yeltsin in April 1993. Those with asterisks meet standards for statistical significance—that is, for those with two asterisks, we know that the probability that the true coefficient is actually zero is less than .05 or one in twenty.

In each case, column 1 gives the estimated coefficients when all theoretically relevant independent variables are included. Column 2 shows a reduced model, formed by excluding all independent variables that do not significantly improve the fit of the regression, as judged by an F-test significant at the .10 level.

TABLE 4.2.   Voting for Yeltsin and Incumbent Pro-Reform Blocs

	April 1993 Referendum: Vote for Yeltsin, Q1		Dec. 1993 Vote for Russia's Choice		Dec. 1995 Vote for "OHIR"		Vote for Yeltsin 1996 (1st Round)	
	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)
Public Spending								
Regional budget expenditure per capita	.02**	.01***	.01**	.01***	.01	.02**	.01**	.01***
	(.01)	(.00)	(.00)	(.00)	(.01)	(.01)	(.00)	(.00)
Recent change in regional budget expenditure per capita	.20		.21*	.11**	.008**	.005**	−.00	
	(.25)		(.10)	(.04)	(.004)	(.002)	(.00)	
Bilateral power-sharing agreement signed	—		—		—		2.62	2.70**
							(1.58)	(1.20)
At least one presidential decree or govt. resolution passed in '96 on aid to region	—		—		—		.06	
							(1.42)	
Economic Performance								
Estimated regional output per capita	−.00		.00		.00		−.00	
	(.01)		(.00)		(.00)		(.00)	
Estimated recent real income change	−6.12		−3.95*	−4.23**	−.01		.00	
	(5.12)		(2.26)	(1.59)	(.02)		(.03)	
Unemployment	.81		−.32		−.03		−.33	
	(1.61)		(.66)		(.35)		(.43)	
Inflation	.03		.14		4.47**		.26	
	(.32)		(.14)		(2.20)		(2.51)	
Proportion of enterprises insolvent	2.18		−.03		.12		.12	
	(6.83)		(.14)		(.07)		(.10)	

(continued)

TABLE 4.2.—*Continued*

	April 1993 Referendum: Vote for Yeltsin, Q1		Dec. 1993 Vote for Russia's Choice		Dec. 1995 Vote for "OHIR"		Vote for Yeltsin 1996 (1st Round)	
	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)
Wage arrears	−3.64	−2.11**	−2.21*	−1.39**	−4.36***	−3.63***	−.02***	−.02***
	(2.55)	(.96)	(1.17)	(.65)	(1.54)	(1.06)	(.01)	(.00)
Regional Costs and Benefits of Economic Reform Program								
Sectoral								
Percent of work force	−.75*	−1.15***	−.39**	−.57***	−.14		.16	
in agriculture	(.40)	(.21)	(.18)	(.07)	(.19)		(.22)	
Region's share in RF	.38		.22		.30	.45**	.65**	.64***
raw materials output	(.63)		(.22)		(.22)	(.18)	(.25)	(.18)
Price and trade liberalization, privatization								
Exports per capita	−.04		−.01		−.00		.00*	.004**
	(.12)		(.01)		(.00)		(.00)	(.002)
Value of enterprises	−.64	−.26	−.36	−.30	.07		.04	
privatized per capita	(.51)	(.43)	(.32)	(.18)	(.06)		(.08)	
Proportion of apartments	.45	.41*	−.01		−.04		−.05	
privatized	(.30)	(.23)	(.14)		(.07)		(.08)	
Social and Cultural Cleavages								
Percent of population	.15		.06		−.17**	−.09**	−.10	
Russian	(.22)		(.08)		(.08)	(.03)	(.10)	
Region predominantly	−8.51		−1.59		−4.72	−3.83**	.29	
Christian	(8.45)		(3.01)		(3.15)	(1.81)	(3.93)	

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Region an ethnically defined republic	−.48 (7.77)		1.21 (3.19)		−3.46 (3.16)		−2.37 (4.05)	
Percent of population above working age	−1.28 (.78)		−.34 (.36)		.20 (.41)		1.11** (.49)	.65* (.34)
Percent of population below age 16	−2.04 (1.31)		−.17 (.58)		.23 (.60)		1.96*** (.70)	1.95*** (.37)
Percent of population with higher education	−.60 (.46)	−.46 (.28)	.10 (.19)		−.06 (.22)		.30 (.28)	
Quality of Life								
Pollution	.01 (.01)		−.00 (.01)		.01 (.01)		.01 (.01)	
Crime	.55 (.37)	.43* (.25)	−.00 (.15)		.00 (.00)		−.00 (.00)	−.00* (.00)
Recent change in life expectancy	1.16 (2.07)		−.83 (.85)		.57 (.79)		−1.52 (.94)	−1.27* (.68)
Refugees and forced migrants per capita	.18 (.79)		.34 (.34)	.20 (.23)	.18 (.19)		−.51** (.23)	−.37*** (.07)
Control Variable								
Pro-Yeltsin or pro-reform vote, previous time	.38** (.16)	.26** (.11)	.13* (.07)	.11** (.05)	.20 (.17)	.19* (.10)	.70*** (.09)	.63*** (.06)
Constant	110.53 (58.32)	51.36*** (11.35)	12.95 (24.35)	19.20*** (4.49)	.79 (27.43)	16.69*** (2.37)	−77.66** (34.26)	−63.35*** (17.65)
R^2	.70057	.63068	.74963	.70301	.61636	.49087	.85048	.81673
Adjusted R^2	.52091	.57974	.60657	.66274	.42453	.43687	.76596	.78523
N	64	66	66	67	72	73	72	75

Note: standard errors in parentheses. For sources of data and definition of variables, see appendix C.

*$p < .10$ **$p < .05$ ***$p < .01$

The figures in table 4.2 offer some clues about what was causing the increasing regional variation in support for Yeltsin and the pro-reform parties.[12] First, the results offer some strong confirmation of the hypothesis of this chapter. Higher and increasing government spending did appear to buy votes for central incumbents. In regions where regional government spending had been relatively high in the previous period, Yeltsin polled significantly higher in both 1993 and 1996, and the most progovernment blocs polled higher in the 1993 parliamentary election and probably also in the 1995 election. In regions where real regional spending had *increased* relatively more in the preceding period, Russia's Choice got a higher vote of support in 1993, as did OHIR in 1995 (note that these results already control for the regions' economic performance, sociocultural characteristics, costs and benefits of reform, and quality of life). Not only that, but regions with which Yeltsin had signed a bilateral power-sharing agreement also had significantly higher votes for him in 1996—the signing bonus appeared to amount to more than two additional percentage points of the vote. Whatever other factors were shaping the developing pattern of regional voting, they could be offset to some degree by federal allocations, agreements, and government spending.

What other factors were also significant? With one important exception, the regressions uncovered little impact of economic performance on regional voting. Regional output, recent real income changes, enterprise insolvency rates, and unemployment levels were not in general significantly related to votes for or against national incumbents. The prime minister's OHIR bloc seems actually to have polled better in regions where inflation the previous year had been particularly high (since inflation tended to be higher in more industrialized, urbanized regions, this may in fact have been picking up some other related factor). The one economic performance variable that does seem to have played an important part in all years was the extent of wage arrears in the region. Where workers were owed more back pay, the level of voting against the progovernment bloc or against Yeltsin was significantly higher.

The sectoral impact of reform does seem to have influenced voting in more or less the expected way. Agricultural regions were less likely to give Yeltsin a high vote of trust in the April 1993 referendum or to vote for Russia's Choice in 1993—right after witnessing the drastic deterioration of market conditions that economic reform brought them. In raw-materials-producing regions—big gainers from reform and political allies of the incumbents—voters were significantly more supportive of Chernomyrdin's OHIR in 1995 and of Yeltsin in the 1996 presidential election. Similarly, exporting regions gave Yeltsin a higher vote in 1996. Measures of the rate of privatization of enterprises and apartments were generally not significant.

Among sociocultural variables, the regressions detected a slightly greater readiness of regions with minority cultures or ethnicity to vote for the "party of

power" at least in 1995. That year, regions with larger non-Russian populations and with non-Christian traditions voted with greater frequency for OHIR.[13] However, ethnicity and religion variables were not significant in any of the other years; and given ethnicity and religion, republic status did not make a significant independent contribution to regional voting behavior in any year. Nor did levels of higher education make a significant difference to the voting totals. In the 1996 presidential election, regions that contained larger concentrations of both the old and the young gave Yeltsin a higher vote. (One *cannot* deduce from this that the old were more likely to vote for the incumbent president—perhaps *other* voters in regions with relatively more elderly residents tended for some reason to be more pro-Yeltsin. Since the young population was below voting age, one obviously can not infer from this result how they would vote.)

Quality of life factors played almost no discernible role in the regional votes. The one significant finding is that, as might be expected, populations of regions with a particularly high rate of refugees and forced in-migrants tended to vote against Yeltsin in 1996, perhaps blaming him for the social dislocation in border regions.

In short, regional electorates seemed willing to punish Yeltsin and the reformers at the ballot box for the terms of trade shock against agriculture after price liberalization, and later on for the increasing problem of wage arrears and for the floods of refugees. Raw-materials-producing and exporting regions—some of the main beneficiaries of reforms—were increasingly ready to support the president and his allies. Sociocultural factors—ethnic and age composition, religion—may have played a small role in some elections, though the results are hard to interpret. But all these factors could be offset to some extent by fiscal and spending policy. Higher and more rapidly increasing levels of regional government spending seemed to buy votes for the president and incumbent central reformers. By increasing the resources regional governments had to spend on local programs, incumbents in Moscow appeared to be able to boost their own local popularity.[14]

How large were the effects? How many votes could the central incumbents "buy" by boosting regional spending or signing an aid decree? The imperfect data and techniques cannot give answers with precision. Nevertheless, the effects seem at times to be sizable. Controlling for other factors, the estimates in table 4.2 suggest that somewhere between 50 and 150 rubles per capita in additional 1991 regional spending could buy Yeltsin an extra percentage point of support in the 1993 referendum.[15] That year, the mean regional spending level was 1,338 rubles per capita, while individual regions ranged from 663 to 4,488. Had the median-spending region, Kirov Oblast (1,074 rubles per capita), spent as much as the highest-spending region, Chukotka (4,488 rubles per capita), the estimates suggest the vote of support for Yeltsin there would have been from 24 to 67 percentage points higher.

In 1992, the mean region suffered a drop in estimated real regional budget spending of about 20,000 1992 rubles per capita. The change in individual regions ranged from a drop of 168,000 in Chukotka (which had done so well the previous year) to a gain of 10,000 in Khanti-Mansiisky AO. Had the median region, Kursk Oblast, with an estimated drop of about 14,000 rubles per capita, sustained the spending performance of Khanti-Mansiisky AO, the estimates suggest that its vote for Russia's Choice in December 1993 would have been from 2.4 to 4.9 percentage points higher. (The mean regional vote for Russia's Choice in that election was about 14.5 percent.)

What about the 1996 presidential election? In 1994, the median region, Ryazan Oblast, had spent about 600,000 rubles per capita. Had it spent as much as Murmansk Oblast, 25 places above it in the rankings, the estimates suggest it would have given a first-round vote for Yeltsin 2.8 to 3.5 percentage points higher. How much was a bilateral agreement worth in votes of support for the president? The estimates suggest that, controlling for other factors, regions with which Yeltsin had signed a bilateral agreement on average gave him a 2.6 to 2.7 percentage point higher vote in June 1996. By the time of the presidential election's second round, Yeltsin had signed such agreements with 27 regions—apparently, an electorally useful move.

A more detailed analysis of the regional returns in the 1996 presidential election confirms these results and suggests additional insights. This election occurred in two rounds: the first pitted 10 candidates of different ideological positions against each other; since none received more than 50 percent, a runoff was held on July 3 between the two first-round leaders—Yeltsin and the Communist leader Gennady Zyuganov. The first-round regional vote for Yeltsin, as shown in table 4.2, can be interpreted as a measure of relatively strong support for him at this time; the second-round Yeltsin vote includes in addition many weak supporters who would have preferred one of the excluded candidates or who were motivated primarily by hostility toward Zyuganov. Thus, the second-round regional results suggest more directly which aspects of policy or regional characteristics made a region's wavering voters choose Yeltsin in the end.

These are analyzed in table 4.3. As in the first round, regions with large wage arrears or larger influxes of refugees tended to return smaller pro-Yeltsin votes, while raw-materials-producing and exporting regions voted more strongly for the incumbent president. Regions with large non-Russian populations also voted more strongly for Yeltsin, as, oddly enough, did regions that had recently experienced a bigger drop in life expectancy. Since drops in life expectancy were higher in more urbanized, industrialized, and northern regions—where support for Yeltsin tended to be strong—this relationship may well be spurious.

Particularly intriguing, though, are the results related to public spending and federal aid. As in the first round, regions that had relatively higher regional government spending also had higher votes for Yeltsin. Other central policies

TABLE 4.3.   The 1996 Presidential Election: Voting for Yeltsin in Rounds 1 and 2

	1st Round		2nd Round	
	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)
Public Spending				
Regional budget	.01**	.01***	.01	.01***
expenditure per capita	(.00)	(.00)	(.00)	(.00)
Recent changes in regional	−.00		.00	
budget expenditure per	(.00)		(.00)	
capita				
Bilateral power-sharing	2.62	2.70**	3.00*	2.95*
agreement signed	(1.58)	(1.20)	(1.76)	(1.57)
At least one presidential	.06		2.69*	2.84**
decree or government	(1.42)		(1.59)	(1.39)
resolution passed in '96 on				
aid to region				
Economic Performance				
Estimated regional	−.00		−.00	
output per capita	(.00)		(.00)	
Estimated recent	.00		.01	
real income change	(.03)		(.03)	
Unemployment	−.33		.50	
	(.43)		(.48)	
Inflation	.26		1.43	
	(2.51)		(2.81)	
Proportion of	.12		.17	.14*
enterprises insolvent	(.10)		(.11)	(.08)
Wage arrears	−.02***	−.02***	−.02***	−.02***
	(.01)	(.00)	(.01)	(.00)
Regional Costs and Benefits				
of Economic Reform Program				
Sectoral				
Percent of work force	.16		−.16	
in agriculture	(.22)		(.25)	
Region's share in RF	.65**	.64***	.42	.49**
raw materials output	(.25)	(.18)	(.28)	(.21)
Price and trade liberalization,				
privatization				
Exports per capita	.00*	.004**	.01*	.01***
	(.00)	(.002)	(.00)	(.00)
Value of enterprises	.04		.03	
privatized per capita	(.08)		(.09)	

(continued)

TABLE 4.3.—*Continued*

	1st Round		2nd Round	
	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)
Proportion of apartments privatized	−.05 (.08)		.02 (.09)	
Social and Cultural Cleavages				
Percent of population Russian	−.10 (.10)		−.20* (.11)	−.18*** (.04)
Region predominantly Christian	.29 (3.93)		−5.98 (4.40)	
Region an ethnically defined republic	−2.37 (4.05)		−7.94* (4.53)	
Percent of population above working age	1.11** (.49)	.65* (.34)	.34 (.54)	
Percent of population below age 16	1.96*** (.70)	1.95*** (.37)	.68 (.79)	
Percent of population with higher education	.30 (.28)		.27 (.31)	
Quality of Life				
Pollution	.01 (.01)		.01 (.01)	
Crime	−.00 (.00)	−.00* (.00)	−.00 (.00)	−.00 (.00)
Recent change in life expectancy	−1.52 (.94)	−1.27* (.68)	−2.45** (1.05)	−2.66*** (.76)
Refugees and forced migrants per capita	−.51** (.23)	−.37*** (.07)	−.37 (.26)	−.40*** (.08)
Control Variable				
Pro-Yeltsin or pro-reform vote, previous time	.70*** (.09)	.63*** (.06)	.63*** (.10)	.68*** (.07)
Constant	−77.66** (34.26)	−63.35*** (17.65)	−3.53 (38.36)	17.79*** (5.55)
R^2	.85048	.81673	.85491	.82210
Adjusted R^2	.76596	.78523	.77290	.78821
N	72	75	72	75

Note: standard errors in parentheses. For details of data sources and variable construction, see appendix C.

*$p < .10$ **$p < .05$ ***$p < .01$

allocating benefits to particular regions were also followed by a relatively higher Yeltsin vote. The regressions still suggest that regions with which Yeltsin had signed a bilateral agreement were more prone to support him—though the significance of this result falls to the .07 level (model 2). At the same time, in the second round another variable became significant. If a region had benefited from at least one presidential decree or government resolution promising aid to the region during the first six months of 1996, that region's voters rewarded the incumbent president at the polls, giving him nearly 3 percentage points more. Such largesse and benefits appear to have been more influential in boosting the less committed support for Yeltsin (in the second round) than in eliciting an absolute preference for him (in the first).

Besides considering regional voting for Yeltsin or for pro-reform central incumbents, it is interesting to examine the determinants of other parties' votes. Table 4.4 shows a more detailed analysis of the regional results from the December 1993 parliamentary election. As well as repeating the Russia's Choice results for comparison, it gives estimated coefficients for regressions of the total vote for the three extreme opposition blocs—the Communists, Agrarians, and Liberal Democratic Party—as well as of the Communist and LDP votes taken separately.

The pattern of opposition voting mirrors the pro-reform voting in various intuitively plausible ways. Both the Communists and LDP performed better in more agricultural regions and in those with lower economic output (significant, however, only at .09 for LDP in model 2). While Russia's Choice drew its strength from the industrialized regions, the extreme opposition did better in less developed parts. Both the LDP and Communist Party apparently also benefited from the protest vote in regions with relatively large wage arrears—regions where Russia's Choice polled significantly lower.[16]

At the same time, the results reveal interesting divergences between the regional bases of support for the Communists and Zhirinovsky's LDP. The regions where the protest vote took a particularly procommunist tinge seemed to be those most likely to be concerned with economic welfare and softening the pain of reform. Regions with larger dependent populations—of the young and old—were particularly supportive of the Communists, though not of the LDP.[17] In fact, the more children under 16, the lower the vote for Zhirinovsky. And the protest vote in regions where public spending was particularly low or dropping particularly fast went to the Communists but not at all to the LDP.[18] On the other hand, protest seems to have favored Zhirinovsky in regions suffering particular social dislocations. Where unemployment, the crime rate, or the inflow of refugees was higher, the LDP appeared to benefit. Crime and refugees were issues that Zhirinovsky exploited rhetorically in campaign speeches. (In high crime regions, the Communist vote was actually lower, suggesting perhaps a battle between the two parties for the extreme opposition vote.)

TABLE 4.4.   Why Did Different Regions Support Different Political Blocs in the December 1993 Parliamentary Election? (OLS regression coefficients)

	Russia's Choice		3 Opposition Blocs[a]		Including			
					Communists		LDP	
	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)
Public Spending								
Regional budget	.01**	.01***	−.01**	−.01**	−.01**	−.01*	.00	
expenditure per capita	(.00)	(.00)	(.01)	(.00)	(.00)	(.00)	(.00)	
Recent change in	.21*	.11**	−.27	−.23**	−.20	−.22*	.08	
regional budget	(.10)	(.04)	(.19)	(.09)	(.13)	(.11)	(.11)	
expenditure per capita								
Economic Performance								
Estimated regional	.00		−.01*	−.01***	−.00	−.01***	−.01*	−.00*
output per capita	(.00)		(.01)	(.00)	(.00)	(.00)	(.00)	(.00)
Estimated recent	−3.95*	−4.23**	5.23		3.06		.48	
real income change	(2.26)	(1.59)	(4.03)		(2.89)		(2.41)	
Unemployment	−.32		2.28*	2.52**	.55		1.35*	1.51***
	(.66)		(1.18)	(1.01)	(.85)		(.70)	(.55)
Inflation	.14		−.18		−.30	−.36**	.13	
	(.14)		(.26)		(.19)	(.16)	(.15)	
Proportion of	−.03		−.29		−.16		−.16	
enterprises insolvent	(.14)		(.26)		(.19)		(.15)	
Wage arrears	−2.11**	−2.21*	6.80***	5.30***	3.90**	1.11	3.79***	4.58***
	(.96)	(1.17)	(2.08)	(1.40)	(1.50)	(1.02)	(1.24)	(.70)

Regional Costs and Benefits
of Economic Reform Program

Sectoral

Percent of work force	−1.15***	−.39**	.96***	.93***	.22	.36**	.44**	.39***
in agriculture	(.21)	(.18)	(.32)	(.16)	(.23)	(.14)	(.19)	(.10)
Region's share in RF	.22		−.63		−.49*		−.17	
raw materials output	(.22)		(.39)		(.28)		(.23)	

Price and trade
liberalization, privatization

Exports per capita	−.01		.03**	.04***	.02	.01*	.01	.02**
	(.01)		(.01)	(.01)	(.01)	(.01)	(.01)	(.01)
Value of enterprises	−.26	−.36	.64		.43		−.17	−.53**
privatized per capita	(.43)	(.32)	(.56)		(.40)		(.34)	(.24)
Proportion of apartments	−.01		.01		.01		.13	
privatized	(.14)		(.24)		(.18)		(.15)	

Social and Cultural Cleavages

Percent of population	.06		−.17		−.17*		.03	
Russian	(.08)		(.14)		(.10)		(.08)	
Region predominantly	−1.59		6.56		3.66		2.07	
Christian	(3.01)		(5.37)		(3.85)		(3.21)	
Region an ethnically	1.21		−7.07		−4.83		−1.02	
defined republic	(3.19)		(5.69)		(4.09)		(3.40)	
Percent of population	−.34		1.12*	1.16***	.87*		−.48	
above working age	(.36)		(.64)	(.27)	(.46)		(.38)	
Percent of population	−.17		.27		1.64**	.57**	−2.29***	−2.00***
below age 16	(.58)		(1.04)		(.75)	(.28)	(.62)	(.20)
Percent of population with	.10		.30		.46*		−.27	
higher education	(.19)		(.34)		(.24)		(.20)	

TABLE 4.4.—*Continued*

| | Russia's Choice | | 3 Opposition Blocs[a] | | Including | | | |
| | | | | | Communists | | LDP | |
	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)
Quality of Life								
Pollution	−.00		.01		−.00		.00	
	(.01)		(.01)		(.00)		(.01)	
Crime	−.00		−.46*	−.51**	−.33	−.51***	.24	.38***
	(.15)		(.27)	(.21)	(.20)	(.16)	(.16)	(.12)
Recent change in	−.83		−.17		−.26		.23	
life expectancy	(.85)		(1.52)		(1.09)		(.91)	
Refugees and forced	.34	.20	−.08		−.31	−.27	.60*	.81**
migrants per capita	(.34)	(.23)	(.60)		(.43)	(.39)	(.36)	(.31)
Control Variable								
Pro-Yeltsin or	.13*	.11**	−.21	.00	.04	.19***	−.16**	−.14**
pro-reform vote,	(.07)	(.05)	(.13)	(.09)	(.09)	(.07)	(.08)	(.05)
previous time								
Constant	12.95	19.20***	33.95	23.67*	−27.46	10.79	81.30***	64.43***
	(24.35)	(4.49)	(43.47)	(12.44)	(31.22)	(9.99)	(25.96)	(6.52)
R^2	.74963	.70301	.80553	.76569	.70516	.60303	.81322	.76322
Adjusted R^2	.60657	.66274	.69441	.71966	.53668	.52506	.70650	.72239
N	66	67	66	67	66	67	66	68

Note: standard errors in parentheses. For details of variable construction and data sources, see appendix C.
[a]Agrarians, Communists, and LDP.
*p < .10   **p < .05   ***p < .01

Putting these various findings together, the emerging geographical variation in Russian voting seems to follow quite an intelligible logic—one that is largely economic, reactive, and reasonably flexible. Sociocultural markers—language, tradition, ethnicity—correlate at times with voting, but they explain only a small part of the pattern. More central are differences in regions' economic profiles. While exporting and raw-materials-producing regions apparently paid Yeltsin and his allies back in votes for the benefits that liberalization had brought them, agricultural regions punished the incumbents for the increasingly dismal prospects of one of their main economic sectors. More generally, regional populations severely affected by wage arrears and refugee flows took out their anger on those in power, while those with larger old and young populations seemed to prefer the social policies of the Communists. Yet, these sources of discontent could be offset, to a greater or lesser degree, by more generous state spending in the given region, or in 1996 by central concessions in the form of bilateral agreements or decrees.

None of the results discussed in this chapter reveals directly why *individual* voters chose to vote for one party or another. An association between older populations and Communist voting at the regional level, for example, does *not* necessarily imply that individuals who are old are more likely to vote Communist—to assume as much is to commit the "ecological fallacy." Such questions can be answered most directly by surveys of individual voters. The focus of the analysis here is what characteristics of *regions* correlate with particular patterns of voting.

Nevertheless, the region-level results do correspond in some ways to patterns other researchers have found in individual-level voting surveys. One nationally representative survey of 1,599 respondents taken right after the 1996 presidential election found that the rate of reported voting for Yeltsin was much higher among respondents with four or more children aged under 16—which would correspond to the higher pro-Yeltsin voting in regions with larger young populations (Rose 1996, 50).[19] Those that felt more unsafe going out on the streets were less likely to vote for Yeltsin, corresponding to the lower vote for him in high-crime regions. The propensity of more agricultural regions to vote against Yeltsin and Russia's Choice also had an analogue at the individual level: agricultural workers (in kolkhoz or sovkhoz) said they voted for the three opposition parties over the three most pro-reform blocs in 1993 by a ratio of almost six to one.[20]

Explaining the North-South Divide

If these factors explain voting variation across Russia's regions, which if any of them can account for the increasingly evident north-south divide? The latitude of a region's capital city can by itself predict about one-third of interregional variation in the vote of support for Yeltsin in April 1993, for Russia's Choice in December 1993, and for the Communists in both December 1993 and

December 1995. It can also explain about one-quarter of the variation in the second-round vote for Yeltsin in 1996. Are southern regions more anti-reform because of ethnicity, lower levels of modernization, poorer recent economic performance, lower public spending, or other variables?

For a factor to offer a plausible explanation for the north-south divide in regional voting, it must meet two criteria. First, it should itself be correlated with north-south location. In other words, to explain why southern voters are more conservative in Russia, one would have to point to some empirically demonstrable characteristic of the *south*. Second, controlling for this factor should dramatically reduce the estimated relationship between north-south location and the regional voting result. A natural place to look for such an explanatory factor is among the variables already discussed in the previous section, each of which might theoretically influence regional voting patterns.

Among the independent variables from the regressions previously presented, a number are correlated with north-south location. All those for which the correlation is at least .20 are shown in table 4.5. These suggest a number of hypotheses about the determinants of southern conservatism. The relatively lower per capita income or the apparently higher inflation in southern regions might be the cause. Alternatively, southern voters, located in an economy more dependent on agriculture and less able to export, might view their prospects as poor under a market system. Northern regions appeared quicker to privatize enterprises (or perhaps were endowed with more valuable enterprises to privatize), but considerably slower to privatize apartments—probably because fewer of the population wished to stay long-term in the less hospitable climatic zones. These factors seem unlikely to explain why voters in northern regions were more favorable toward reformers, however. So do the greater pollution and sharper drop in life expectancy of northern regions—apparently such concomitants of industrial development are outweighed by other positive aspects. Southern populations contained larger non-ethnic-Russian minorities, and more of the non-Christian regions lie in the south. The presence of larger numbers of refugees in the south might also have sparked a conservative counterreaction. In addition, southern regions tended to have more elderly populations. Finally, along with lower levels of economic development in the south went lower levels of regional budget spending: this might also explain the south's lower support for central incumbents.

I tried adding each of these factors individually (chosen for the appropriate time period) to regressions of the vote for Russia's Choice in December 1993 and for Yeltsin in the second round of the 1996 presidential election on regions' north-south location. In the regression for the Russia's Choice vote, the estimated coefficient on the region's latitude without any control variables included was .63 (significant at $p = .0000$). In other words, for every degree further north a region's capital was located, the vote for Russia's Choice was .63 percentage points higher. Only two of the latitude-correlated variables reduced

TABLE 4.5. Independent Variables Correlated with the (North-South) Latitude of Regions' Capital Cities

	Correlation with (North-South) Latitude of Region's Capital
Proportion of work force in agriculture	−.49
	(.00)
Estimated output per capita	.44
	(.00)
Inflation December 1992–December 1993	−.25
	(.02)
Value of exports per capita 1993	.24
	(.03)
Value of exports per capita 1994	.25
	(.03)
Charter capital of enterprises privatized in 1993	.23
	(.03)
Charter capital of enterprises privatized in 1993 and 1994	.26
	(.02)
Proportion of apartments privatized by 1992	−.53
	(.00)
Proportion of apartments privatized by 1995	−.59
	(.00)
Proportion of population Russian	.22
	(.05)
Region predominantly Christian	.33
	(.00)
Proportion of population above working age 1994	−.21
	(.05)
Refugees per 1,000 regional residents 1993	−.30
	(.01)
Refugees per 1,000 regional residents 1995	−.32
	(.00)
Change in life expectancy 1991–93	−.63
	(.00)
Pollution level 1994	.54
	(.00)
Regional budget spending 1991	.43
	(.00)
Regional budget spending 1993	.25
	(.02)

Note: All correlation coefficients greater than .20 shown. Significance level in two-tailed test in parentheses.

this coefficient estimate below .55. These were the change in life expectancy and the proportion working in agriculture. In the regression for the second-round Yeltsin vote in 1996, the coefficient on latitude started out at 1.07 (significant at $p = .0000$). When latitude-correlated control variables were added one by one, the same two variables lowered the latitude coefficient the most. The life-expectancy change variable lowered the latitude coefficient to .39, and agricultural employment lowered it to .32.

The most plausible interpretation of these results is that the north-south divide in Russian voting behavior is related primarily to the more agricultural economic profile of southern regions. The association of *lower* drops in life expectancy in the south and higher anti-Yeltsin voting is puzzling more than revealing at first glance. Yet, this may actually just be picking up the relationship with agricultural employment since the change in life expectancy was quite highly correlated with agricultural employment (at $r = .68$, significant at $p = .000$). More agricultural regions suffered a smaller drop in life expectancy in the early 1990s. When the two variables were added to the regression together, agricultural employment was highly significant, but the change in life expectancy was not. (The same was true for the Russia's Choice regression.)

Such a conclusion coincides with evidence from some local participants in the political life of the south. In the summer of 1996, I posed the question of the south's conservatism to political leaders in Tambov Oblast, an agricultural region to the south of Moscow with perhaps the most distinct claim to be part of the "Red Belt." In the 1995 parliamentary election, the regional vote for the Communists—40 percent—had been nearly double the party's unexpectedly high national average. In December 1995, the region defiantly elected as its head of administration a career Communist leader, Aleksandr Ryabov, who had supported the August 1991 attempted coup.

I asked Ryabov's deputy, Yuri Blokhin, whether it was political tradition or a particular set of local attitudes that explained the region's preference for the Communists. He answered that if anything Tambov Oblast's historical traditions pulled in the opposite direction. The main historical reference for Tambovites was the uprising of peasants under Aleksandr Antonov in 1920 *against* Bolshevik rule, a violent anticommunist jacquerie that established a tradition of resistance by guerrilla tactics. In Blokhin's view, anti-Yeltsin voting had more to do with the deteriorating economic condition of agriculture in the period of reform.

> A trader in Moscow earns half a million rubles a month. A farmer who raises cows here earns 170,000. He watches television shows where everyone is smiling. And then he looks at his wife, who has no teeth. And there's no money to buy any.[21]

Valery Koval, the mayor of Tambov, widely considered to come from the democratic reform side of the spectrum, also saw in the south's Communist vot-

ing a reaction against current economic conditions in the countryside: "Those who vote for Zyuganov are not voting for communism as an idea, or for a return to the past." In the old days, according to Koval, Communists were "hated in the countryside more than in the cities," as the dependence of ordinary farm workers on the often corrupt kolkhoz directors bred resentment. The Communists' newfound popularity, he argued, was a direct reflection of discontent with local economic decline.

> In the countryside, trains don't go to some towns anymore. Buses don't go to some villages. In some, they don't bring in bread regularly; electricity is often shut off. In the old days, musical groups used occasionally to go out on tours. Now they don't.[22]

According to the chairman of the Lenin Kolkhoz, just outside Tambov city, the reason agricultural workers tended to vote against Yeltsin was not just that current conditions were bad, but that they saw absolutely no hope for the future. Foreign food goods were cheaper than those domestic farms could produce, given prevailing energy prices. Fields had not been fertilized for four years, and not surprisingly, yields were declining. Both Koval and Blokhin pointed to the sharp rises in regional support for Yeltsin during his 1996 election campaign, after he began to address the sources of southern discontent, paying wage arrears and increasing pensions. Political opinion seemed both to be quite fluid and to be susceptible to economic policy initiatives.

Similar views are often expressed by other southern politicians. When asked about the procommunist voting of his province, Yegor Stroyev, the governor of Orel, explained it as follows.

> Today only 3 percent of the villages here have natural gas; meanwhile gas is carried through the region by pipeline to the whole of Europe. They have never built any roads here. They have never provided enough fertilizer. And you wonder why people here think like they do? (Medvedev 1996, 16–18)

Voting for Regional Politicians

The preceding analysis found that higher levels of and increases in regional public spending were associated with higher subsequent levels of regional support for central incumbents. The implication was that central officials, by increasing regions' ability to finance public services, could buy themselves local support. For regional spending to occur, however, regional administrations have to authorize it. It is easy to imagine why governors ideologically and politically sympathetic to Yeltsin might wish to do so. But various governors in

the early 1990s vociferously opposed him. Would such regional leaders use aid from Moscow in a way that would boost local support for their political opponents in the capital?

A second puzzle complicates the picture still further. The analysis of chapter 3 found that a relatively *low* level of electoral support for Yeltsin was associated with *higher* subsequent net central transfers. Strategically, therefore, a governor concerned to extract more central benefits should nurse public hostility toward the center in his region as a source of leverage. Would it not be irrational for such a governor to undermine his own bargaining position by boosting public spending?

To answer these questions requires an analysis of the relations between regional governors and their constituents. It turns out, when such an analysis is conducted, that increases in public spending in a region do not just improve the electoral chances of central politicians—they also raise support for the regional governor. So, in order to buy votes for themselves, it makes sense for regional governors—even those ideologically opposed to Yeltsin and the central reformers—to increase public spending in their region. Such a policy may increase the popularity of their central rivals and reduce their leverage in future bargaining with the center. But in the short run, the benefit of the additional support from constituents may outweigh such costs. The rest of this section presents the evidence on which this argument is based.

What determined whether regional electorates supported or opposed their regional political leadership in the early 1990s? Two measures of this were constructed from electoral results. Between the beginning of 1993 and mid-1996, 33 regions held elections for regional governor (see chap. 2). In all but one of these (Kalmykia in April 1993), the incumbent was running for reelection. In another three cases (Ingushetia in February 1993, Karelia in April 1994, and Kalmykia in October 1995), he was running unopposed. In the remaining 29 cases, the incumbent won in 17 and another candidate defeated him in 12.

The factors that might plausibly explain the electoral success or failure of incumbent regional officials are mostly similar to those that would explain support for central incumbents. Relatively strong economic performance in the region might predispose voters more favorably toward the incumbent. A rapid pursuit of economic reform could either create a constituency supportive of the incumbent's policies or create short-run dislocations costly to his popularity. Different age, ethnic, and educational structures of the regional population might lead to different degrees of loyalty or readiness to question incumbents. A higher local "quality of life" might boost the governor's support, as might higher or increasing rates of public spending. A final, additional factor is necessary to try to detect the impact of manipulation or even fraud in the regional election results. A governor with background and connections in the regional

party or state apparatus would have greater experience and resources to accomplish such manipulation or distortion of the results.

Table 4.6 shows the results when a dummy variable taking the value 1 if the incumbent was reelected and 0 if he was not is regressed with logistic regression on a range of such independent variables. The analysis includes all gubernatorial elections between January 1, 1993, and July 1, 1996, in which the incumbent governor or president ran and in which there was at least one other candidate. Logistic regression is a technique analogous to the more common ordinary least squares type but which is appropriate when the dependent variable is dichotomous. Column one shows the estimates when a full range of theoretically plausible independent variables are included. Column two shows a shortened regression, from which each of the variables from column one has been excluded if doing so increased the significance of the regression, as judged by its chi-square.

With relatively few cases available, it was necessary to economize on independent variables in order for the logistic regressions to yield results. Sectoral cleavage variables—agricultural employment and raw materials production—were left out since, while inhabitants of different regions may certainly have different expectations about how their region will fare in the free market, there is no plausible reason why they would hold *regional* officials responsible for this. As an additional check, however, each of these was added to the final form regression to see whether it was in fact significant and whether it substantially changed the significant results. In each case, the added variable was highly insignificant, reduced the significance of the regression's chi square, and while somewhat reducing the significance of the other estimates did not lead to major changes in their values.[23]

In each case, the independent variable for the most appropriate time period was chosen from available sources (for example, the insolvent enterprise variable for January through May 1993 was used for the Orel Oblast election held in April 1993; the variable for January through August 1993 was used for the Bashkortostan election held in December 1993; and the 1995 version of the variable was used for the Moscow Oblast election held in December 1995). To make nominal variables comparable across years, each was expressed as a proportion of its mean in that time period, and variables measuring change across years were expressed as percentage changes in real terms.

A second attempt to gauge regional support for incumbent governors employed the results of the December 1993 election to the upper house of the Federal Assembly, the Federation Council. In this election, the almost universal practice was for members of the high regional leadership—the president or head of administration, chairman of the regional legislature, their deputies, other executive and legislative officials—to run for each region's two seats. The top executive official (head of administration or republic president) was elected in two-thirds of all regions.

TABLE 4.6. Logistic Regression of Whether the Incumbent Governor Was
Reelected if Regional Election Held (1993 through mid-1996)

	(1)	(2)
Public Spending		
Regional budget	9.66	
expenditure per capita	(14.43)	
Change in real regional budget	.16*	.11**
expenditure per capita	(.09)	(.05)
Economic Performance		
Estimated economic output	2.86	4.52**
per capita 1993	(2.85)	(2.22)
Estimated change	−2.81	
in average real income	(4.34)	
Proportion of enterprises	4.54	5.37*
insolvent	(6.09)	(3.14)
Regional Costs and Benefits		
of Economic Reform Program		
Book value of	−.05	
enterprises privatized	(.62)	
Percent of apartments	.44	
privatized	(2.08)	
Social and Cultural Cleavages		
Percent of population	−4.81	
Russian	(13.71)	
Percent of population	1.65	
above working age	(9.70)	
Region an ethnically	−23.11	−12.78**
defined republic	(17.60)	(6.33)
Percent of work force	−3.66	
with higher education	(4.77)	
Manipulation or Elite Support		
Head of region a former state	−5.16	−3.95*
or party apparatus worker	(3.16)	(2.37)
Quality of Life		
Refugees or forced migrants	3.15	2.31
per 1,000 residents	(2.15)	(1.67)
Constant	−.35	−6.66**
	(17.12)	(3.28)
Model χ^2	19.84	19.61
	(Sig at $p = .10$)	(Sig at $p = .004$)
N	26	27

Note: standard errors in parentheses.

*$p < .10$ **$p < .05$ ***$p < .01$

Table 4.7 shows the results when a dummy taking the value 1 if the highest regional executive official running for the election was elected to the Federation Council and 0 if he was not is regressed by logistic regression on similar independent variables, as before measuring economic performance, reform-related interests, regional government spending, and sociocultural characteristics of the region's population.[24]

Two factors were significant at the .05 level in both regressions. In regions with higher economic output per capita, the incumbent governor was more likely to be reelected and the highest executive official running was likely to win election to the Federation Council. More developed regions, thus, seem more likely to support their incumbents. This runs counter to the expectation that in more rural, traditional regions, voter loyalty or manipulation would be greater.[25] In less developed regions, unusually high proportions of voters actually opposed those in power. (This may in fact reflect a greater loyalty or capacity for manipulation of the *previous* leadership. Regional governors appointed by Yeltsin often replaced locally entrenched bosses—such as Ryabov in Tambov—and the elections may have given such bosses the opportunity to return to power.)

Second, regions where real spending had increased more in the preceding period (or fallen less) were significantly more likely to vote for the incumbent. This has an important implication in light of the results presented earlier in this chapter. At first glance, it seemed paradoxical that governors philosophically or personally opposed to Yeltsin would use central transfers in ways that would boost local support for the center. Strategically, such a policy also seemed unwise, since local discontent was an effective lever to pry further aid from the center. The regressions suggest an explanation. Increased regional spending appears to increase the electoral appeal of *both* central and regional incumbents. In this way, their political fate is linked, whether or not they share political views or loyalties. Voters apparently assign credit for more generous provision of public services to both levels of government. Thus, while regional leaders might prefer to encourage anti-Yeltsin voting, they seem unable to buy support for themselves without also buying support for him. In this way, central redistribution turns institutional adversaries into, if not friends, at least somewhat improbable political partners.[26]

Conclusion

Russia's postcommunist political development depended in part on what was causing the increased polarization of opinion and political loyalties across the country's regions. This would determine what constitutional arrangements linking center and periphery were feasible, what central political strategies were likely to be effective, and ultimately how great the danger of national disinte-

TABLE 4.7. Logistic Regression of Whether the Most Senior Regional Executive Official Running in December 1993 Federation Council Was Elected

	(1)	(2)
Public Spending		
Regional per capita budget	.001	
expenditure 1991	(.003)	
Change in real per capita	.14**	.11**
regional budget expenditure 1991–92	(.07)	(.04)
Economic Performance		
Estimated economic output	.01*	.006**
per capita 1993	(.00)	(.003)
Change in average real	.81	
income (June 92–June 93)	(2.11)	
Unemployment August 1993	2.46*	1.58*
	(1.40)	(.95)
Proportion of enterprises	−.18	
insolvent (Jan.–Aug. 1993)	(.19)	
Regional Costs and Benefits		
of Economic Reform Program		
Book value of enterprises	-.08	
privatized in 1993	(.40)	
Percent of apartments	.32*	.30**
privatized	(.18)	(.14)
Social and Cultural Cleavages		
Percent of population	.30*	.13
Russian	(.17)	(.09)
Percent of population	−.66*	−.23
above working age	(.40)	(.15)
Region an ethnically	15.63	5.73
defined republic	(9.72)	(4.50)
Percent of work force	.06	
with higher education	(.18)	
Manipulation or Elite Support		
Head of region a	4.36*	2.54*
former state or party	(2.53)	(1.50)
apparatus worker		
Quality of Life		
Refugees or forced migrants	.62	
per 1,000 residents	(.42)	
Constant	−22.80	−12.28
	(15.79)	(7.81)
Model χ^2	26.19	23.53
	(Sig at $p = .03$)	(Sig at $p = .003$)
N	58	61

Note: standard errors in parentheses.
*$p < .10$ **$p < .05$ ***$p < .01$

gration would prove to be. How entrenched or changeable were regional voting patterns? Did emerging regional differences represent the inexorable legacy of history or responses to more transitory phenomena? In Western Europe, Lipset and Rokkan argued, contemporary political cleavages reflect the impact of revolutions several centuries past. In Italy, Putnam traced current regional differences in political culture as far back as the thirteenth century. If Russia's regional polarization had similarly entrenched cultural or historical roots, the chances and political strategies for integration in a democratic state seemed open to question.

The evidence previously presented does confirm the continuing influence of cultural cleavages. Ethnic and religious differences between regions did correlate with voting differences. But ethnic minority and non-Christian republics did not, as some had feared, turn out to be bastions of conservatism. In fact, the votes for Yeltsin in July 1996 and Chernomyrdin's Our Home Is Russia bloc in December 1995 were *higher* in regions with larger non-Russian populations. Non-Christian regions also supported OHIR at higher rates. Other things being equal, it was the predominantly Russian oblasts and krais that voted most insistently against the powerholders at the center.

Sociocultural differences, however, explained only part of the puzzle. Equally important were a region's economic profile and its recent gains and losses from the policies enacted by the Moscow incumbents, including the introduction of pro-market economic reforms. Where wages were not paid for months on end or where streams of refugees flowed into the region, relatively more voters expressed discontent with reformers in Moscow. Regions with a particularly large dependent population—those below or above working age—tended to vote in December 1993 against the Moscow incumbents, who had cut social provision, and in favor of the Communists, who had promised to restore it. Such demographic effects are easier to read as responses to state policy than as indicators of different political values among different age groups. Regions with larger young populations reversed themselves to vote particularly strongly *for* Yeltsin in the first round of 1996, after he had promised to end universal conscription and to increase student stipends and family benefits.

Those regions with raw-materials-producing industries and export potential apparently rewarded the reformers for the new opportunities opened up by liberalization. Those with strong agricultural sectors seemed to take revenge at the ballot box for the sharp shift in terms of trade against the farm sector. The agricultural character of the south offered the most plausible explanation for the increasingly pro-opposition voting of southern regions. Since dramatic reform of agriculture and its partial replacement by small business and service industries was not likely to occur overnight, these geographical divisions appeared likely to reappear in voting tallies for some time to come.

Yet, to the extent that the central government could collect and reallocate

revenue, it retained considerable leverage to offset and control the hostility of economically disadvantaged regions. The most obvious instruments were those of public spending, bilateral negotiation, and economic concessions. While each 50,000 rubles owed in wage delays to the average worker as of June 1996 cost Yeltsin about 1 percentage point of the second-round vote, more generous public spending in the region in previous years buffered the population against such responses. For each additional 100,000 rubles per capita that the regional government had spent in 1994, the second-round vote for Yeltsin was on average 1 percentage point higher.[27] If the estimates in table 4.3 are right, either a bilateral power-sharing agreement signed between Yeltsin and the given region or at least one decree passed that year promising aid earned him a boost in his second-round vote of almost 3 percentage points.

This view is not just supported by cross-regional statistical analysis, it echoes a theme common in the explanations of Russian politics offered by its experienced practitioners. Even in ideologically communist Tambov, the deputy governor, an experienced Party worker, insisted that more generous central aid or social policy could boost local support for Yeltsin. "Just in the last three months, when he started paying pensions and wages, Yeltsin's rating in the oblast rose from 8 percent in January to about 21 percent in the [first round of the presidential] election," he said, in June 1996. The president's vote rose precisely because Yeltsin "defined the direction of social programs."[28] In Karelia, Yeltsin's vote in the 1996 election was high despite a governor who refused publicly to endorse the sitting president. When I asked him why, despite economic problems in the region, support for Yeltsin was so high, he pointed to three central initiatives: a decree of 1991 that declared an economic experiment in Karelia, providing it with various privileges; another decree in August 1993 broadening the economic autonomy of the republic; and generous aid to the northern territories of Russia—for instance, the granting of pensions five years earlier than in the rest of the country. "All this created a context in which, despite all the economic difficulties, despite all the political conflict, people expressed gratitude toward the president."[29]

Such federal strategies are, of course, constrained by the center's limited resources and by the economically rational desire to reduce redistribution in the interest of efficiency. The recurrent dilemma for reformist politicians in similar conditions, however, is how they should balance the efficiency goals of economic reform against the political requirements of maintaining public support and preventing state disintegration. Governments that have to worry about reelection—even if just to preserve the gains of economic reform—may have to continue to redistribute in economically undesirable ways.

Lest it seem strange that regional politicians would help central incumbents restore their local support by authorizing more generous local spending and benefits, this chapter uncovered a source of shared interest between exec-

utives at the two levels. Increased regional spending is not only an effective strategy for reducing voter hostility toward central incumbents, it is also perhaps the best way for regional leaders to boost support for themselves. Whether or not they shared philosophical convictions, personal sympathies, or political networks, Yeltsin and his governors shared an interest in nurturing support with which to face future elections. And voters, by apparently holding incumbents at both levels responsible for declining state services, made it difficult for one to achieve his aim without also assisting the other. This may have helped to offset the incentives for division and confrontation already discussed in chapter 3.

Regional governors faced a strategic dilemma. They apparently could not win local support for themselves via increased spending without simultaneously alleviating local resentment of the center. But a regional public *hostile* to the center was, as chapter 3 showed, a valuable asset in bargaining for central transfers. The choice they faced was thus whether to exacerbate local discontent by cutting spending sharply and blaming Moscow, in the hope of exploiting public protest to pry greater concessions from the center—or whether to try to spend their way to local popularity, within the limits of their resources, even at the cost of undermining their bargaining power vis-à-vis the center. The following chapter considers how different regional leaders made this trade-off.