

D. Roderick Kiewiet and Mikhail Myagkov

Abstract

According to many observers of Russian politics, advocates of market-oriented reform have time on their side. A number of studies have reported that backing for the Communist Party and opposition to reform is concentrated among the elderly. As this cohort of voters – people who came of age during the Stalinist era and who have suffered disproportionately from Yeltsin-era economic reforms – dies off, one would expect to see a decline in support for the Communists and weaker resistance to further reform measures. The results of elections in 1999 and 2000, however, show that support for the Communists remained relatively steady over the decade of the 1990s. This paper analyzes results from presidential elections in 1991, 1996 and 2000, in order to explain the persistence of Communist Party support.