

Henry E. Hale and Timothy J. Colton

May 23 , 2007

Parties vs. Independents: The Case of Russia's 2003 Elections in Krasnodar and Riazan

Abstract

In this working paper, we aim to contribute to the small body of work that does take the question of party system development seriously, that does not simply ask "What kind of parties?" or "How strong the parties?" but "Why parties at all?" One of our innovations is to apply survey evidence to this question, most importantly by comparing how voters relate to party-nominated candidates and independents in the ways that the theoretical literature on parties would lead us to think is important in generating a party-dominated polity. We present here a first cut into the data, suggestive more than definitive. Specifically, patterns in two carefully chosen districts in the 2003 Duma elections suggest that party-nominated candidates indeed enjoy an advantage over nonparty candidates, but that this advantage is rather slight and is not present in all the areas that the comparative literature leads us to expect.