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Chapter Author(s): Nathan F. Batto, Henry A. Kim and Natalia Matukhno

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Presidents and Blank Votes in the Bolivian and Russian Mixed-Member Systems

Nathan F. Batto, Henry A. Kim, and Natalia Matukhno

Mixed-member electoral systems confront voters with two choices: a list tier ballot to be cast on the basis of the party and a nominal tier ballot to be cast on the basis of the characteristics of the local candidates. Some voters do not make these two choices independently, but instead use information about the choices in one tier to help make the choice in the other tier. These sorts of “contamination” effects have been the subject of a great deal of research (Cox and Schoppa 2002; Herron and Nishikawa 2001; Nishikawa and Herron 2004; and Ferrara, Herron, and Nishikawa 2005).

In the introduction to this volume, Batto and Cox argue that directly elected executives shape the legislative party system differently than indirectly elected executives. We build on this idea and argue that in presidential systems, a third consideration—what the voters know of the presidential candidates—may also shape the vote choice on the list and nominal tier ballots. Presidential elections typically dominate public discourse during an election campaign, and voters often know much more about the presidential candidates than the party platforms or their local district candidates. Many voters might project what they know of a presidential candidate onto his party’s list or district nominee. However, we argue that the presidential candidates do not affect list and district tier decisions equally. The connections between the presidential candidate and the party list are typically much closer and more apparent, and voters may consequently be

less willing to assume that the district nominee is simply a local avatar for the presidential candidate.

This is especially apparent in new democracies with less institutionalized parties that do not penetrate deeply into society. When a party is simply a hastily constructed vehicle for a presidential candidate's national campaign, local organizations are often weak, underfunded, and impotent. Many district candidates for such parties are likely to be unknown political novices without a credible chance of winning. Even people who turn out to support the presidential candidate and are willing to back the national party list may balk at voting for a completely unknown quantity with little chance of winning on the district ballot.

Some countries allow voters to vote "blank" or "against all," and we examine patterns in these blank votes to infer how presidential candidates affect voting in the list and nominal tiers. An explicit blank vote can be interpreted as a sign that none of the candidates in that tier have inspired the voter to vote, so the impetus to vote must have come from elsewhere.¹ We examine two elections that took place in very different political environments, Bolivia in 2002 and Russia in 2003, and find that blank votes were much more common in the nominal tier than in the list tier. More important, larger numbers of blank votes were correlated with better performance in the list tier by more loosely organized parties led by personally popular and charismatic presidential candidates. These results are consistent with the idea that presidential candidates had a larger contamination effect on the list vote than on the district vote, and the effect was particularly strong for presidential candidates of newer and less organized parties.

Contamination Effects and Presidential Candidates

The basis of the contamination effect is commonly thought to be psychological. Herron and Nishikawa suggest that voters value consistency in their vote choices. That is, if voters observe the same choices available on both ballots, they are inclined to make the same vote choices in both tiers (2001, 68–69). Cox and Schoppa also argue that the physical presence of the district candidate campaigning locally and furnishing a "human face" to a race has a positive impact for a party. Such a presence helps mobilize what they term "either way voters," those without a strong psychological or habitual commitment to that party. Moreover, the presence of a district candidate can increase the party's list tier totals, even if that district candidate stands no chance of capturing the nominal tier seat (2002, 1031).

Ferrara, Herron, and Nishikawa (2005, 67) make the argument explicitly informational by explaining the effect as an informational shortcut: voters can judge the quality of all the candidates on the party list by simply looking at the quality of the particular candidate in their local district. In the presence of this contamination effect, even small parties without any prospect of winning the election in the nominal tier are encouraged to field candidates in as many districts as they can in order to improve their list tier performance, thus countering the Duvergerian incentive to abstain from participating in unwinnable races.

These arguments all look at how the district race contaminates the party list race. The most compelling evidence comes from parliamentary democracies, such as Italy, New Zealand, Germany, and Japan. This is no coincidence. Parliamentary systems often lack a single, nationalized party politician with a separate electoral mandate from his or her legislative counterparts, who can furnish a distinct “face” for the rest of the party (Samuels and Shugart 2010). By the nature of the institution, voters in a parliamentary system are not asked to vote explicitly for the party’s national standard bearer in an election. While parties may conscientiously attempt to draw voter attention to their leaders, the linkage is at best indirect in the absence of an ability to vote directly for their standard bearers by name. Furthermore, party leaders in a parliamentary system often are not the most electorally profitable choices to act as their parties’ “human faces.” Party leaders in parliamentary democracies have often risen through the ranks on the basis of their skills as backroom operators in the legislative process, rather than on their ability to arouse the masses outside the chamber (Samuels and Shugart 2010). In other words, the voters in a parliamentary system can sometimes be confronted with a set of rather dry or uninspiring national party faces to base their party list decision on.

Presidential systems are qualitatively different, especially when the presidential and legislative elections are held concurrently. Presidential candidates provide a visible and recognizable face. Often, they are political outsiders who have built a strong, well-defined reputation of their own. Indeed, many successful presidential contenders, regardless of the country, are likely to have risen in politics through their ability to mobilize supporters through their own actions, rather than their roles in the inner workings of parties (Samuels and Shugart 2010). Media coverage is usually dominated by the presidential campaign, and the messages and reputations of local candidates are often drowned out amid the focus on the executive race. Such focus on the personal appeals of the presidential candidates is arguably justified. After all, the person elected president will be the head of

government, and parties have no mechanism like a vote of no confidence to ensure that presidents from their party actually follow the party line. Quite the contrary, presidents almost always become the *de facto* party leaders and often decide to lead their parties in new directions chosen according to their personal priorities. Thus, not only is the information about the presidential candidate more easily accessible than corresponding information about a party leader in a parliamentary system, voters are fully justified in adjusting their attitudes about a particular party based on that information.

Particularly in U.S. politics, the electoral impact of the president on legislative elections has long been recognized in numerous studies of the so-called coattail effect and its impact on legislative elections (Burnham 1975; Calvert and Ferejohn 1983; Campbell 1997; Miller 1955). However, the importance of the president may be even greater in other presidential democracies, especially where presidents enjoy greater formal power relative to other political actors or where political parties have shorter histories and weaker reputations. Newer and less institutionalized parties are much more likely to field a reasonably charismatic presidential candidate than to be able to recruit a full slate of well-known candidates to run for the legislature. Modern media technology can help project the faces of presidential candidates to the homes of voters in every district, regardless of the efficacy of the local party organizations in promoting voters' familiarity with candidates for the legislature. In short, information from the national race, or more accurately, the presidential race, is likely to be much stronger, clearer, and more omnipresent than information garnered from the local races.

Presidential elections also affect turnout. More people turn out to vote in legislative elections when a presidential election is being held concurrently. Perhaps more significantly, voters in concurrent elections also turn out to vote for different reasons.² Since they have been bombarded with information about the presidential race, they are often thinking primarily about the presidential race and supporting a particular presidential candidate. The legislative race is usually a secondary consideration. Indeed, many people may cast their legislative vote as an expression of support for the presidential candidate.

If the presidential candidate is the human face of the party, the extent to which this human face spills over to the list and district votes may differ. The presidential candidate is usually the leader of the party. Even when he stresses positions that are at odds with orthodox party doctrine, other party leaders tend to downplay these differences since highlighting intra-party divisions during a campaign is usually a losing strategy. Hence, equating a vote for the party list with support for the presidential candidate is

relatively straightforward. Doing so for the district candidate, however, is more complicated. District races are run along different contours from the national campaign. Districts may diverge significantly from the national average on many dimensions, such as ethnic makeup, partisan balance, and economic vitality. Different issues may matter locally, and local preferences may be at odds with national preferences. Because of this, a local party nominee may not always follow the national party in lockstep. Voters in local districts must also consider the question of viability. Party list seats are distributed proportionally, and even parties with relatively low levels of support can win list seats. This is not the case in the nominal tier with single-seat districts. Disorganized, underfunded, and unknown candidates are usually sure losers. Strategic voters may be loath to waste their district vote on such a candidate, even if they support the party's presidential candidate. Alternatively, they may simply decide that voting for the party's district nominee is hopeless and choose not to vote at all in the nominal tier.³ In short, some voters will base their legislative votes on their opinions of the presidential candidate, and this is more likely to occur in the list tier than in the nominal tier.

Blank Votes and Inchoate Parties

In a number of countries, including Bolivia and Russia, voters have the option to vote "blank" or "against all"—to indicate that the voter does not want to support any of the candidates or parties. Blank votes are not the same as null votes, in which a voter votes for multiple candidates, does not mark any option, writes something inappropriate on the ballot, or otherwise spoils the ballot, and blank votes are counted separately from null votes.⁴

Why would a voter cast a blank vote? It is possible that the voter is highly informed about each candidate and simply dislikes all of them. However, most highly informed voters can eventually conclude that one candidate is a little better than the others, or at least that one is awful enough that it is worth it to vote for someone else in order to stop the worst candidate. Another possibility, which we suspect is more common, is that most blank votes reflect extremely low levels of information. That is, the typical blank vote occurs when the voter does not know enough about any of the options to decide that any of them are better (or worse) than the others.

This begs the question of why such a voter would turn out in the first place. Of course, it could just be that the voter has a strong sense that voting is a democratic duty (Achen and Hur 2011) and believes that the

actual choice is less important than the mere act of participation. More significantly for our purposes, a voter may turn out to vote because she has a strong opinion in a different race taking place at the same time. For example, with concurrent party list and district elections, the voter may have a strong opinion in the former elections but not in the latter race. In this case, the voter might vote for a party in the list tier and vote blank in the district tier.

Since information about presidential candidates is so prevalent, and this information leaks primarily into the list tier and only secondarily into the district tier, most voters should be able to make a choice in the list tier. Information from the presidential race is less useful in local races, and more voters might be unable to differentiate among the various names on the ballot. Some of these voters will respond by explicitly not making any choice, by casting a “blank” ballot. Alternatively, voters who turn out expressly to support the presidential candidate may vote for the party list, which is closely associated with the president, but not the district candidate, who may not be viable or may take somewhat different positions. More of these voters should vote blank in the nominal tier than in the list tier. This implies:

H1: In countries with a presidential system and a mixed-member electoral system, blank votes should be more common in the district tier than in the list tier.

H1 is fairly crude; it makes only a single, national-level prediction. However, we can use the differences between more institutionalized and less institutionalized parties to draw a more finely tuned hypothesis. The relative degree to which the presidential candidate defines the “face of the party” varies from party to party. We are particularly interested in parties that revolve around a single leader. Where these types of parties are strong, blank votes should be more common.

These personal vehicle parties are often hastily organized for the upcoming presidential campaign, and the rest of the party is somewhat of an afterthought. Ironically, it may be precisely the presidential candidates who most thoroughly embody their party image who have the most trouble extending that image and influence voting down to the local level. It is often much harder for new and disorganized parties to assemble a roster of competent local candidates. Instead, these inchoate parties are often only able to cobble together a group of unknown, unimpressive, and underfunded local politicians. Such local politicians will have difficulty commu-

nicating information about themselves to the voters, so they cannot compete with, modify, or reshape the image projected by the national party. However, they might also be so anonymous that there is effectively no local presence for the national party face to be projected onto. The more invisible the local candidate, the more likely voters are to decide that there is no viable foot soldier for their favored presidential candidate. Almost by definition, an anonymous candidate is an incompetent candidate. In such a district, voters might decide simply to vote for the presidential candidate's party in the list tier and to vote blank in the nominal tier.

Older, more established, or less personalized parties are likely to have a stable of fairly well-known local candidates supported by a substantial network of organizations at the grassroots level. The better the organization, the easier it is for politicians to familiarize and ingratiate themselves with their voters. Access to such organizational resources permits candidates of more established parties a greater opportunity than their counterparts in more inchoate parties to communicate to the voters and, in so doing, assert their viability. In such a party, the presidential candidate is not the sole face of the party, and local candidates may even try to present a slightly different platform or image. However, because of the national focus on the presidential race, the presidential candidate will still be the dominant face of the party. Even the strongest local candidates are generally happy to cloak themselves in the aura of their party's presidential candidate. Voters in these situations who want to support the presidential candidate have a viable candidate and a clear strategy. In essence, the difference between more and less organized parties is that the roster of viable candidates fielded by the former has the capacity to soak up all the votes from supporters of the presidential candidate while the roster of the latter may not.

Many parties in presidential systems are formed precisely as personal vehicles to promote the political fortunes of a politician with presidential ambitions.⁵ These parties are often hastily organized and lack any sort of organizational capacity to penetrate deeply into society. Indeed, the rest of the party is somewhat of an afterthought. For these parties, the projection from the presidential candidate to the party list should be quite strong. Since the presidential candidate dominates the party, the top spots on the party list usually go to his close allies or cronies, and, with a lower electoral threshold, viability is less of a problem. However, parties formed as personal vehicles are precisely the types of parties that find it difficult to cobble together a full roster of competent local candidates.⁶ They may have strong local candidates in some districts, but these newer parties typically round out the roster with unqualified, unknown, underfunded, or oth-

erwise dismal candidates. At the extreme, they may not even be able to field a candidate at all. Such local politicians will have difficulty communicating information about themselves to the voters, so they cannot compete with, modify, or reshape the image projected by the national party. However, they might also be so anonymous that there is effectively no local presence for the national party face to be projected onto. The more invisible the local candidate, the more likely voters are to decide that there is no viable foot soldier for their favored presidential candidate. Ironically, it may be precisely the presidential candidates who most thoroughly embody their party image who have the most trouble extending that image and influence voting down to the local level.

In short, whereas the rosters of established parties tend to be filled with competent local candidates, inchoate parties have a higher percentage of incompetent local candidates. Since voters are more likely to vote blank in the nominal tier when the local candidate of their favored party is incompetent or missing altogether, parties that are newer, less organized, or personal vehicles should be more associated with blank votes in the nominal tier than older and more institutionalized parties. This leads to our second hypothesis:

H2: In countries with a presidential system and a mixed-member electoral system, blank votes in the nominal tier should be more common in areas in which less institutionalized parties win a higher vote share in the list tier.

Methodology and Case Selection

Methodologically, this paper employs a most different systems research design. In this research design, cases that are different on a set of control variables are compared. However, the independent variables of interest and the dependent variables of the cases should be the same. If the theorized process works the same way, with the same independent variables leading to identical outcomes, in very different contexts, this provides confidence that the outcome is not the result of some third variable (Przeworski and Teune 1970, chap. 2).

Given the preceding theoretical discussion and hypothesis, we need cases with directly elected presidents, mixed-member electoral systems for the legislature, the option to vote blank, and a party system in which parties' capacity to field a roster of credible local candidates varies. The cases

should be different in as many other aspects as possible. The patterns of blank votes should then vary in predictable and similar ways.

We have chosen to examine Bolivia in 2002 and Russia in 2003. Both countries have a presidential system and elect their national legislature by a mixed-member system. In Bolivia, voters can vote “blank,” while in Russia, voters can cast a vote “against all.” The party systems are discussed below, and we argue that both cases featured some parties that could present credible candidates in most races and other parties that did not have such broad-based organizations.

In the remainder of this section, we note some of the more obvious differences between the two cases. Russia is much larger, ecologically diverse, and more populous. Bolivia was a Spanish colony, while Russia was the heart of an empire. In the Cold War, Russia was a central player while Bolivia was a peripheral pawn. Following the Russian Revolution of 1917, most property was collectivized and controlled by the state. After the Bolivian Revolution of 1952, land was seized from landlords and given to local communities and syndicates who held it collectively on behalf of the local peasants (Klein 2003, 214–15). Bolivia remains a much more rural and agricultural society. Ethnically, both countries are diverse, but Russia is dominated by ethnic Russians, while Bolivia has historically been dominated by its white minority rather than by the indigenous peoples who collectively make up a majority.⁷ In recent years, indigenous peoples have transformed their numbers into political power through extensive grassroots organizing by social organizations. There has been no equivalent wave of grassroots social movements in Russia. In Bolivia, the mobilization of large numbers of previously inactive citizens led to an enormous increase in voting.⁸ By contrast, turnout has declined in Russia.⁹

There are a few notable differences in the two electoral systems. First, Russia had an MMM system, while Bolivia employs an MMP system. Second, Bolivia uses a fused vote. Voters cast two ballots, and the nominal tier ballot elects the local district seat for the lower house. The second ballot is more consequential. It not only decides the seat share for each party in each department, it is also used to elect the president and the Senate. In fact, what we are calling the list tier ballot is better understood as a presidential ballot that is also applied to legislative seats. In this chapter, we assume that presidential candidates effectively become the face of their party. The Bolivian fused vote almost necessarily assures that this is the case, since a vote for the presidential candidate is indistinguishable from one for the party list. However, Russia does not use a fused vote. In 2003, voters cast three separate ballots for the district, party list, and president. A

third difference is that parties in Bolivia run full slates of candidates. One possible reason for a blank vote is that the voter's favorite party may not run a candidate in the local district race. Rather than vote for another, less favored party, the voter might simply vote blank. This was certainly a possibility in Russia, but it probably does not drive the overall results because Bolivian parties present full slates of candidates. That is, every party that runs one candidate for president or the legislature runs a candidate for every seat available. In 2002, 11 parties presented presidential candidates, each of the 68 legislative districts had 11 candidates, and each of the 11 parties listed 62 candidates for the 62 party list seats. Unaffiliated candidates were not allowed, so the partisan choice set was exactly the same for every voter. If a Bolivian voter had a favorite party, she could vote for that party on both ballots.

The Bolivian Party System in 2002

In the later part of the 2000s, the Bolivian party system underwent a dramatic change, evolving into a dominant party system. However, in 2002 the *Movimiento al Socialismo* (MAS) was just beginning its rise to power, and it was just one of several contenders for power. The party system was a rather fragmented multiparty system, and no party had won an absolute majority in votes or seats since the restoration of democracy in the early 1980s.

Three parties, the *Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario* (MNR), the *Acción Democrática y Nacionalista* (ADN), and the *Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria* (MIR), dominated politics throughout the 1980s and 1990s. All the presidents in that era came from one of these three parties, and they collectively won over half the vote in every election. The MNR and MIR can both trace their roots to the 1940s, while the ADN was formed in the 1970s by the former military dictator Hugo Banzer (Klein 2003). Ideologically, the MIR presents itself as a leftist party, the MNR as a centrist party, and the ADN as a rightist party. However, all three signed on to the neoliberal economic reforms of the 1980s and 1990s, and by 2002 there was not a great difference among the three traditional parties' stances on economic issues (Singer and Morrison 2004, 174). Instead, the three parties' primary focus was on distributing patronage to their followers (Gamarra and Malloy 1995; Domingo 2005, 1731).

Prior to the electoral reform of 1994, seats in the lower house of the legislature were elected by closed list PR. As might be expected, power within the traditional parties was characterized as centralized and hierar-

chical. In particular, nominations were tightly controlled by the top leaders (Gamarra and Malloy 1995, 419). Indeed, one of the main reasons for the electoral reform was to encourage closer ties between politicians and their voters (Mayorga 2001a, 201), and stronger pressures for district candidates to develop local reputations began to emerge after reform (Mayorga 2001b, 438–42). At the same time, the Law of Popular Participation passed in 1994 marked a significant devolution in political power from the central government to localities, making it much easier for local politicians to establish local power bases (Van Cott 2008). By 2002, the three traditional parties had been concentrating on distributing patronage for over a decade. Much of this patronage went through local politicians who used it to build personal reputations.¹⁰ As such, by 2002 the three traditional parties could field rosters of candidates who would have been quite well known in their local districts.

A second group of parties was quite different. In 2002, two new parties emerged as contenders for power, finishing second and third in the presidential election. The Nueva Fuerza Republicana (NFR) was led by Manfred Reyes Villa, a former prefect of Cochabamba. The NFR was a vehicle for Reyes Villas's presidential candidacy, and it declined quickly after his defeat in the 2002 election.

The Movimiento al Socialismo won second place over the NFR by fewer than a thousand votes. The MAS was dominated by a campesino movement headed by Evo Morales. Morales had been elected to the legislature in 1997 under the banner of the Izquierda Unida, but had split off to form his own organization in 1998. Because the costs of establishing a formal political party are high, MAS agreed to let Morales and his organization run under their banner in 2002 (Van Cott 2008, 53). While Morales has now been the dominant force within MAS for a decade, the party in 2002 was less a coalition of politicians than an umbrella group of heterogeneous social movements supporting a charismatic leader (Mayorga 2008). While MAS had candidates with local organizations and popularity in some areas, this network was patchy. Moreover, the leaders of these movements were primarily social activists and only secondarily candidates for political office. These two very different challenges require very different types of organizations, tactics, and appeals.

A third party, the Movimiento Indígena Pachakuti (MIP) vied with the MAS for leadership of the movement for indigenous people's rights, taking a more aggressively proindigenous stance (Domingo 2005, 1737–38; Madrid 2005, 165). Like the NFR and MAS, it was dominated by a char-

ismatic leader, Felipe Quispe. Van Cott suggests that “the MIP is more a personalist vehicle for Quispe than the electoral expression of a social-movement organization. It is a classic charismatic party in that the leader determines party goals, chooses all militants and candidates, mediates all disputes, oversees all communications, distributes all incentives, and prevents the institutionalization of structures or leadership beyond his personal control” (2008, 55).

The NFR, MAS, and MIP looked very different from the three traditional parties in 2002. Whereas the latter had networks of established local politicians, the former were dominated by charismatic leaders. Their rosters of district candidates were almost certainly characterized by candidates who had not been funneling patronage resources into building personal followings for several years.

In the 2002 election, the three traditional parties won 42% of the list vote, while the three new parties won 48%. Five small parties combined to win the remaining 10%. In this paper, we will not consider the five small parties.

The Russian Party System in 2003

Not unlike the Bolivian elections in 2002, the Russian elections in 2003 featured a fragmented mixture of parties, none of which enjoyed anything approaching dominant electoral support. Most of the parties were relatively new, having been born in the chaotic 1990s following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Indeed, only one, the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF), the successor to the Communist Party of Soviet Union, could be considered an “old” established party among the contenders in 2003. The newer parties differed among themselves in terms of the paths to party organization they adopted. Some were built around centralized leadership of charismatic leaders without much organization at the local level while others established close connections with the central government in Moscow and leveraged their access to power to build organizational networks that could support local candidates.

The KPRF inherited substantial organizational assets from the old Communist Party of the Soviet Union. In addition, many of its members retained control over administrative resources in much of the country throughout 1990s, especially in the southern regions of Russia, which became known as the “red belt” on the account of continued strong sup-

port that the party retained (Hadenius 2002). Its leader, Gennady Zuzanov, was a former bureaucrat famously lacking in charisma and with little personal following (White 2005).

United Russia, the party associated with Vladimir Putin, would soon become the dominant party, but in 2003 it was still merely a plurality party. United Russia had been constructed on the foundation of earlier attempts to build a party of power (Gel'man 2008). In the mid-1990s, Yeltsin supporters had formed Our Home Russia as a party of power to support the Kremlin in the Duma. In 1999, these Kremlin insiders were challenged by a coalition of local governors operating under the label of Fatherland, and Fatherland almost won a majority in the Duma. In an effort to consolidate power and tie the powerful local governors to the Kremlin, Our Home Russia merged with Fatherland to create a new party, called Unity. This new party, which was later renamed United Russia, was meant to promote penetration into Russian society and prevent future strong challengers from emerging (Hale 2006). United Russia relied heavily on local governors, other officials supportive of the Putin administration, and on the country's largest companies (White 2005). Each brought their respective constituencies into the coalition as well as impressive abilities to mobilize the electorate.

The Union of Right Forces (URF) was founded by high-level officials in the Yeltsin government who had been associated with attempts to implement liberal economic reforms and continued to push for a deepening of market liberalization and democratization (Kara-Murza 2001). The URF envisioned itself as a party that would work within the power structure whenever possible, cooperating with the authorities to implement their preferred policies (Klyamkin 2004), and it continued to enjoy some support from and access to the Kremlin during the early 2000s (Sakwa 2005; Gel'man 2008).

United Russia and the URF thus constituted the *de facto* legislative coalition supporting the Kremlin and its program in the early years of Putin's administration (Rose, Munro, and White 2001; Sakwa 2005). This connection to the regime likely yielded them the resources necessary to build organization at the local level, to recruit a superior slate of local candidates, and certainly to better familiarize voters with their candidates.

Three other parties, the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR), Yabloko, and Motherland, had far less organizational strength or local reach. The LDPR serves as a personal vehicle for its charismatic leader, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy. Zhirinovskiy's appeal centers on economic issues and nationalism. LDPR attempted to create strong grassroots organiza-

tions during the 1990s, but these efforts have largely failed. While it still maintains regional branches, caucuses, and committees, its regional leaders remain mostly unknown (Hadenius 2002).

Similarly, Yabloko was dominated by a charismatic leader, Grigory Yavlinsky. Yabloko tried to model itself along the lines of European social democratic parties (White 2005), but its electoral and organizational bases remained confined to Moscow and St. Petersburg (Hadenius 2002). Unlike the other major liberal force, the URF, Yabloko operated as a pure opposition party, systematically opposing government proposals, and it did not enjoy access to a stream of resources from the Kremlin (Gel'man 2008).

The third party of this group, Motherland, was only created a few months before the 2003 elections and had very little time to develop an organization or establish a reputation. It was founded by federal and local elites who were opposed to Putin and United Russia. Motherland hoped to siphon away supporters from the KPRF and LDPR, and the party appealed to nationalist voters who supported some socialist ideals but were dissatisfied with the Communists (White 2005).

In sum, we identify the KPRF, United Russia, and the URF as more institutionalized parties at the time of 2003 election, and the LDPR, Yabloko, and Motherland are classified as less institutionalized.

Data and Results

H1 makes a simple national-level prediction, that there should be more blank votes in the nominal tier than in the list tier. This expectation is clearly realized. Table 10.1 summarizes the results of the two elections. In Bolivia in 2002, 12.0% of the votes in the district tier were blank, nearly three times the 4.4% blank votes in the list tier. In Russia in 2003, the disparity was similar. Only 4.7% of the votes in the list tier were blank, but 13.3% of voters cast blank votes in the district tier. Note that this pattern is not confined to the two elections we are studying. Table 10.2 shows that there have been far more blank votes in the district tier than in the list tier in all eight elections held under mixed-member rules. In fact, the trend was particularly dramatic in Bolivia in 2005 and 2009. In 2005, a whopping 25.2% of district votes were blank, while only 4.0% of list votes were. In 2009, there was again an enormous disparity, with 21.4% blank in the district tier and 3.3% blank in the list tier. The consistently high numbers of blank votes in the districts tier is a stunning finding, especially from the perspective of mobilization. One of the old tropes of political campaigns

TABLE 10.1. Summary of 2002 Bolivian and 2003 Russian Elections

	List tier		District tier	
	votes	%	votes	%
Bolivia 2002				
MNR (M)	624,126	22.5	611,027	23.9
MAS (L)	581,884	20.9	373,454	14.6
NFR (L)	581,163	20.9	395,559	15.5
MIR (M)	453,375	16.3	478,614	18.7
MIP (L)	169,239	6.1	134,177	5.3
ADN (M)	94,386	3.4	190,618	7.5
Other parties	274,635	9.9	371,670	14.5
Valid votes	2,778,808	100.0	2,555,020	100.0
Null	84,572	2.8	73,417	2.5
Blank	130,685	4.4	359,380	12.0
Total votes	2,994,065	100.0	2,987,817	100.0
Russia 2003				
United Russia (M)	22,776,294	40.1	14,124,122	28.6
KPRF (M)	7,647,820	13.5	6,119,161	12.4
LDPR (L)	6,944,322	12.2	1,827,716	3.7
Motherland (L)	5,470,429	9.6	1,719,147	3.5
Yabloko (L)	2,610,087	4.6	1,54,1463	3.1
Union of Right Forces (M)	2,408,535	4.2	1,757,146	3.6
Other Parties	8,975,297	15.8	7,173,919	14.5
Independents			15,127,780	30.6
Valid votes	56,832,784	100.0	49,390,454	100.0
Null	948,435	1.6	1,247,512	2.1
Blank	2,851,958	4.7	7,745,248	13.3
Total votes	60,633,177	100.0	58,383,214	100.0

Notes: (M) indicates party is classified as more institutionalized; (L) indicates party is classified as less institutionalized. Vote shares for parties and candidates are calculated using valid votes; shares of null and blank votes are calculated using total votes.

TABLE 10.2. Blank Votes in Mixed-Member Elections in Bolivia and Russia

		List tier	District tier
Bolivia	1997	3.3%	8.7%
	2002	4.4%	12.0%
	2005	4.0%	25.2%
	2009	3.3%	21.4%
Russia	1993	4.2%	15.4%
	1995	2.8%	9.9%
	1999	3.3%	11.9%
	2003	4.7%	13.3%

Source: All Bolivian data and the Russian data for 2003 are from the official election data commissions. Russian data for 1993–99 come from the Project for Political Transformation and the Electoral Process in Post-Communist Europe dataset (<http://www.essex.ac.uk/elections/>).

is that you just have to get your voters to the polls. However, in most of these elections, one-tenth of the voters who were at the polls chose not to vote for any district candidates. One imagines throngs of voters coming in to the polls, voting for the president, then turning to a district ballot full of bewilderingly anonymous names, and either voting for the candidate with the same party label as their preferred presidential candidate or simply voting blank to fulfill their obligations as citizens to participate.

H2 states that there should be more blank votes in the district tier when a new and less organized party does better in the list tier. Based on the discussion in the previous two sections, we can crudely classify the various parties as more or less institutionalized.

For each country we ran two simple OLS regressions. We analyzed the 2002 Bolivian and 2003 Russian elections using sub-district-level election returns. In Bolivia, we examined the 19,876 precincts, while in Russia we looked at the 2,756 towns. The dependent variable is the excess of blank votes in the district tier. This is calculated as the percentage of blank votes in the district tier minus the percentage of blank votes in the list tier.¹¹ The independent variables are the party list vote shares of the more institutionalized and less institutionalized parties. We expect the coefficient for the less institutionalized parties to be larger than that for more institutionalized parties, reflecting a greater number of blank votes where less institutionalized parties are more popular. We operationalize the independent variables in two different ways. The simpler method is to add all the less (more) organized parties together to see the overall pattern. We also examine the individual parties to make sure that the pattern applies to each party within the group.

The results are in table 10.3. Models 1 and 3 compare the two groups of parties. The coefficients for the more organized parties should be smaller than those for the less organized parties.¹² In both models, this is, in fact, the case. That is, higher numbers of blank votes in the district tier (controlling for blank votes in the list tier) are associated with better performances by less organized parties in the list tier. To illustrate the magnitude of this effect, we might consider some hypothetical cases. In Bolivia, consider a precinct with 45% for the more organized parties in the list tier, 45% for the less organized parties, and 10% for all other parties. In Russia, consider a town with 60% for the more organized parties, 25% for the less organized parties, and 15% for all others. These cases, which are fairly close to the national averages, should yield 7.2% and 8.1% more blank votes in the district tier than in the list tier, respectively. If we make a modest change by giving the organized parties 10% more and the less organized parties 10%

less, the excess blank votes decline to 6.1% and 4.9% in the Bolivian and Russian examples, respectively. Even relatively small changes are sufficient to produce notable differences in the percentages of blank votes.

In Models 2 and 4, we disaggregate the groups into individual parties in order to ensure that these results apply to each individual party. In fact, we find exactly the patterns we expect. In both countries, all three of the less organized parties have larger coefficients than any of the more organized parties. Moreover, the differences between these coefficients are statistically significant. Table 10.4 looks at post-hoc pairwise comparisons of the coefficients. In Bolivia, the coefficients for all parties are significantly different at the $p < .001$ level. In Russia, there are pairs within each group that are not significantly different, but all pairs between groups are significant.

Overall, we find clear support for our hypotheses. There are far more blank votes in the district tiers than in the list tiers. Moreover, higher percentages of district blank votes are associated with better list tier performance by relatively inchoate parties.

TABLE 10.3. OLS Regression of Blank Votes and Party List Vote Shares

		b	s.e.	t
Bolivia 2002				
Model 1	Constant	.120	.006	19.84
Adj $R^2 = .156$	Less organized	.002	.007	.31
$N = 19,876$	More organized	-.109	.007	-16.00
Model 2	Constant	.127	.006	21.06
Adj $R^2 = .184$	MIP	.052	.007	7.36
$N = 19,876$	MAS	-.028	.007	-4.17
	NFR	-.009	.007	-1.20
	MIR	-.084	.007	-11.36
	MNR	-.121	.007	-16.77
	ADN	-.182	.009	-19.43
Russia 2003				
Model 3	Constant	-.053	.012	-4.46
Adj $R^2 = .254$	Less organized	.381	.017	22.27
$N = 2,757$	More organized	.064	.014	4.52
Model 4	Constant	-.014	.013	-1.10
Adj $R^2 = .277$	Yabloko	.599	.049	12.22
$N = 2,757$	LDPR	.326	.027	11.92
	Motherland	.278	.027	10.37
	United Russia	.038	.015	2.63
	URF	-.006	.042	-0.06
	KPRF	-.065	.024	-2.74

Conclusion

This volume examines many ways in which the constitutional system affects other elements of the political system. Various chapters examine the effects of the constitutional system on the party system, the faction system, the way candidates are nominated, the ways in which candidates campaign, and so on. This chapter examines another facet of this theme: how the electoral system, in conjunction with the presidential system, shapes the linkage between elections for different offices. In particular, presidential candidates shape the legislative elections by acting as the public faces of the parties that color voters' evaluations of legislative parties and candidates.

Our perspective departs from the previous studies of contamination effects that have generally focused on parliamentary systems and have emphasized how local district candidates influence national party list choices. In contrast, this chapter argues that the presidential system provides a basis for a potentially powerful contamination effect in the opposite direction. Voters project what they know of the presidential candidate onto the party list and, to a lesser extent, local district candidates. This complements, rather than repudiates, the existing research by elucidating a broader institutional context in which such intertier electoral interactions take place. By virtue of having the chief executive subject to a direct election, presidential systems encourage recruitment and development of charismatic party leaders who can successfully appeal directly to the broad electorate, with an independent political base of their own. The institutional

TABLE 10.4. Pairwise Comparison of Regression Coefficients from Table 10.3

Bolivia	MAS	NFR	MIR	MNR	ADN
MIP	*	*	*	*	*
MAS		*	*	*	*
NFR			*	*	*
MIR				*	*
MNR					*
Russia	LDPR	Motherland	UR	URF	KPRF
Yabloko	*	*	*	*	*
LDPR			*	*	*
Motherland			*	*	*
United Russia					*
URF					

Note: An asterisk (*) indicates the difference between the two coefficients is statistically significant; the probability that they are equal is $p < .0001$.

role normally required of parliamentary systems, of appealing largely to a relatively limited group of party elites applies comparatively less to those in a presidential system. Leaders in a presidential system, thus, tend to be better equipped to exert an influence on the vote choices in legislative elections, even if the formal institutional linkages may be potentially more tenuous.

This chapter, however, also observes that the extent to which the presidential election can contaminate the legislative election is constrained by the nature of the parties. Counterintuitively, the more a presidential candidate monopolizes the party image, the less he may be able to project the party face onto local candidates. We have shown that the district candidates representing less institutionalized parties do not appear to be as able to capitalize on the popularity of their own presidential candidates as their better institutionalized counterparts. In parties organized around a single presidential candidate and with anonymous local candidates, voters may not see the local nominee as an avatar for the presidential candidate. Rather, they might simply conclude that there is no viable local foot soldier for their favored presidential candidate. To successfully project the party face, the local candidate must meet a certain standard of competence. That is, presidents most successfully act as the face of their parties when the party can field a full roster of candidates who each have their own local identities, resources, and networks in society. Shared party label alone, then, is not a sufficient condition for the separation of mandates inherent in a presidential system to be overcome in the electoral arena. The institutional separation between elections to different offices remains significant: successfully bridging this gap requires a superior party organization at the local level.

NOTES

1. We draw distinction between an explicit blank vote, where the voter deliberately chose no particular candidate, from an invalid vote, where the nonchoice of the voter may be due to technical reasons other than actual voter choice.

2. This linkage is important in the pattern of “Surge and Decline” well known from studies of U.S. presidential and off-year elections (see Jacobson 2009 for an overview).

3. The incentives to vote strategically differ in MMM and MMP. In MMM, standard Duvergerian logic applies. Voters have an incentive to avoid wasting their votes on lower ranking candidates. In MMP, the seat shares of each party are determined by the list tier vote, so incentives to vote strategically are much weaker. After all, if a party loses a particular nominal seat, it will be compensated with one additional list seat. On the one hand, this frees voters to vote sincerely for their

favorite party. On the other hand, if they do not have strong feelings about the local race, voters are also free to abstain or vote blank. While the logic differs, the critical point for this paper is that in both MMM and MMP there are reasons for voters who support a national party with an uncompetitive local candidate to eschew voting for that local candidate.

4. In this paper, we consider both blank and null votes to be invalid votes. That is, they are included in calculating turnout, but they are not included when calculating the vote share of candidates or parties. This is consistent with the practice in Bolivia, but not in Russia. In Russia, both blank and null votes are counted in the divisor for the purposes of determining whether a party has passed the 5% threshold to receive list tier seats.

5. For example, Hicken notes that in the Philippines the number of legislative parties is inflated by the number of presidential candidates. Many of the parties are newly formed personal vehicles of a particular presidential candidate and are typically not highly institutionalized (Hicken, chapter 8, this volume).

6. It is not always the case that hastily organized parties cannot recruit a large number of competent local figures. For example, in Taiwan James Soong's People First Party was hastily organized before the 2001 legislative election and attracted many established politicians. We do not consider this sort of party as an inchoate party. The key question is not whether the party has a charismatic leader, but whether the leader stands alone as nearly the only politician with a popular following in the party.

7. In the 2006 LAPOP survey, Bolivians self-identified as 64.8% mestizo, 19.3% indigenous, and 11.0% white. On a separate question asking which, if any, indigenous group they belonged to, 36.4% said they were Quechua, 24.2% were Aymara, 10.9% mentioned another indigenous group, and 28.5% belonged to no indigenous group (Seligson et al. 2006). In general, self-identification as indigenous has increased markedly since 1998.

8. In 1989, 1.57 million votes were cast in the presidential election; in 2002, the number of votes nearly doubled to 2.99 million.

9. Turnout in Russia was 54.2% in 1993, 64.3% in 1995, 61.3% in 1999, and 55.3% in 2003 (Nohlen and Stover 2010).

10. See Lazar 2004 for a case study of one such politician.

11. These percentages are calculated using total votes. Party list vote shares are calculated using valid votes only.

12. The constant is determined by the minor parties. These parties are outside the scope of this paper, so the fact that the constant is positive in Model 1 and negative in Model 3 is unimportant.

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