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Abstract

This dissertation develops and evaluates a structural theory of protest onset, applied to the Russian case. Russian stability has become a pressing international political concern, as Putin has annexed the Crimea, fomented one war, in Ukraine, and become a major player in another, in Syria. In December 2011, thousands of Russians gathered in Moscow, Saint Petersburg, and other cities for the largest set of protests since the fall of the USSR. Waves of protest have reappeared sporadically since. Each time, events create islands of dissent, spread widely, but unevenly, throughout the country - in a picture reminiscent of the pre-collapse Soviet Union.

The dissertation argues that only an integrated theoretical framework can adequately explain protest onset variation. Such a framework must include three leading positions: social mobilization capacity, grievances, and political opportunity structure. It must include an additional element as well: state capacity, which is only weakly present in the theoretical canon of Social Movement Studies. The project requires novel sub-national data to test the integrated framework. Independent variable data derives from the Russian Federal Statistics Service. Dependent variable data derives from activist-curated web collections.

According to statistical results, structural factors do, in fact, systematically explain variation in Russian protest from 2007 to 2013. A time series negative binomial regression model reports that protests are most likely in federal subjects featuring highly urbanized populations, high unemployment, and low social spending. These structural factors provide a probabilistic explanation of Russian protest variation over the time horizon. A paired case study, focused on Novosibirsk and Krasnoyarsk Krai, evaluates quantitative results and offers model specification suggestions.

Conclusions indicate that targeted public spending serves as a tool with which the Russian state can coopt public obedience; local governments can employ revenues as a tool to maintain social order. These findings generate novel international political implications, particularly connected with commodity price fluctuation and wars in Ukraine and Syria.

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Barry Hughes, Ph.D.

Second Advisor

Rachel Epstein

Third Advisor

Aaron Schneider

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by

Carey C. Neill

March 2018

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Major Findings.....	1
Major Contributions	1
Motivation	3
A Geography of Micro Events	4
The Troubled State of the Art.....	7
Not in Circumstances They Choose	8
An Academic Desert	9
Statistical Findings	10
Policy Implications.....	11
Case Study and Moving Forward.....	12
 I - Introduction	 14
The Rise of Russian Protest	14
Motivation	19
The Dependent Variable	27
The Puzzling Empirical Realm	32
A Model Of Russian Protest.....	43
Moving Forward	47
 II - Theories of Protest and State Power	 49
Introduction	49
Social Protest Theory Over Time	51
State of the Field	64
Not In Circumstances They Choose	66
State Capacity Theory.....	70
Protest and the Idea of the State	73
 III - Operationalizing Core Concepts	 76
Introduction	76
The Importance of the State	79
The Tenuous Link	83
Methodological Nationalism	89
Organizing Operationalizations	101
Moving Forward	108

IV - Data Politics.....	110
Introduction	110
From Concept to Measurement, Again	113
Effective, Efficient Accumulation	115
Event Data Flaws	120
The Russian Environment.....	125
Activist Sources.....	127
March of the Discontents	131
The Coding Decision.....	137
Ideas for Further Study	142
V - Structural Conditions of Russian Protest, 2007-2013	144
Introduction	144
Descriptive Trends	148
Central.....	155
Far East.....	161
North Caucasus	163
Northwestern.....	166
Siberia	169
Southern.....	172
Ural.....	175
Volga	178
Hypothesis Formulation	181
Modeling Unrest	185
Results	192
Implications	196
Further Research	200
VI - Protest in Siberia	201
Introduction.....	201
Case Study Analysis	203
Analytical Narrative: Idea of the State.....	206
Paired Comparison: Novosibirsk and Krasnoyarsk.....	209
Conclusion	238
References.....	242
Appendix i	262
Appendix ii.....	265

List of Figures

Figure 1: Russian Federal Subject Boundaries	34
Figure 2: Protest Onset Histogram 2007-2013	36
Figure 3: Annual Russian Protest Events, 2007-2013	150
Figure 4: Protests by Federal District	152
Figure 5: Protest Events, Central District	155
Figure 6: Protest Events, Far East District	161
Figure 7: Protest Events, North Caucasus District	163
Figure 8: Protest Events, Northwestern District	166
Figure 9: Protest Events, Siberian District	169
Figure 10: Protest Events, Southern District	172
Figure 11: Protest Events, Ural District	175
Figure 12: Protest Events, Volga District	178
Figure 13: Onset Distribution	190
Figure 14: Models 1-4	194

List of Tables

Table 1: Independent Variable Operationalization.....	108
Table 2: Central District.....	157
Table 3: Far East District.....	162
Table 4: North Caucasus District	165
Table 5: Northwestern District.....	168
Table 6: Siberian District.....	171
Table 7: Southern District.....	174
Table 8: Ural District.....	177
Table 9: Volga District	180

Executive Summary

Major Findings

- 1) Structural factors provide a probabilistic explanation of relative protest frequency, across Russian federal subjects, from 2007-2013.
- 2) State capacity to coopt, through targeted public spending, and grievances best explain protest frequency variance.
- 3) Social mobilization capacity (other than total population and urban population percentage), political opportunity structure, state capacity to coerce, by force, and state capacity to cooperate, by generating loyalty to the ruling United Russia party, do not explain protest frequency variance.
- 4) Russian federal subjects characterized by large, urban populations, scant public spending, and high unemployment are the most likely to host protest events; low public spending per capita and high unemployment are the most robust drivers.
- 5) A paired case study of Siberian federal subjects validates statistical findings.

Major Contributions

- 1) The project represents the first ever systematic exploration of Russian protest onset.
- 2) Theory work identifies, and corrects, major problems plaguing research programs in Social Movement Studies and contentious political studies.
- 3) Independent variable work contributes to the cottage industry of state capacity operationalization.
- 4) Dependent variable work enhances an existing sub-national Russian protest database.

- 5) An overview of event data, driven by news worthiness theory, offers a cautionary tale to scholars using newspaper data in general, and automated event databases in particular.
- 6) Use of activist data offers an alternative to traditional dependent variable sources.

Limitations

- 1) The project adds to an existing database, rather than creating a new one.
- 2) A more systematic critique of extant event data sources would require additional time and resources.
- 3) The project integrates existing theories, rather than creating true theoretical novelty.

Motivation

This dissertation project argues that Russian protests are of interest to non-academic and academic audiences alike. For observers outside of academia, Russian protests demanded international attention in December, 2011, when tens of thousands filled squares and streets from Saint Petersburg to Vladivostok, the Baltic Sea to the Bering Strait. Disputed Duma elections marked the start of a consistent wave. In February 2012, the words Bolotnaya Square obtained a new, defiant symbolic meaning. Standard bearers Pussy Riot toured late-night studios and college campuses, laughing with David Letterman and winning supporters. After a few relatively quiet years, the phenomenon reappeared in 2017. Alexei Navalny—persona non grata and literal he-who-shall-not-be-named of Russian state television—organized country-wide anti-corruption protests. Each time, events created islands of dissent, spread widely, but unevenly, throughout the country—in a picture reminiscent of pre-collapse Soviet Union.

Understanding why Russian protests occur, why they occur in some regions more frequently than others, is an important target for social inquiry. The phenomenon holds importance—even urgency—for a number of groups: the current Russian government, the United States and NATO, liberal civil society groups, and investors. The United States treats social unrest in Russia as a potential path towards political or ideological change. The now famous feud between Vladimir Putin and Hillary Clinton began when Clinton, as secretary of state, allegedly stoked protests around the 2011 election. Over the past decade, the Kremlin has built insurance against an Arab-spring like movement carried out by activists. For example, the Ministry for Internal Affairs held a 40,000-troop exercise against a simulation of the Maidan protests, during which troops operated water cannons and tear gas while under attack from stones and Molotov cocktails. Liberal civil society groups monitor protests as a potential site for human rights abuses. Investors monitor protests as a threat to earnings and market sentiment. In short, numerous stakeholders watch Russian protest patterns with a wary eye.

This dissertation project is an attempt to generate useful knowledge, to broaden understanding of an urgently important phenomenon. Until now, the academic space has remained nearly entirely empty, populated by descriptive studies (Robertson 2013; Lankina 2015; Lankina and Voznaya 2015).

I argue that only an integrated theoretical framework can adequately explain protest onset variation. Such a framework must include each of the three dominant positions: social mobilization capacity, grievances, and political opportunity structure. It must include an additional element as well: state capacity, which is only weakly present in the theoretical canon of Social Movement Studies. My integrated position, titled the Idea of the State, an allusion to Barry Buzan's work on state capacity, predicts high levels of protest in the following structural conditions: where social mobilization capacity is high, or grievances are high, or political opportunity structures are open, or state capacity is weak; it predicts low levels of protest under inverted conditions. Each element is, alone, a probabilistically sufficient factor, but not a necessary one. An explanation that focuses on any one element only would potentially suffer from omitted variable bias—a major problem plaguing the field. Theoretical motivation thus arises from an opportunity to test leading theories, and at the same time, to challenge the prevailing state of the field in Social Movement Studies. For academic audiences, modern Russian protest offers an arena in which to test and improve theoretical tools.

A Geography of Micro Events

Only a disaggregated approach can produce explanations valued by non-academic and academic audiences. Protest onset is an important phenomenon regardless of size, regardless of location. Events that brought the world's attention to Russia were large, with tens of thousands marching in major metropolitan centers. This project is not an attempt to gain an understanding of mass protest only, however, but rather protest onset in general. It explores where and when citizens challenge the contours of society; it explores the dynamic social contract of modern Russia.

Disaggregation facilitates an explanation of protest onset that appeals to observers concerned with small and large events alike. Even small protest can be considered “dress rehearsals” that incrementally contribute to future mass mobilization (Wolchik 2012), and even spark major upheaval in the short term, as in Tunisia and Syria (Noueihed and Warren 2012). Initial cleavages and coalitions can reappear, magnified, when the curtain rises. This project takes methodological inspiration from recent work that eschews monolithic treatment of social unrest. Only a sub-nationally-defined dependent variable exposes the streams and strains characterizing the modern Russian socio-political environment.

Theoretical testing likewise requires a dependent variable defined at the sub-national level. Causal mechanisms driving grievances, mobilization resources, political opportunities and the state’s capacity to discourage activists—all operate primarily at the local level. Operationalizations compiled at the national level are misleading analytic abstractions, often created for the sake of expediency and data availability. Indeed, scholars have created decades of specious findings by collapsing numerous dissimilar sub-national polities into a single figure. In the parallel, high-profile field of civil war studies, corrective sub-national studies have exposed flawed conclusions regarding socio-political grievances, and ethnic divisions (Buhaug, Cederman, and Gleditsch 2014). As Welzel and Inglehart (2008) have argued, emergent environmental effects may interact with local conditions to drive outcomes. An evaluation of “socio-tropic” effects is relevant only once proximate drivers are understood. Such work falls outside of this project’s scope.

The project generates novel sub-national dependent variable data. It significantly adds to an existing event database. Since 2007, a team of Russian sociologists have maintained a virtual chronicle of protest—housed on the website namarsh.ru. The team gathers dispatches from regional print and web journalists. Dispatches cover protest events triggered by any type of grievance, from environmental degradation, to wage conditions, to political corruption. The website is funded by opposition politician and chess grandmaster Gary Kasparov. Tomila Lankina

and Alisa Voznaya created a dataset from namarsh.ru reports, hand-coding the timing and location of protests. This project enhances existing data, coding an additional year of event reports to create a dependent variable dataset that covers the time period 2007-2013.

Activist-based data offer a valuable alternative to mainstream event data sources, most of which are based on newspaper articles. News worthiness theory expects proximate, surprising, large-scale, violent events to make the news (Galtung and Ruge 1965; Barranco and Wisler 1999). In modern Russia—a sprawling land mass characterized by illiberal press—the theory predicts biased coverage. Significant risks are compounded by mundane pitfalls of automated miscoding and foreign language translation accessibility. A brief vetting exercise reveals that major newspaper-based data sources are indeed poor—extremely poor. Where GDELT’s failure is overreporting, SPEED’s failure is dramatic underreporting, both sources exhibiting hundreds of errors.

The enhanced Lankina and Voznaya dataset reveals unexplained variation across Russia. In recent years, the country has experienced thousands of protest events, occurring unevenly across federal subjects. An initial look at the data reveals concentration in the two federal cities. Over 1,400 protests occurred in Moscow, and over 500 in Saint Petersburg. Despite such high frequencies, the data further show that the majority of Russia’s 4,500 protests occur outside the two major cities (more than 70% of the total figure). Frequency varies widely across the eighty three federal subjects. The histogram displayed in Figure 2 below offers a quick look at variation. Twenty regions experienced over fifty events from 2007-2013. Seventeen regions experienced between twenty five and fifty events. Nineteen regions experienced from ten to twenty five. And twenty seven regions experienced ten events or less.

The Troubled State of the Art

The project identifies and addresses two major problems rife in Social Movement Studies. A historical literature review exposes the insufficiency of the dominant political process model and problematic operationalization practices.

First, state capacity is largely absent from Social Movement Studies. Recent consensus on the elements of the political process model fails to adequately represent the statist position, originated by Tilly (1976), that the state as actor shapes protest potential. In an overview, McAdam (1996) identified the constituent elements of the dominant model, across numerous articulations. McAdams identified a list of four dimensions: relative openness of formal political institutions; stability of elite alignments within a polity; presence of allies, among elected officials and among civil society groups; and finally, state capacity and propensity for repression. Only the fourth dimension describes the state as actor. Tilly and other contentious politics scholars demonstrate that repressive capacity is but one element of a much more complex whole.

Second, when scholars do operationalize state capacity, two additional problems emerge. Twin pitfalls of observational equivalence and over-aggregation threaten construct validity. The use of GDP in civil war studies offers a clear example. Two oft-cited studies identified a common link between GDP and onset frequency, then proceeded to produce divergent conclusions. Collier and Hoeffler (1998) encouraged governments to highlight job creation as a path to peace. Fearon and Laitin (2003) would divert resources to government military command and control structures instead. But, here, the policy recommendations derive from an identical evidence base. The GDP per capita operationalization transforms state capacity into an undifferentiated monolith. Theorists recognize numerous interrelated but distinct dimensions or elements of state capacity. All are elided when operationalizations fail to follow Levi's (1988) call to disaggregate the state.

Not in Circumstances They Choose

In a sense, the project features two competitions: the first, between structural and agent-based explanations, and the second, within the structural methodological realm, a tournament of variables, a search for the most compelling explanation offered by decades of scholarly work. Contenders include the subcomponents of the integrated Idea of the State framework: state capacity, and the major strains of Social Movement Studies: political opportunity structure, resource mobilization theory, and grievance.

The project argues that structural factors shape the relative likelihood of Russian protest, throwing a challenge to agent-based explanations such as New Social Movement Theory (NSM). The school of thought encompasses several strains of academic work first appearing in the 1980's and 1990's. New social movement theorists describe their work as 'new' in reference to classical Marxism, eschewing the monolithic theory's economic reductionism and class-based understanding of identity. The school is loosely connected (Buechler 1995), held together by a focus on temporary and fluid catalyzing factors. Some scholars emphasize the ephemeral nature of networks undergirding social action (Melucci 1989); others sketch a similar story of socially-constructed grievances and ideology, amorphous and unmoored to objective conditions (Laraña, Johnston, and Gusfield 1994). The key methodological standpoint cuts against the structuralist analytical gamble. Contributors are united by a methodological approach that places explanation with quickly-changing context-specific factors. The project places explanation, instead, on relatively-stable, structural factors that shape the relative likelihood of Russian protest.

The project further argues that a dimensional understanding of state capacity is an essential component of any comprehensive understanding of protest onset. Most commonly, a state's capacity is considered high when would-be activists are deterred through force or the threat of force (McAdam 1996). Coercion is only one aspect of the state, however. Softer and more abstract forms of power are just as effective as boots and truncheons. States coopt their populations through measures aimed to ameliorate suffering, such as social spending programs

and access to social services. States can also develop cooperative power that engenders feelings of loyalty. Fjelde and de Soysa's (2009) tri-part taxonomy nicely captures the dimensions of capacity that shape variations in protest onset. A theory of state capacity expects high levels of protest where state capacity is weak along dimensions of coercion, cooptation, and cooperation.

An Academic Desert

To date, only one limited explanation of Russian protest onset exists. This attempt falls away as flimsy and not compelling upon examination. Lankina (2015), an international relations specialist at the London School of Economics, evoked political opportunity structure to explain variation in onset frequency. Instead of Eisinger's original objective local political indicators, Lankina relied on a subjective index of regional democracy: an index compiled by the Moscow Carnegie Center and the Independent Institute of Social Policy. The index is based on expert opinions. Lankina's evidence amounts to selectively highlighting a small group of regions exhibiting the expected relationship between political opportunity structure and social protest onset.

Moreover, very few explanations of protest onset exist at all. The few structural studies—focusing on any country—that operate at the subnational level do not comprehensively test theoretical drivers. For example, focusing on India, Wilkinson (2004) evaluated the forward effects of politically motivated transfer rates, ethnic composition of police and federal administration, and corruption. He did not find a significant relationship between onset and any of his measures. Bohlken and Sergenti (2010) conducted a more recent study of social unrest in Indian federal states. The authors mimic the initial, invalid operationalization of GDP and report negative results. Gillezeau (2014) analyzed the relationship of federal spending at the state level and both the onset and severity of racially motivated protests in the United States. Recently, Arce and Mangonnet (2013) conducted a sub-national study of political opportunity structure and protest onset in Argentina. The state of the field, then, sees a small group of scholars studying

protest onset at the correct geographic level, all of whom apply an incomplete set of theoretical drivers.

Statistical Findings

After identifying and correcting major flaws in theory, independent variable operationalization, and dependent variable operationalization, the project produces statistical analysis. Random effects, time series negative binomial regression models test a set of nine hypotheses, derived from the Idea of the State integrated framework, in addition to three hypotheses from Russian Studies.

- Coercive state capacity (crime rates) is a mitigating factor—Rejected
- Cooptational capacity (social spending) is a mitigating factor—**Accepted**
- Cooperative capacity (United Russia vote share) is a mitigating factor—Rejected

- Social mobilization capacity (urban population) is a driving factor—**Accepted**
- Social mobilization capacity (educated population) is a driving factor—Rejected
- Social mobilization capacity (transport infrastructure) is a driving factor—Rejected

- Grievances (unemployment) are a driving factor—**Accepted**
- Grievances (morbidity rates) are a driving factor—Rejected

- Open political opportunity structure (Carnegie Index) is a driving factor—Rejected

- Natural resource wealth (lack of federal transfers) is a driving factor—Rejected

- Public employment (public employment share) is a mitigating factor—Rejected
- Generous federal support (federal transfers) is a driving factor—Rejected

In summary, more generously supported federal subjects, with small, dispersed populations experienced relatively low levels of protest onset. Where unemployment is low and the populace benefits from social spending, low levels are similarly expected. Empirical testing provided supportive evidence for only three of the 12 hypotheses. Switching to a fixed effects negative binomial regression model—one that draws more heavily on within region variation—both population measures lost significance. For this reason, and due to the crude nature of population-based operationalizations, cooptational capacity and grievance offer the best statistical explanations of protest onset frequency in modern Russia. At least in this context, other drivers do not appear as important as initially theorized.

Policy Implications

Empirical results suggest that cooptational state capacity, measured at the sub-national level, conditions the frequency of protest in Russia from 2007-2013. Population measures and unemployment also shaped protest frequency. Only cooptational capacity, however, is completely within leaders' control. The finding regarding state capacity to coopt is particularly interesting due to its magnitude. *Ceteris paribus*, a one thousand ruble increase in social cultural spending per capita results in a 3% decrease in expected onset potential. Such a strong relationship is not seen with the other significant independent variables. A one thousand ruble increase is relatively small, less than 3% of most Russian federal subjects' current spending levels.

As local governments allocate more funds to socio-cultural projects—to public health and education, to unemployment assistance, or to public park maintenance—the frequency of protest declines. It appears, then, that targeted public spending serves as a tool with which the state can

coopt public obedience; Russian local governments can employ revenue as a tool to maintain social order. These findings begin to outline the shape of the social contract across the Russian Federation. Moreover, these findings bring to light implications of international politics, particularly implications of commodity price fluctuation and ongoing wars in Ukraine and Syria. Oil and gas shocks would affect state revenue at both the central and local levels. Sanctions threaten revenue by jeopardizing the country's general economic outlook. Further still, Putin's costly military engagements could limit local governments' capacity to coopt.

Case Study and Moving Forward

Case study evidence supports the major empirical findings. The project produces a most common systems design case study. Novosibirsk and Krasnoyarsk coincide along all independent variables except one. Novosibirsk exhibits lower cooptational capacity than its Siberian neighbor, as well as higher protest frequency. An in-depth analysis of protest environments evaluates the validity of statistical relationships and suggests model improvements. Analysis also explores interaction effects between cooptational capacity and grievances, the two most robust drivers.

It appears that the sub-national Krasnoyarsk state was more inclined to employ cooptation capacity than its counterpart in Novosibirsk. And it appears that cooptational actions did, in fact, dissuade protestors from organizing demonstrations of dissent. This is not to say that Novosibirsk's government completely refused to employ cooptation. Rather, in all years under analysis the northern-most region reported more incidents of "buying-off" protestors, despite reported fewer protests, fewer opportunities for such a response. In 2007, out of 8 quality of life movements, Krasnoyarsk demonstrated cooptational tactics in response to 4 of them. Novosibirsk, faced with 8 movements, responded with cooptation only in response to striking grain workers. In 2008, Krasnoyarsk leveraged cooptational state capacity to "buy off" auto-owners, alumni factory workers and displaced airline workers, or 3 of 5 protest movements. In the same year, Novosibirsk reached an agreement with just one group, striking municipal bus drivers,

when faced with 8 quality of life movements. In 2009 and 2010, Krasnoyarsk's protest environment was tranquil. Only four groups organized quality of life demands. The local state responded each time, three times with cooptation, and once with effective repression. Over the two years, 12 separate movements demanded assistance in Novosibirsk. Government responded twice, once to pay tractor factory workers threatening an official visit from Putin, and once to reverse a cut to subsidized transportation. The difference in cooptational capacity appears to drive differing protest outcomes in the two regions. Against this backdrop, unemployment proved a steady driver of unrest—particularly when not met with cooptational response.

Disaggregated statistical analysis represents one potential way forward. I am convinced that a quality-of-life/ideology dichotomy would improve the search for structural drivers of protest. The next step in the dialectic that is social scientific research—from hypothesis, to testing, and back again—would evaluate the notion that quality of life protests are structurally predictable, while ideologically-driven protests are not. Even this more disaggregated approach would face difficulties, however. The in-depth look at two Siberian provinces revealed consistent connections between quality-of-life protests and ideological protests. Categorical boundaries collapsed as striking workers joined political activists, and the mundane became political.

I - Introduction

The Rise of Russian Protest

In December 2011, thousands of Russians gathered in Moscow, Saint Petersburg and other cities for the largest set of protests since the fall of the USSR. Days earlier, the country held legislative elections across voting regions for seats in the State Duma. The ruling United Russia, led by Vladimir Putin and Dmitri Medvedev, won nearly 53% of seats over rival Communist, Liberal Democratic and Just Russia parties. United Russia's victory, despite dropping in magnitude from 70% in the previous election, triggered wide-spread accusations of vote-fixing. Tens of thousands of people gathered in protest across the country. Activists convened the largest gathering near the Kremlin in Moscow to focus country-wide demands for new elections. Police estimates placed attendance at 25,000 people, while protestors claimed over 100,000, and news agencies in the United States and Europe reported a midpoint around 50,000. No matter the exact number, the event was, as *The New York Times* reported, "too large to be edited out of the evening news"(Barry 2011).

Protests against 2011 Duma elections marked the beginning of two concurrent trends, a rise in protest activity, and a rise in international attention. In February, in the following year, tens of thousands of protesters again took to the streets across Russia, with the largest demonstration in Moscow's Bolotnaya Square. Large-scale protests continued in response to the disputed electoral results, and in anticipation of Putin's presidential campaign, announced after an interlude as prime minister.

The election itself again mobilized activists, who cited irregularities despite Putin's claim that he had "won a clean victory" (Herszenhorn 2012). The wave of protest beginning in 2011 included the now famous arrest of Pussy Riot. On February 21st 2012, five members of the punk rock band/art collective donned masks and staged a performance at the Christ the Savior Cathedral in Moscow, during mass. The group's "Punk Rock Prayer" denounced Putin's relationship with the Russian Orthodox Church, repeating in verse the protest movement's call of "Russia Without Putin" (Россия без Путина). Three members of the group spent over a year in prison on charges of destabilizing social order, before release under an amnesty law passed in the run-up to the Sochi Winter Olympics. Over the course of the group's trial the members actively sought to connect Russia's dissident movement with transnational justice and democracy movements. As Masha Gessen describes in a biography, the group's name demonstrates their strategy in microcosm. The vulgarity is an attempt to catch observers' attention. And the usage of English is an attempt to appeal to a broad audience—even when displayed in Russian media the band's name appear in roman script (Gessen 2014). The strategy worked. HBO aired a documentary account of their story in 2014, and Russian protests have continued to garner widespread attention in the international press.

Thanks in part to this English-language campaign, Russian protests have become a pressing international political concern, and as such, a pressing target for social inquiry. Recent events have focused the attention of Putin's regime and the international community, as well as academic audiences working in the contentious politics tradition. Around the world, numerous actors would benefit from understanding the causal mechanisms underlying protest onset.

This project is the first ever systematic exploration of protest onset in modern Russia. Large-scale events, those appearing in international headlines, are one element of a much larger phenomenon. For every action in Saint Petersburg or Moscow many more take place in provincial cities spanning the roughly 6,200-mile land mass. From 2007 to 2013, over 4,000 protest events occurred, nearly two-thirds outside of the twin capitals—according to my updated Lankina and

Voznaya dataset, discussed below. A glimpse at the data reveals significant variation in relative onset frequency. Of the eighty three federal subjects, some featured hundreds of events, others around fifty, and still others reported fewer than ten or none at all. What explains this variation? What drives some regions to become protest hubs? Theoretical tools offer a way forward. Scholars have argued that social mobilization capacity (e.g., Urdal 2006; Wallace and Weiss 2013), grievances (e.g., Walton and Ragin 1990; Porta 2008), or political opportunity structure (e.g., Arce and Mangonnet, 2013; Voznaya, 2015) explain protest onset variation. Each individual approach, however, provides merely a partial, inadequate explanation.

This project argues that only an integrated theoretical framework can adequately explain protest onset variation. Such a framework must include each of the three dominant positions. It must include an additional element as well: state capacity, which is only weakly present in the theoretical canon of Social Movement Studies. My integrated position, titled the Idea of the State, an allusion to Barry Buzan's work on state capacity, predicts high levels of protest in the following structural conditions: where social mobilization capacity is high, *or* grievances are high, *or* political opportunity structures are open, *or* state capacity is weak. It predicts low levels of protest under inverted conditions. As this chapter demonstrates, each element is, alone, a sufficient factor, but not a necessary one¹. An explanation that focuses on one element alone would potentially suffer from omitted variable bias—a major problem plaguing the field, as outlined in Chapter 3. Theoretical motivation thus arises from an opportunity to test leading theories, and at the same time, to challenge the prevailing state of the field in Social Movement Studies. For academic audiences, modern Russian protest offers an arena in which to test and improve theory.

The Idea of the State framework generates a set of falsifiable hypotheses, required to evaluate the effect of each sufficient but unnecessary driver. Due to the relatively early stage of

¹ The Idea of the State is based on a probabilistic understanding of causality. I here use the terminology sufficient and necessary in Douglas Dion's (1998) sense: each element is not deterministically, but "probabilistically, sufficient," increasing the relative likelihood of onset.

Russian protest research, hypothesis testing also evaluates the broader structuralist position: do there, in fact, exist systematic drivers of protest onset in modern Russia? Statistical models in Chapter 5 will evaluate the following:

H*: Structural conditions systematically shape relative protest onset across Russian federal subjects.

H1: State capacity is negatively correlated with protest onset.

H2: Social mobilization capacity is positively correlated with protest onset.

H3: Grievances are positively correlated with protest onset.

H4: Open political opportunity structures are positively correlated with protest onset.

The first several chapters establish preconditions for hypothesis testing. Chapter 2 builds theoretical tools, presents the Idea of the State as a synthesis of existing work in Social Movement Studies. Time and again, over decades of research, scholars return to the three leading theoretical positions. Time and again, purportedly comprehensive protest models under-theorize the role of the state. My framework solves this problem by importing a rich, multi-dimensional understanding of state capacity from contentious politics. In addition to coercion, state capacity to coopt, and state capacity to cooperate mitigate protest onset frequency (Fjelde and de Soysa 2014). Hypothesis H1 expands accordingly, to include:

H1a: State capacity to coerce is negatively correlated with protest onset.

H1b: State capacity to coopt is negatively correlated with protest onset.

H1c: State capacity to cooperate is negatively correlated with protest onset.

Chapter 3 operationalizes these three dimensions, in addition to social mobilization capacity, grievances, and political opportunity structure. Detailed analysis of existing

operationalization produces a cautionary tale. I avoid common pitfalls by measuring independent variables at the subnational level. As the final building block, Chapter 4 builds a dependent variable database, containing event data—the when and the where of protest onset. Comparative analysis leads me to eschew sources based on newspapers and traditional media, in favor of activist-curated web collections. Chapter 5 conducts statistical testing, before Chapter 6 subjects hypotheses to qualitative testing. Here, this introductory chapter provides motivation and delineates the phenomenon under investigation. In order to demonstrate the importance of the dependent variable, I will produce evidence that Russian protest events represent an area of concern for many actors. Protest event onset attracts scant scholarly attention (Lankina and Voznaya, 2015). For this reason, I will provide a lengthy, robust statement of motivation. I will first discuss the Russian government's approach to recent events, an approach that includes a foray into predictive analytics. Next, I will demonstrate a similar level of concern from a variety of international actors: the United States, liberal civil society organizations and investors. By including perspectives from this array of actors, I indicate the broad appeal of a project dedicated to explaining the onset of Russian protest events.

With motivation firmly established I then briefly demonstrate the superiority of an integrated approach over prevalent individual explanations. Three theoretical traditions offer tools for understanding social protest onset in Russia. Two recent scholarly papers have even addressed the topic explicitly (Lankina and Voznaya 2015; Lankina 2015). However, extant academic work does not provide an adequate explanation of the phenomenon. The academic terrain, relating to Russian protest onset— and protest onset in general, as discussed in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4—is relatively bare. The few studies attempting to explain protest onset are shot through with serious problems regarding theory, independent variable operationalization, and dependent variable operationalization. I conclude the chapter with a road map for the rest of the dissertation, moving through the problem areas in chapters 2, 3, and 4, offering my solutions

along the way. With corrected fundamental elements in place, chapters 5 and 6 provide statistical and case study analysis.

Motivation

The onset of protest events in Russia is relevant to the country's current governing regime. Putin and his allies are concerned with the causes of protests, historical and future. Evidence of regime preference is notoriously difficult to obtain, however. Country leaders often conceal true preferences behind rhetoric aimed at mollifying domestic audiences or international rivals. International relations scholars long ago called attention the "other minds problem," the impossibility of accessing the thoughts of government leaders (Butterfield 1951; Jervis 1978). Words spoken at official events are carefully polished and may offer little evidence of true preference. Putin's speeches are especially poor sources of evidence, given his reputation as a dishonest spokesman. For example, in April 2015 during a public question and answer session, the leader forcefully denied involvement in the ongoing Ukrainian crisis: "let me be clear, I will say this clearly: There are no Russian troops in Ukraine" (Demirjian 2015). During the early phases of the conflict heavily armed men seized control of local government buildings, wearing unmarked uniforms similar to those worn by Russian troops. Since the initial attacks, various news agencies have established the presence of military vehicles only owned by the Russian army, Russian-made weapons systems, and videos of Russian units, including self-published social media footage from soldiers' personal accounts (Ostrovsky 2015). Given the difficulty of capturing preference, and given Putin's particular tendency to dissimulate, actions best demonstrate the Russian regime's preferences.

The Kremlin's fluid response to recent protests shows a regime desperate to quell unrest. At first, in December 2011, the government employed what Lilia Shevtsova describes as it's "usual harsh tactics," beating and arresting hundreds of participants as it had throughout the 1990's and 2000's. State-led repression, however, failed to discourage protestors. Worried about inciting further dissident support, the regime shifted to a "soft-kill" strategy of cooptation and

conciliation (Shevtsova 2012). Superficial legislative changes were the first element of the strategy. In March 2012 Medvedev proposed a law that would make it easier for parties to register for legislative elections. As a second element, the prime minister mobilized parallel protests each time dissidents organized. The parallel groups even echoed calls for clean elections. State-supported protestors attempted to discredit pro-democracy activists as Western puppets funded by foreign agents to incite revolution in Russia. Furthermore, the regime recruited pro-government groups from rural areas to intimidate urban protestors. Despite these strategic actions violent repression and arrests remained low (Shevtsova 2012). The soft-kill strategy further involved a curtailment of freedom of expression, especially the form of social media. According to Reporters Without Borders, a French non-profit dedicated to informational freedom, the Federal Security Service frequently acted to block accounts on VKontakte. Moreover, thousands of Twitter accounts were flooded with pro-government slogans tied to opposition hashtags in order to dampen the site's utility. Initially, the regime responded with force. When force appeared to strengthen dissident support, the regime quickly changed tactics.

The eruption of revolutionary protests close to home, in Ukraine, marked the end of Russia's soft-kill strategy. As Viktor Yanukovich fled protestors, the Russian government shifted back to harsh punishment. Instead of acting indirectly, through proxy groups, or acting conciliatorily, through legislative measures, the regime sent a harsh message to would-be dissidents. In February 2014, a group of protestors dubbed the 'Bolotnaya Eight' were sentenced to a combined total of 20 years in prison for participating in protests on the eve of Putin's third inauguration. The farcical nature of the trial is clear from 22 year old Yaroslav Belousov's fate—he received an eighteen-month sentence for throwing a lemon, reported as an 'unidentified yellow object' which caused an officer 'excruciating pain' (Amnesty International 2014). Furthermore, the regime increased the legal measures of punishment. In Putin's third term fines for participating in un-sanctioned protests have more than tripled (Ibid.). Although the Kremlin has moved away from the soft-kill strategy, it has maintained a commitment to social media control. Since 2012,

Russia's Federal Service for Supervision of Communications, Information Technology and Mass Media (Roskomnadzor) has frequently blocked access to websites and social media networks (Shevtsova 2012). Since initial protests, the Russian regime's actions reflect learning from domestic and international experiences. With experience, the regime forged a counter-protest strategy that has fluctuated from leniency to severe repression, with constant control over social media.

Putin's government further demonstrated its concern over protest activity by creating a set of preventive programs. The Kremlin-affiliated Center for Research in Legitimacy and Political Protest recently announced the launch of a predictive analytical tool. The group's program is titled Laplace's Demon, a reference to the work of 19th century French mathematician Pierre-Simon Laplace. In his *Philosophical Essay on Probabilities*, Laplace posited the existence of an intelligence so vast as to comprehend all causal forces at play in the natural world. For this being, or demon in subsequent interpretation, "the future, as the past, would be present in its eyes" (1812). For such a being, all uncertainty in planning would disappear. Members of the Center for Research in Legitimacy and Political Protest claim to offer the government just such a powerful tool, by aggregating social media posts across Russia. In a press release the Center's chairman, Yevgeny Venediktov stressed the importance of the tool, of "software that would monitor social networks and warn in advance of protest onset in the country" (Maus 2015). The Kremlin's preparations are not confined to the virtual realm, however. Interior Ministry troops held a 40,000 troop exercise against a simulation of the Maidan protests. During the exercise troops operated water cannons and tear gas while under attack from stones and Molotov cocktails. A domestic stability unit remains on call, ready to put training into action (Parfitt 2015).

Thus, evidence suggests that Russian leadership considers protest a dangerous phenomenon, one that must be carefully managed and, if possible, prevented. This concern is the reasonable product of learning from the Arab Spring revolutions. Like former leaders in Egypt, Syria and Libya, Putin heads a long-standing government that is, by some measures (Freedom

House, Polity IV, for example) authoritarian or anocratic. In the Middle East, protest movements eventually forced leaders to relinquish political control. And relinquishing political control meant not only loss of assets, but also loss of freedom, or even loss of life. Popular protests raise the threat of weakening Putin's grip on power, the threat of replicating the fate of Hosni Mubarak or Muammar Qadhafi. Russia's current rulers want to avoid a variation on the theme "authoritarians come to a bad end" (Shevtsova 2012). In August 2011 current chair of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko emphasized the importance of security in the wake of the Arab Spring. Leaders agreed that social networks such as Twitter and Facebook played a crucial role in Egypt, Syria, and Libya. After the meeting, members of the security cooperative launched a joint cyber defense program. In the following years the CSTO has continued to share results and strategies of cyber monitoring and control, (Kucera 2011). Putin his allies across the Post-Soviet space have begun to perceive popular mobilization as an existential threat.

Outside of Putin's support structure, a wide range of international actors would benefit from an increased understanding of Russian protest event onset. Three sets of actors serve to demonstrate the breadth of interested parties. First, actors within the United States military and diplomatic communities exhibit interest, indirect or direct. The military has recently identified Russia as a security priority. And as academic work has demonstrated, domestic political configurations influence foreign policy positions (Katzenstein 1977; Solingen 1994, 2007). In this way the American military is indirectly interested in protest onset. The diplomatic corps' interest is direct. The State Department has recently exhibited an ideological drive to protect freedom of individuals engaged in protest, as well as protecting democracy around the world. Members of a second group, liberal international civil society, serve their mission by monitoring the emergence of, and response to, protests under authoritarian regimes. And finally, investors both within and outside of Russia see in protest events, large and small, a source of financial risk.

Russia has recently risen in security importance for the United States. In the 2015 U.S. National Military Strategy, a document produced by the armed forces, the Joint Chiefs of Staff identified Russia as a critical security concern. According to the document, Putin's regime offered the potential for significant cooperation, especially in the realms of counter-narcotics and counter-terrorism. Any contribution is outweighed, according to the document, by Russian unpredictability. Russia frequently violates signed agreements. In addition to annexing Crimea, the country recently violated the UN Charter, the Helsinki Accords and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. The military authors conclude that the ongoing tension in Crimea has increased the chances of interstate war between the two countries (Joint Chiefs of Staff 2015). Recent intervention in the Syria further heightens the strategic importance of Russia. Marine General Joseph Dunford highlighted this concern during his nomination speech for chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Dunford stated that "Russia presents the greatest threat to our national security," and moreover that the country under Putin, "could pose an existential threat to the United States" (Lamothe 2015). Threats from Russia are heightened by the country's stockpile of nuclear weapons. According to the last biannual exchange of data recorded under the New START Treaty, data gathered and published by the American State Department, Russia holds over 1,6000 warheads across intercontinental ballistic missiles, submarine-launched ballistic missiles and bombers. Including non-deployed weapons raises the total to over 8,000 warheads (2015).

Because Russia is a foreign policy concern, the American military must pay close attention to domestic Russian politics. So-called second image theories of international relations have long established the connection between domestic political developments and foreign policy. Scholars called for a theoretical synthesis between the two political levels in a 1977 special issue of *International Organization*. Peter Katzenstein organized a series of articles under the thesis that effective analysis of the international political system must "start at home" (1977). The link between foreign and domestic politics holds even for major actors in the international system. As one high-profile example, Jeffrey Frieden (1988) demonstrated that American interwar

actions in the 1920s and 1930s are explicable only with reference to domestic socio-economic and political groups. More recently Etel Solingen's work on military aggression (1994) and nuclear proliferation (2007) connected domestic and international politics. Her argument holds that, for costly actions such as making war or developing nuclear weapons, any state requires a domestic coalition to support the expense. According to this strain of international relations' thought, the United States military community should be indirectly concerned with Russian protests as a potential catalyst for change in foreign security policy. The October Revolution of 1917, which upended Tsarist rule and spread communism throughout the globe, guarantees policy makers never forget the importance of domestic Russian political movements.

It is not surprising that the United States has, in fact, demonstrated concern with Russian protest events. Actors within the United States' diplomatic community took an active interest in the 2011 election protests and the continuing wave of events. Diplomats' concern reflects a tension between two goals. First, the United States diplomatic community is committed to democracy and human rights. This ideological commitment was on display in 2011. Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton criticized the Putin regime at a speech before the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), claiming that "Russian voters deserve a full investigation of electoral fraud and manipulation ...regardless of where you live, citizenship requires holding your government accountable" (Pessin 2011). Clinton further claimed that a commitment to free elections "is part of who we are...it's our values" (Ibid.). Again, academic work in international relations suggests a more nuanced reason for the United States to monitor domestic political unrest. Simply put, a shift in the dominant Russian ideology would alter world politics. In his 1999 book, Fred Halliday argued that revolution brings new ideologies to the international level. For example, the Cold War itself can be seen as a clash between the ideals of the Bolshevik Revolution and the West. If the communists had not overthrown tsarist rule, the subsequent trajectory of international politics would have been dramatically different (1999). By supporting pro-democracy protests, the State Department could facilitate the emergence of a like-

mindful, cooperative partner; by supporting certain protest elements in Russia, American diplomats could eventually influence foreign policy. But supporting unrest conflicts with the diplomatic community's second goal vis-à-vis Russia. The United States has reason to value stability in the country. Successful regime change or prolonged unrest could undermine attempts to strengthen diplomatic connections. As Obama declared at the United Nations in September 2015: "We need a strong Russia that can work with us to strengthen the international system as a whole" (Epatko 2015). For both its ideological and more pragmatic diplomatic goals, the United States has reason to monitor Russian protest events.

International civil society organizations represent the second group of interested observers. Liberal organizations dedicated to freedom and human rights have an inherent interest in protests and associated state repression. These groups pursue a normative agenda, to protect and spread liberty and equality around the world. Such virtues find expression in democratic governance, freedom of speech, and civil rights—or John Locke's life, liberty, and property. Protest events appear on the liberal agenda for two reasons. First, protestors often mobilize in reaction to curtailment of liberty or civil rights. And secondly, regimes' repressive responses further exacerbate grievances: violent responses threaten bodily harm, and non-violent control mechanisms restrict freedom of speech and assembly. Liberal concern is heightened in an authoritarian or hybrid regime like Russia, where protestors cast their grievances in Lockean language. Not surprisingly, high-profile organizations have dedicated resources to monitoring Russian protest. Amnesty International, for example, tracks human rights violations around the world. The group published an analysis of Russian unrest, including the events in Bolotnaya Square (2014). A second group, Freedom House tracks civil freedom, which the Putin regime has curtailed in an effort to diffuse protest activity. The organization has chronicled, "a long list of [restrictions] that collectively testify to the shrinking of freedoms in Russia" (2015). And as a third example, Human Rights Watch highlighted Putin's regime as particularly alarming in their 2014 World Report. President Rachel Denber identified several problematic issue areas, including a

crackdown on freedom of expression, both in the virtual and physical realms. Denber's group published an additional special report on human rights violations surrounding the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics and protests against the Crimean occupation. Concerned with physical safety, and freedom from arbitrary governance, liberal groups serve their mission by closely monitoring Russian protests.

In addition to members of the United States government and liberal organizations, a third set of actors, investors, are concerned with social unrest in Russia. Within the country, the 2011 protests themselves triggered dips in the MICEX ruble-denominated index. Russian stocks listed on international exchanges similarly declined during this period (Gutterman 2011). Protests turned market sentiment for two related reasons. First is the fear of hours lost due to social unrest. Large-scale protest events can lead to work stoppages, lost production, and therefore lost revenue. Labor protests and strikes explicitly shut down production as a bargaining tool. However, non-labor protests can similarly force shutdowns (Robertson 2007). Protest events can thus damage economic activity directly. Investors are also indirectly affected by protest events, by the uncertainty associated with unrest. For example, Russian Finance Minister Anton Siluanov warned that negative investor sentiment led to significant capital flight during the wave of protests beginning in December 2011. Political risk analysis firms, such as the Eurasia Group, analyze the relationship between politics and market outcomes. The effect of the Kremlin's information control measures is a clear example. Political changes have damaged IT firms' commercial viability in Russia despite a cheap domestic labor market. In 2014 Google closed its engineering office in Moscow, in response to a law requiring all firms to store Russian residents' personal data on servers that are physically located within the country (Luhn 2014). Adobe Systems canceled Russian operations in September of 2014 for similar reasons (Boyle 2014).

Protest events in Russia are a phenomenon of interest for a wide range of actors, within and beyond the country's borders. Putin's regime, members of the United States government, international civil society groups, and investors would all benefit from an understanding of protest

onset, from an understanding of when and where protests are likely to occur. Social scientists are positioned to provide just such an explanation. Charles Ragin laid out criteria by which events or phenomena should be deemed worthy of social scientific inquiry: the rule of “double generality.” A phenomenon may first be deemed general if it affects many people directly or indirectly. The actors mentioned above are directly or indirectly affected by protests—in addition, of course, to participants on both sides of police barricades. A phenomenon secondly qualifies as general if it occurs frequently. Spending time and energy exploring the causes of a one-off or once-in-a-generation event offers little generalizable knowledge. As I shall demonstrate below, such protests occur frequently. Thus, social scientists ought to consider Russian protest onset a phenomenon worthy of inquiry. This dissertation project will attempt to generate useful knowledge, to broaden understanding of this important phenomenon.

The Dependent Variable

For the project, I will borrow a dependent variable definition from social movement literature. Douglas McAdam provided a useful conceptual definition of protest in his 1982 book, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930–1970*. According to the author, protests are “organized efforts to promote or resist changes in the structure of society or polity and nature of regime that involve recourse to non-institutional forms of political participation” (1982: 25). This form of expression can include demonstrations, marches, picketing, sit-ins and so forth. It is similarly important to clearly define what the dependent variable is not. In the umbrella discipline of contentious politics scholars have often studied protest alongside civil wars, ethnic violence, genocide and politicide (e.g., Goldstone et al. 2010). While my work is situated in the contentious politics tradition, it explores the causes of protest, not other forms of contention.

As a further specification, my dependent variable is protest onset regardless of size, regardless of location. Events that brought the world’s attention to Russia were large, with tens of thousands participating. With this project I do not hope to gain an understanding of when and why only mass protests occur. I hope to gain an understanding of protest onset in general. I hope to

gain an understanding of when and where citizens challenge the contours of society; I hope to gain an understanding of the social contract, the Idea of the State, in modern Russia. Mass protests are unarguably important events for potential audiences discussed above. Even small, local protests hold interest for civil society groups and investors. Human rights are at risk in any clash between state and society. Ildar Dadin, organizer of a set of one-man protests, was hassled, arrested, and reportedly tortured in prison. After Dadin became the center of an international human rights campaign Putin pardoned the man (Meduza 2017b). Seemingly minor events can similarly have an outsized impact on economic conditions. Small groups of striking factory workers are capable of shutting down production, as seen in agrarian equipment plants in Siberia (KPRF News, 2008c). In the hands of aggrieved transport drivers, a single freight truck can bring even Moscow rush hour to a standstill (Meduza 2017a). Justification for a disaggregated approach holds for the remaining audience as well: the United States government, and more generally, any actor concerned with regime (in)stability.

Academic work suggests that contentious political events small and large, provincial or central, are often connected. Scholars have described mass protest as the product of a latticework of state-society friction. Large, destabilizing movements may have humble beginnings. And even small events that do not directly evolve into national movements establish a foundation for future protest—a foundation of networks and experience. Sidney Tarrow popularized the term “early risers” (1994) to highlight the catalytic nature of small gatherings. Building on this foundation, Debra Minkoff outlined a logical chain which she refers to as social movement sequencing (1997). Following Minkoff’s logic, early risers spark contagion by signaling elite vulnerability. As more and more people take part in protest actions, increases in “organizational density” then create a durable resource base for extant and future movements. The longer activist networks persist, the more likely new groups will emerge through “attribution of similarity” and imitation (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001). As protests continue to spread, networks continue to grow and await precipitous political conditions. According to this theoretical position, then,

analysts hoping to understand the causes underlying mass protests would do well to consider the general context of protest. Otherwise, what may be the logical culmination of a sequence of conflict and organization will misleadingly seem to appear out of nowhere, or “out of never” (Kuran, 1991).

Two examples demonstrate the importance of the disaggregated approach. The onset of civil war in Syria and the collapse of the Soviet Union offer cautionary tales. In each case, analysts who obscured the broader context of protest—the social movement sequence—were caught off guard by mass protest and eventual regime collapse. Neither Bashar Al-Assad nor Sovietologists working in the 1980’s were prepared for shocking upheaval. Working retrospectively, scholars have since identified the importance of small, provincial events in both cases.

On the eve of calamity, President Bashar al-Assad asserted in an interview with the *Wall Street Journal* (2011) that Syrians were not going to revolt because the country’s security forces had established ‘resistance credentials’. In hindsight, the leader confused center control with national control. What began as a set of provincial marches, organized in response to the imprisonment and torture of teenage vandals, steadily grew, and eventually spread across the country. For Reinoud Leenders and Steven Heydeman, local contextual factors explain the emergence of early risers, which in turn explains the emergence of mass protest. Contributors to social movement theory label this phenomenon “scale shift,” as small movements slowly increase in levels of coordination and participation. The authors argue that local context in Dar’a was conducive to mobilization precisely because observers considered the area secure. Assad had recently redirected regional troops and monitoring resources to the capital city (2014). Leenders and Heydeman argue that early risers in Dar’a and other areas played a key role in “animating and sustaining early mobilization” (2014). An overview of protest attendance figures offers means to trace mobilization sequencing. During the conflict’s first months relatively high levels of

participation were reported in Dar'a, Homs, Idlib and Deir Az-Zur, and only later in the capital of Damascus.

For analysts ignoring the general context of fraying state-society relations, the fall of the USSR was similarly unexpected. Employing the social movement sequencing approach, Mark Beissinger describes the Soviet collapse, instead, as the product of “accumulating inevitability” (2002). In the author’s rendering, several distinct streams of protest eventually formed a tide that brought down one of the world’s two super powers. Over the course of several years, over a massive geographic expanse, social movement networks built towards critical change. Through numerous expressions of discontent participants and organizers developed a base of resources and grievances. Beissinger identified three significant protest streams. Conservative reactionaries resisted the changes of Glasnost. Nationalists hoped to push new-found local autonomy further, a move towards complete independence from the federal center. And miners sought economic sovereignty as a means to remedy wage arrears and a deteriorating quality of life.

Restricting analytical focus to large events in Moscow and Saint Petersburg would completely obscure the sequence of social protest that eventually brought down the USSR. Each of the protest streams occupied distinct geographic zones. The economically-focused unrest, for example, occurred primarily in Donbass, Komi province in Northern Russia, and Northern Kazakhstan. Statistics gathered by Beissinger’s research team frame the context of state-society tension during the crucial period. Of the 5500 + protests in the Glasnost period, 1900 occurred in the Russian territory, and 714 of these occurred in Moscow or Saint Petersburg (around 36% of the total number). Individual events formed streams, which eventually formed a destabilizing tide as nationalism, the fight for local governance and local identity, became a dominant mobilizing force. Nationalist activists successfully harnessed existing social tensions related to living condition concerns, including miners’ grievances. The tide reached critical magnitude as connections between protests across time and space strengthened and multiplied (Ibid.). By

tracing the social movement sequence in its entirety, by gathering data on events of any size and any location, Beissinger generated an explanation of the USSR's collapse.

Other scholars have recently begun to trace the humble beginnings of mass protest. Research on Brazilian unrest in Sao Paulo surrounding the 2014 World Cup identified "scale shift." Small groups of graduate students organized to condemn increases in public transportation. After a video of repressive response spread through social networks, breadth of protest spread in kind (Alonso and Mische 2017) . Moving to the former Soviet space, a similar shift occurred in Ukraine at the now famous Maidan square. Crowds capable of choking off city transportation, crowds reported at over 80,000 people, only appeared after police cracked down on a relatively small gathering, estimated at around 1,000 participants (Aytaç, Schiumerini, and Stokes 2017). In another former Soviet state, Sharon Wolchik chronicled social movement sequence in Kyrgyzstan's color revolution. Broad-based social mobilization from Kyrgyz society ousted President Kurmanbek Bakiyev. Early stages of the movement, however, can be traced to the remote Eastern town of Naryn, where protestors voiced frustration with high oil prices and local corruption. Democracy activists were able to harness the economically-focused strain of protest to create a destabilizing mass movement (2012).

The examples above demonstrate that smaller protests can be considered "dress rehearsals" that incrementally contribute to future mass mobilization (Wolchik 2012). As Beissinger's study suggests, the cleavages present in dress rehearsals can reappear in the main event. My project is methodologically inspired by recent work that eschews monolithic treatment of social unrest, and is particularly inspired by Beissinger's approach. Only by defining my dependent variable at the disaggregated level can I trace the streams and strains characterizing the modern Russian environment. This approach will allow me to create an explanation of protest onset that appeals to audiences concerned with both small and large events.

Thus, I will focus my attention on acts of protest, whatever the size, wherever the location. I define my dependent variable as protest onset frequency at the level of federal subject. Subject is not the most micro geographical unit. In the Russian context, however, federal-subject governments feature political and financial structures required to test leading theories, while avoided the gross over-simplification of a broader analytic lens. Defining protest onset sub-nationally separates my project from much contemporary work. Tomila Lankina and Alisa Voznaya argue that “the spatial dimension of protest has remained marginal to the literature” (2015: 22). This means that a hypothetical study would focus on Russian or Brazilian protest, rather than protest in Moscow or Novosibirsk, San Paulo or Brasilia. Any accompanying explanation of onset would rely on national-level independent variables. This practice is puzzling. States that have provided case material for recent studies of protest onset—Argentina, Mexico, Russia, Ukraine—exhibit significant spatial variation in protest frequency and socio-political conditions (Buhaug, Cederman, and Gleditsch 2014). Failure to consider the actual location of events is an astounding, common flaw in much contentious politics work. I will thoroughly address the puzzling neglect of the local level more fully in Chapter 3.

The Puzzling Empirical Realm

This section begins with a discussion of the Russian Federation, a polity consisting of numerous types of federal subject. With the federal structure established, I will then introduce variation in protest onset. Since 2007, Russia has experienced over 4,500 discrete protest events. In the last decade two groups of scholars have begun studying the phenomenon. Nevertheless the academic terrain remains virtually unexplored, populated by descriptive work (Robertson 2013; Lankina 2015; Lankina and Voznaya, 2015).

The modern Russian Federation consists of eighty three federal subjects, as outlined in the Russian Constitution of 1993. (Two recent additions, Crimea and Sevastopol, are not internationally recognized as part of the Russian Federation). Subjects hold numerous designations: oblasts, comparable to provinces or states; republics, named after indigenous non-

Russian majority ethnic groups; krais, originally established as lower-order political units; and autonomous oblasts and autonomous okrugs, which emerged as small ethnic groups won autonomy from surrounding oblasts or krais. Finally, Moscow and Saint Petersburg hold the designation of federal city, which entails full subject-hood. Subject designations appeared during the Bolshevik years, and the formative years of the Russian Soviet Federative Social Republic (RSFSR), the core member of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). With the collapse of the USSR, a constituent assembly met to reform relations between the federation and subjects. Members hoped to phase out hierarchal political status of the subjects, in favor of an equal system based on the German *Länder* (Sheehy 1993). After a contentious bargaining process—one that may have threatened the survival of the federation (Treisman 2001)—the 1993 Constitution did indeed reduce disparities between designations. However, individual regions continued to press the center for conciliations, a process which produced numerous bilateral agreements. James Hughes and other scholars label the resulting structure “asymmetrical federalism” (2001). Each type of federal subject has equal representation in chief executive elections, and in the Federation Council, the upper house of the federal legislature. Each type of subject features a local executive, parliament, judicial body, and budget. However, under the Russian system of asymmetrical federalism, each subject enjoys differing degrees of financial and policy-making autonomy from the center. And this autonomy is fluid and extra-legal, as bi-lateral agreements can contradict federal or regional constitutions or go entirely ignored. For this reason, Alfred Stephan (2000) describes federal-center relations as difficult to represent in concrete terms. Indeed, a degree of vagueness was built into the post-Soviet constitution: Article 66 of the 1993 constitution leaves unclear conflict-adjudication between the center and its subjects. Hughes argues that this provision was included to allow bi-lateral center-subject negotiations as ad-hoc ameliorative measures (2001).

Because of the murky nature of this political arrangement, scholars of Russian asymmetrical federalism infer relations from outcomes rather than legal designation. Scholarly

work on center-subject budget transfers serves as a useful example. Scholars often assert that certain regions, republics and the “autonomous” subjects, are privileged in comparison with their counterparts (Triesman 2001). Vladimir Popov conducted a study in order to quantify this privilege. After determining that subjects had similar budgets by law, Popov decided to explore federal relations by looking at outcome indicators such as tax revenues, spending, and federal transfers. Popov concluded that, more than subject type, financial privilege stemmed from political performance. Specifically, net fiscal transfers varied in step with votes for pro-central government parties (2004). Following this example, I do not expect subject designation to influence protest onset frequency. Below, Figure 1 displays the current federal boundaries. The two federal cities are not displayed.

Figure 1: Russian Federal Subject Boundaries



In recent years, Russia has experienced thousands of protest events, occurring unevenly throughout federal subjects. Since 2007, a team of Russian sociologists have maintained a virtual chronicle of protest—housed on the website namarsh.ru. The team gathers dispatches from

regional print and web journalists. Dispatches cover protest events triggered by any type of grievance, from environmental degradation, to wage conditions, to political corruption. The website is funded by opposition politician and chess grandmaster Gary Kasparov. Tomila Lankina and Alisa Voznaya created a dataset from namarsh.ru reports, hand-coding the timing and location of protests. I build on the existing data, coding an additional year of event reports and creating a dependent variable dataset that covers the time period 2007-2013. Data availability dictates the starting year. However, 2004-2005 marked a critical juncture in Russia's political history, when a Duma decision abolished popular election of regional governors (Robertson, 2013). Even if data for 2005 and earlier years were available it would be reasonable to analyze the two periods separately.

An initial look at protest onset data reveals concentration in the two federal cities. Over 1400 protests occurred in Moscow, and over 500 in Saint Petersburg. Despite such high frequencies, the data further show that the majority of Russia's more than 4,500 protests occur outside the two major cities (more than 70% of the total figure). Frequency varies widely across the eighty three federal subjects. The histogram displayed in Figure 2 below offers a quick look at variation. Nearly twenty regions experienced over fifty events from 2007-2012. Fifteen regions experienced between twenty five and fifty events. Seventeen regions experienced from ten to twenty five. And twenty six regions experienced ten events or less. For a full list of regions by onset see Appendix i. What drives protest onset frequencies across federal subjects?

Figure 2: Protest Onset Histogram 2007-2013



Source: Updated Lankina and Voznaya Protest Data (Appendix i)

Leading theories of social protest onset offer an initial cut at explaining this variance. The prevailing set of theoretical tools consists of three approaches to understanding conditions shaping protest onset—political opportunity structure theory, resource mobilization theory and grievance theory. Each of these three approaches offers tools for a structural explanation. As Chapter 3 demonstrates, elements of the triad are often applied as explanations in isolation. Only one explicit application to the Russian case exists: Lankina’s exploratory exercise based on political opportunity structure. Neither this, nor an alternative based on the other traditions provides a comprehensive explanation.

First, political opportunity structure predicts covariance between onset frequency and local government openness. The initial, and perhaps the most well-known, strain of social movement theory is political opportunity structure. Writing in the midst of the civil rights struggle and the Vietnam War, Peter Eisinger (1973) produced a foundational expression of the position in his study of protest onset in 43 American cities. In the late 1960’s and early 1970’s political scientists were concerned with exploring the relationship between so-called “political environment” variables and political outcomes of interest. Eisinger attempted to theorize the context as a structure of political opportunity facing a particular community, which served to obstruct or facilitate non-traditional political expression. Elements of the structure could include:

whether a city is under a mayor or city manager; an at large or ward-alderman voting system; partisan or non-partisan voting system. Employing the instrumental rationality assumption, Eisinger argued that individuals would choose to protest when there exists little opportunity to exercise influence through delegates or representative bodies. In other words, “protest is a device by which actors making demands in the political system attempt to maximize the impact of their meager resources...at the same time they strive to minimize the costs which they might incur by such demand making”(1973: 13). Eisinger posited two hypotheses linking political opportunity structure and protest onset. A linear relationship would see people frustrated as opportunity structures were “closed,” or non-representative and non-responsive. A second, curvilinear model, predicts protest as opportunity structure begin to open. The expected benefit of protest actions in either very closed or very open structures is similarly low. When government is not at all responsive or representative, would-be dissidents expect to fail. When government is very responsive, directing resources from the system is a more likely route towards success. In the middle range previously excluded groups acquire enough influence to hope to change the system. In the structural tradition, then, Eisinger’s theory—and modern versions—explain protest events through contextual factors. However, the context is limited to the political realm. This strain of thought has thrived since its introduction. Indeed, the position is so often amended as to “become a sponge that soaks up every aspect of the social movement environment” (Gamson and Meyer, 1996). Some scholars even use the term in a loose, ad hoc manner, to describe any protest driver. In the following, I refer to the more focused, political formulation—as discussed in Chapter 2.

In order to evaluate this first argument, scholars must gather data pertaining to sub-national political structure. Recent work by Lankina (2015), an international relations specialist at the London School of Economics, followed this approach. The author created measures of regional political opportunity structure openness. Instead of utilizing Eisinger’s objective local political indicators, Lankina uses a subjective index of regional democracy: an index compiled by

the Moscow Carnegie Center and the Independent Institute of Social Policy, covering the years 2000–2005. The index is based on expert opinions. Respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they considered each federal subject, "a political system, one of the characteristics of which is the quality of being completely or almost completely responsive to all its citizens," meaning that citizens must be able "to formulate" and "signify" their preferences and have them "weighed equally in the conduct of the government" (Moscow Carnegie Center). Lankina employed the results to argue that regions exhibiting comparatively open regional political systems are among the leaders in protest activism. She claimed that several members of the top ten protesting regions are also those that have in the past received high democracy ratings. It is true that, Sverdlovsk, Samara, Perm, and St. Petersburg have been among "democracy" leaders according to the subjective index. And further, it is true that these regions are among the leaders in protest activism. Upon further inspection, however, Lankina's argument is not compelling.

This evidence amounts to selecting several regions which exhibit the expected relationship between political opportunity structure and social protest onset. John Stuart Mill's System of Logic quickly reveals the incomplete nature of Lankina's claimed relationship. For Mill, a necessary condition must always be present if the effect is present. Any properties which are absent when the effect is present cannot be necessary conditions for the effect. Comparing other regions' political opportunity scores and onset frequency reveals that a relatively open political opportunity structure is not a necessary condition of high protest frequency. Some regions score highly on protests frequency but low on openness: Penza; Primorsky; Voronzeh; Krasnodar; Kirov; Ulyanovsk. Moving beyond Lankina's narrow examples renders the political opportunity structure explanation inadequate; something else appears to drive protest onset. At best an open political opportunity structure—at least under this operationalization—explains part of the phenomenon of protest onset in Russia.

The second set of theoretical tools, resource mobilization theory, captures part of the environment that has not been “soaked into” political opportunity structure. Resource mobilization, given name and initial formulation by McCarthy and Zald (1977), places explanatory power in contextual factors that empower would-be dissidents. The authors focus on resources available to collective actors in advanced industrial societies. Increased personal resources, professionalization and financial support allow citizens to create professional movement associations. Following this approach, protest drivers include the population of potential protestors, the presence of potential sponsors and organizational capacity among activists. But in addition to human and financial resources, cognitive and motivational factors facilitate mobilization. Educational attainment, for instance, has long been identified as a driver of traditional and non-traditional political participation (Almond and Verba, 1963; Chenoweth and Ulfelder, 2015a). Resource mobilization theory shares assumptions with Eisinger’s political opportunity structure theory. McCarthy and Zald’s framework rests on the rationalist assumption: that would-be protestors act when perceived costs exceed perceived benefits. A further similarity, both strains of thought assume that grievances are ubiquitous. Indeed, according to McCarthy and Zald, “the definition of grievances will expand to meet the funds and support personnel available” (1973: 103).

As an exploratory exercise, I will again evaluate perhaps the simplest operationalization of this theoretical position. Willing participants are the fundamental protest resource. For this reason, scholars hypothesize that higher population numbers correspond with higher resource mobilization, and thus higher likelihood of protest onset (McCarthy and Zald 1977a; Chenoweth and Ulfelder 2015a). The position would predict regional population size and onset frequency to closely covary. This logic explains the high frequency of protests taking place in the two largest Russian cities, Moscow and St Petersburg (Robertson 2011, 2013). However, a simple comparison of regions indicates that this operationalization of resource mobilization, like political openness, does not represent a necessary condition for high protest frequency. For example, the

city of Kaliningrad has a population of nearly one million and accounts for a rough 2% of the country's protests—comparable to the 3% of protests experienced by Northern and East Siberian divisions, which hold populations 5 and ten times larger than that of Kaliningrad. Other high population areas experience low protest frequencies, including the North Caucasus (17.7 million) and West Siberian divisions (14.6 million). Simple correlational statistics further weaken the resource mobilization position. For all 81 regions outside of the federal cities, the r-squared correlational statistic between population and protest onset is barely over .5. Under a simple understanding of the statistic, population size explains roughly half of the variation in protest onset in Russia.

The third and final theoretical position focusses the analytical lens firmly on grievances. Again, the foundational statement appeared during the height of protest activities in America, in Ted Robert Gurr's *Why Do Men Rebel?* The study includes cross-sectional analysis of contentious political events from 1961 to 1965 and assigns explanatory power to socio-economic factors inspiring participation. Grievance inducing factors could include economic discrimination, political discrimination, religious cleavages, or perceived financial injustice. At the heart of Gurr's theory lies the frustration-aggression thesis. Gurr posited frustration as the principal psychological root of human rebellion. This frustration can arise out of relative deprivation, the "perceived discrepancy between value expectations and value capabilities" (1970, 37), or simply put, the difference between how things are and how things should be. At first glance this third theoretical tradition might appear incompatible with structural analysis. Explanatory power is placed in the minds of men and women. For this reason grievance theory has been labeled psychological (Goldstone, 2001). However, the level of analysis is not the agent, but rather the political environment which are likely to engender grievances. This approach can be considered a structural theory, because the assumed driver of protest is a "fundamental social dislocation," represented by broad socio-political context.

A grievance-based explanation for protest onset is again incomplete at best. From 2007 to 2013 federal subjects that score relatively highly on common indicators of grievance do not score similarly highly on protest frequency. In fact, the most deprived regions—those with highest levels of unemployment and with lowest levels of regional wealth measured in GDP per capita—are those exhibiting some of the lowest levels of protest activism. Lankina and Voznaya highlighted the absence of North Caucasus republics among protest leaders. As the authors point out, this absence is particularly damaging for the grievance position considering the highly publicized socioeconomic problems in the region. For instance, the republics of Karachay-Cherkessia and Kabardino-Balkaria recorded only six and five protests respectively for the entire period under investigation, while Adygea recorded three protests. Again, a simple correlation further weakens the explanation. The r-squared statistic for average protest and average unemployment across sub-regions is a weak .20. Recently Robertson (2013) joined Lankina and Voznaya in highlighting the weakness of the grievance position in the study of Russian protest onset.

Each one of these leading theories offers an explanation for some regions and not for others; each strain offers a sufficient but unnecessary element of protest onset. The three leading theories, any one taken alone, offer only partial explanation of variation. For instance, none of the three leading theories explain low levels of protest onset in the North Caucasus region or the Far East region, together the home of 17 federal subjects. Both feature high rates of unemployment, and particularly puzzling, the Far East also features high urbanization rates, and open political opportunity structures. The region should produce relatively high onset rates, according to the three theoretical positions. This is not the case. Not surprisingly, given the preceding demonstration, something is missing; something is omitted. An explanatory model based on any single element of the triad would suffer from omitted variable bias. But even an integrated model, featuring all three, would suffer from omitted variable bias.

The omitted variable is state capacity. Most commonly, a state's capacity is considered high when would-be activists are deterred through force or the threat of force (McAdam, 1982). Coercion is only one aspect of the state, however. Softer and more abstract forms of power are just as effective as boots and truncheons. States coopt their populations through measures aimed to ameliorate suffering, such as social spending programs and access to social services. States can also develop cooperative power that engenders feelings of loyalty. Fjelde and de Soysa's (2009) tri-part taxonomy nicely captures the dimensions of capacity that shape variations in protest onset. A theory of state capacity expects high levels of protest where state capacity is weak along dimensions of coercion, cooptation, and cooperation. As discussed in detail in Chapter 3, the only element captured in Social Movement Studies is coercive capacity, often crudely rolled into political opportunity structure.

Looking at the two most puzzling regions, this state capacity lens produces clarity not offered by the three proceeding positions. Quiescence in the North Caucasus appears to be the product of coercive capacity and cooperational capacity. A snapshot of Grozny, capital of Chechnya and the most recognizable city in the region, encapsulates a set of structural conditions not conducive to protest: heavily armed police patrol a pristine downtown, one marked with modern commercial buildings, colorful light displays, and a massive, modern mosque. Less than a decade ago the city was a scene of utter destruction, razed city blocks and burned-out cars. The local Idea of the State takes the form of an iron fist legitimately buffering the population from the horrors of instability. Quantitative operationalizations validate this interpretation—as further discussed in Chapter 3. The area features very low levels of crime, a measure of coercive capacity, and very high vote shares for the dominant United Russia party, a measure of cooperational capacity. The key to understanding low protest rates in the Far East lies with the third dimension: cooptational capacity. Local governments spend very generously on social programs in the area. As well-known example, oligarch Roman Abramovich served as governor of the federal subject Chukotka. Abramovich is today known as a secretive billionaire owner of

the Chelsea football team, rumored to exchange financial support for protection from Putin. As governor, the oligarch lavished financial assistance on residents of Chukotka, in a push to raise the local standard of living. With his goal accomplished, he departed for more lavish surroundings in London. Again turning to quantitative indicators, each of the 9 federal subjects in the Far East feature rates significantly higher than average on per capita social spending. Here the Idea of the State takes the form of a provider, buying off would-be dissidents even under conditions otherwise conducive to protest.

A Model Of Russian Protest

I expand on existing work to develop and operationalize an integrated model of protest onset, titled the Idea of the State, over the next three chapters. Members of the Putin regime, the United States military and diplomatic communities, liberal civil society organizations, and investors would all benefit from understanding the conditions precipitating and militating against protest events in Russia; members of this diverse audience would deem important an explanation of when and where protests are more and less likely to occur. Political scientists, economists and international relations experts strive to provide the analytical tools needed to produce such an explanation. Or put another way, King, Keohane and Verba (1998) claim that “social science constitutes an attempt to make sense of social situations that we perceive as more or less complex.” In order to make sense of phenomena, social scientists must first select an analytical strategy. With the complexity of reality reduced and ordered, scholars can move on to address causal forces. My approach is, thus, to simplify the reality of Russian protest, in a fashion that will create a useful understanding of cause. I take inspiration from a noted historian.

There are innumerable ways to describe the onset, or the occurrence, of an event. As the historian E.H. Carr argues there are, in fact, infinite pathways to identifying “cause.” In his book *What Is History?* Carr (1961) provides a description of this concept. In history, every event is the product of innumerable contingent forces occurring simultaneously. The historian’s job is to sift through the mass of effects and create a useful account of say, the origin of World War II, the fall

of the Roman Empire, the Arab Spring, or protests in Russia. For Carr the quality of good history is utility, not truth. Numerous versions of an event can be deemed true, but only a useful account will allow consumers to learn from historical analysis, in order to shape future situations. In a memorable example, the author presents a hypothetical scenario: one rainy night, a drunken party-goer decides to drive home against the wishes of his hosts. Elsewhere, a man, suddenly realizing he is out of cigarettes, dons a raincoat and heads to the corner store on foot. Minutes later with the smoking-man lying dead in the road, the contemporary historian, the social analyst, is tasked with creating an explanation of the account. Equally valid arguments would deem weather conditions, a lack of cigarettes, or an intoxicated driver as the main cause of the accident. However, any account that did not lay primary blame with the driver would do little to prevent similar future accidents. Social scientists face a similar conundrum when crafting accounts of causation.

My integrated model places explanatory power with structural conditions in Russian federal subjects. An event can be considered the cause of underlying structural conditions, or a short-term catalyst. The goal of the first analytical strategy, the structural approach, is the identification of “stable conditions that systematically determine” where an event is likely to occur. James Fearon and David Laitin’s 2003 *American Political Science Review* article epitomizes this position. The article employed statistical techniques to create measures of civil war risk. Fearon and Laitin argued that civil wars have structural roots, represented by fragmented control of state territory. The contrasting position holds that structural positions are incidental to contentious politics onset, because the drivers are short-term triggers. This perspective holds that structural conditions do not cause events to emerge. Instead cause resides with a triggering event, or a concerted activist campaign as described in agency-based approaches. As one example, Klandermans and Staggenborg (2002) argue that contentious politics onset should be understood as caused by individual protest entrepreneurs. He argues that “movements consist of individuals,” and thus too should the analytical frame. Fearon and Laitin’s work includes policy

recommendations that nicely demonstrate the difference between the two strategies. A structural approach finds that all sets of belligerent agents emerge in similar conditions of weak state control—be they communists in Southeast Asia and Latin America, Islamic fundamentalists in Afghanistan, Algeria or Kashmir, or reactionary militants in Nicaragua. If this is true, any short-term trigger or ideology doctrine is incidental to cause. The attendant policy recommendation becomes strengthening state capacity, not a focus on individuals. My model describes variation in protest onset likelihood probability as driven by variation in similar underlying structural factors.

The Idea of the State framework hypothesizes that protest onset varies systematically with particular structural conditions. Conditions include the triad of theories from Social Movement Studies along with state capacity, as four sufficient but unnecessary causal drivers. It expects high levels of protest in conditions of high social mobilization capacity, or high levels of grievance, or open political opportunity structure, or weak state capacity; the framework expects low levels of protest under inverted conditions. This project follows the tradition laid out by Fearon and Laitin, attempting to explain protest onset variation through stable conditions. The relatively undeveloped nature of Russian protest studies allows me to provide the first test of this general analytical wager. Scholars have not yet determined whether or not a structural approach will bear fruit at all. A test of the structural methodological position versus the agency alternative is itself a novel academic contribution. Do there exist “stable conditions that systematically determine” where and when Russian protest events occur? Findings—presented in Chapter 5—offer an affirmative answer.

According to statistical results, structural factors do, in fact, systematically explain variation in Russian protest from 2007-2013. A time series negative binomial regression model reports that protests are most likely in federal subjects featuring highly urbanized populations, high unemployment, and low social spending. These structural factors provide a probabilistic explanation of Russian protest variation over the time horizon. The finding regarding state capacity to coopt is particularly interesting. *Ceteris paribus*, a one thousand ruble increase in

social cultural spending per capita results in a 3% decrease in expected onset potential. Such a magnitude is not seen with the other significant independent variables. A one thousand ruble increase is relatively small, less than 3% of most Russian federal subjects' current spending levels. Moreover, the finding is interesting because state capacity is generally omitted from protest models. When it does appear, it is restricted to coercive capacity. Findings regarding cooptational capacity underscore the importance of a dimensional approach. Not all of the hypotheses generated by the Idea of the State framework were accepted, however. Neither political opportunity structure, nor coercive capacity, nor cooperational capacity were significantly linked to protest onset frequency. These elements seem to hold little explanatory power, at least in the Russian context, over the time period 2007-2013. A case study exercise in Chapter 6 further evaluates the statistical results and offers suggestions for model improvement.

These findings throw a broad challenge to agent-based positions, such as so-called New Social Movement Theory (NSM). The school of thought encompasses several strains of academic work first appearing in the 1980's and 1990's. New social movement theorists describe their work as 'new' in reference to classical Marxism, eschewing the monolithic theory's economic reductionism and class-based understanding of identity. The school is loosely connected (Buechler, 1995), held together by a focus on temporary and fluid catalyzing factors. Scholars emphasize the ephemeral nature of networks undergirding social action (Melucci 1989)—in direct opposition to structural applications of the resource mobilization approach. Others sketch a similar story of socially-constructed grievances and ideology, amorphous and unmoored to objective conditions (Laraña, Johnston, and Gusfield 1994). The hallmark methodological standpoint cuts against the structuralist analytical gamble. Contributors study ethnicity, gender, and sexuality. All are united by an approach that places explanation with quickly-changing context specific factors. My explanation will be based on macro, structural, factors that shape the relative likelihood of Russian protest.

In a sense, this project features two competitions: the first, between structural and agent-based explanations, and the second, within the structural methodological realm, a tournament of variables, a search for the most compelling explanation offered by Social Movement Studies. Based on statistical results, underscored by case study analysis, structural factors do offer a systematic explanation. Protest onset patterns vary in step with urbanization, state capacity to coopt the populace through public spending, and grievances associated with unemployment.

Moving Forward

In one of his earliest speeches, in 1999, Vladimir Putin claimed that “Russia needs strong state power and must have it” (Taylor, 2011). Over the course of the remaining chapters I will attempt to reveal the contours of the state that produce strength vis-à-vis social unrest. The Idea of the State framework offers a set of hypothesized conditions that shape relative protest onset frequency across federal subjects. Findings generate a novel understanding of this important phenomenon.

A foundation of theory and data facilitates the knowledge-building exercise. I build the datasets needed to evaluate Lankina’s political opportunity structure explanation, along with other theoretical positions, and my integrated Idea of the State framework. In so doing, I conduct the first ever robust exploration of Russian protest onset frequency. The next chapter leverages a literature review to reveal major theoretical blind spots, in particular inadequate treatment of the state. Over the last several decades social movement theorists and state capacity theorists have covered similar conceptual and empirical ground without much communication. By merging the traditions, I will craft a comprehensive structural framework that generates falsifiable hypotheses regarding the likelihood of protest onset. The third chapter discusses independent variable conceptualization and operationalization from the two areas of study. Moving to the dependent variable, the fourth chapter introduces my hand-coding approach to Russian protest data. In the fifth chapter I subject the integrated Idea of the State framework to statistical testing, using a variety of models. Any observed patterns merely suggest causal mechanisms at play. The sixth

chapter, thus, offers a process tracing exercise, evaluating protests in the case of Novosibirsk and neighboring Krasnoyarsk Krai, regions similar in all respects other than state capacity profile and onset potential.

II - Theories of Protest and State Power

Introduction

Social science, the practice of crafting explanations for social phenomena, is a collective enterprise. Even if political scientists, economists, and sociologists do not stand on the shoulders of their predecessors, they explicitly and implicitly connect to extant work. Over the course of a research project, scholars make choices that situate articles or books within a broad academic narrative. Citation choice directly forms a conversation with previous work. And research design shapes the conversation by defining the realm of testable hypotheses, and subsequently, the realm of viable critique. In a memorable quote, Dietrich Reuschmeyer observed that “there are many crossroads where social scientists meet, move, halt, or collide”(2003, 22).

In this chapter I place my study of Russian protest onset within a tradition of scholarly work. I begin with a discussion of major contributions from political scientists and sociologists, a body of work today known as Social Movement Studies. Since the 1960s scholars have developed theoretical resources intended to facilitate the understanding of social movements and protest events. The following literature review exercise identifies possible structural conditions linked to protest onset potential—this is its primary purpose.

I further leverage the review to argue that the state of the art features two problems. Today, a consensus view of the field identifies three potential drivers of protest: grievance, political opportunity structure, and social mobilization.

Very few structural studies, however, evaluate more than two of the concepts. Whether the triad is complimentary or competing, omitting any one element is unjustified. As a second problem, the theoretical triad grossly under-theorizes the role of the state. Indeed, compared with a parallel research strain, civil war and conflict studies, Social Movement Studies' formulation takes on the appearance of a caricature or straw man. To address both problems, I leverage resources produced by structural civil war studies and statist theories associated with the Copenhagen School of international relations. Only by synthesizing insights from these traditions will I be able to effectively test the structuralist analytical gamble: that there do indeed exist "stable conditions that systematically determine" where a protest event is likely to occur. What I title the Idea of the State theory of protest shifts focus to the state's ability to mitigate driving factors. My framework thus contributes to several academic traditions. In the following sections I will explore the meeting points—and collision points—between my work and work on protest, civil wars, and state capacity.

A chronological literature reveals the triad's enduring nature. A timeless truth, scholars have discovered and rediscovered the driving factors. Reiteration across time demonstrates the importance of all three; any understanding of protest onset must include a representation of each. But this is not enough. A comprehensive understanding of protest must include a fourth element: state capacity.

Scholarly work on protest and state capacity has evolved alongside the course of human history. The state of the world, current political, military or sociological events, shapes the academic realm. As they attempt to generate useful knowledge, scholars frequently take inspiration from the headlines. Robert Keohane notes that big research questions often appear "in the wake of disaster" (2008). Whole sub-fields emerged after major events in the 20th century: international relations after World War I (Carr 1939; Morgenthau 1948); security studies during the Cold War (Schelling 1960); modern political economy after the economic malaise of the 1970's (Gilpin 1975); terrorism studies after September 11th (Ranstorp 2007). As the previous

chapter indicated, recent protests in Russia brought international and scholarly attention to the phenomenon. Russian scholars have recently attempted to identify structural determinants of protest onset in the country (Robertson 2007; Lankina and Voznaya 2015). And the Arab Spring conflict has heightened attention to protest across authoritarian or mixed regimes (Wolchik 2012; Koesel and Bunce 2012). Since the 1950s, protest and conflict theorists similarly reacted to contemporary events. In the post-war decades, scholars faced a wave of protest, as people took to the streets in support of civil rights, anti-poverty, and anti-war movements—a tumult, or “American reckoning” (Appy 2015), that shaped national identity.

As I argue below, the current state of the field provides a useful but incomplete set of tools for the structuralist. To improve my position, I turn to the state-centered study of civil wars. In the wake of the Cold War, a new set of disasters shifted the academic community’s attention. Ethnic conflicts and wars of secession represented a disaster that shifted scholarly attention towards civil wars (Kaldor 2007). Scholars studying intra-state conflicts greatly expanded on political opportunity structure theorists’ concept of state capacity. Below I describe the history of scholarly work in these areas, proceeding roughly in chronological order. A synthesis of the two traditions produces a complete, but large, set of structural drivers. In order to provide an orderly theoretical framework for the study of Russian protest onset, I introduce Buzan’s concept of state capacity before concluding.

Social Protest Theory Over Time

The following literature review serves to identify potential protest drivers. Through a historical walkthrough of Social Movement Studies, I argue that a structural theoretical framework of protest onset must include political opportunity structure, grievance, and social mobilization capacity. The three major strains of Social Movement Studies emerge time and again, and make up the current state of the field. Failure to include any element is inexcusable. Even such a robust framework would be incomplete, however. I further argue that social movement theorists missed an opportunity to include state capacity in their models, an omission that created an insufficient

set of protest drivers. Sophisticated statist elements first appear in Social Movement Studies in the 1970's. After that point—as reviews of the current state of the field make clear—insights were inadequately brought into theoretical canon. A search for structural protest drivers must extend beyond narrow disciplinary boundaries, to leverage contentious politics work.

My search must begin with the turbulent post World War II decades. Throughout the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, protests erupted across America—*The New York Times* reported thousands of protest events in the country during this time period (McCarthy, McPhail, and Smith 1996). Study of protest emerged under a concurrent trend within academia. The behavioral revolution, perhaps best described as a “mood towards developing systematic theories and empirical testing” (Dahl 1961, 765), brought grand theoretical frameworks and big quantitative datasets to prominence. Dahl titled his own framework pluralism, which described political influence as the product of resources such as social standing or wealth. Referred to later by statist theorists as the “cash-register” theory of government, the pluralist state simply tallied up resources and preferences to produce appropriate policy (Evans, Reuschemeyer, and Skocpol 1985). Working under this framework, the study of protest became the study of “relatively powerless groups” (Adrian 1960); because protestors lacked the resources held by mainstream political groups, they had only a minor effect on politics under pluralism. Thus, the pluralist established a place for protest studies while simultaneously deeming the phenomenon marginal.

Refinement of the grand framework generated useful theoretical tools. Beginning with the work of Michael Lipsky, protest scholars began to carve out an independent area of study. Lipsky's *American Political Science Review* article “Protest as Political Resource” established a conceptual baseline for protest studies (1968). The article's title reveals that the author is clearly working under Dahl's pluralist influence. Lipsky, indeed, embraced the behaviorist reliance on theoretical frameworks as organizational devices. In his work the author bemoans the widespread use of the single-case case study, disconnected from broader theoretical discourses (e.g., Walker (1963), on Atlanta; Burgess (1962) and Keech (1966), on Durham; Clark, (1965) on New York).

However, Lipsky rejected the substantive content of pluralism as applicable to protest study: protestors were not relatively powerless groups, as measured by pluralist resources. Instead, protestors created their own resources in a way distinct from other political actors. Against the cash-register theory of the state, Lipsky posited that under certain conditions protestors could generate resources necessary to impact policy. This position corresponded with James Q. Wilson's (1961) contemporary argument that protestors can, and do, increase their bargaining ability without acquiring Dahl's resources of influence. Lipsky's work strongly argued that protest ought to be studied as an independent subject, and simultaneously offered the first potential structural drivers of social protest onset.

The major streams of modern Social Movement Studies are first visible in "Protest as Political Resource." Lipsky established four dimensions of "protest as political resource." Each dimension conditioned the likelihood that a social movement would successfully influence policy. First is personnel recruitment, uniting individuals under a common cause. Recruitment covaried with fears, real or perceived, facing members of society—in other words covaried with perceived grievances. Second is the informational environment in which protests are embedded. Lipsky theorized that cohesive movements maximized exposure through communication media; media coverage, in newspapers and on television, raised awareness of protests. Exposure benefitted protestors by increasing recruits and winning allies—by increasing social mobilization capacity. The third resource dimension is interaction with third parties. In their struggle, successful protestors win support from third-party allies and combat third-party enemies—enemies to include repressive state agents. Allies can include civil society groups and other protest movements, while enemies can include repressive arms of the state. Finally, the fourth dimension is support from targeted groups, which include institutionalized political actors. Lipsky saw effective protest movements receiving support from elected officials, through conventional political channels such as petitioning and voting—through openings in the political opportunity structure.

Lipsky's resource model, already present in the late 1960's, suggests that grievances, social mobilization capacity, political opportunity structure, and a measure of state capacity all shape protest conditions. The model intended to "assist in ordering data and indicating the salience for research of a number of aspects of protest" (1968: 1157). Dahl's pluralism established a common vocabulary and set of concepts to order the study of all politics. Lipsky's resource dimensions accomplished the same goal for the circumscribed area of protest studies. At the same time, the dimensions offered theoretical tools for structural researchers. Lipsky's model was not designed as a theory of protest onset per se. The author attempted to explain the conditions under which protest movements could affect political decisions. His conceptual tools nevertheless offer plausible causal drivers of onset. In fact, his four categories foreshadow the major theoretical positions introduced over the next half century in Social Movement Studies. Today structural studies of protest onset evaluate the triad of grievance, political opportunity structure, and social mobilization capacity, each of which resembles a posited dimension. Lipsky's resource dimensions theory set the stage for over half a century of work in protest studies.

The first attempts to identify structural determinants of protest events, appearing during the 1960's, were atheoretical, offering no guidance to the modern scholar. Protest scholars, like political scientists more generally during this period, explored observable patterns between so-called political environment variables and outcomes. Political environment studies exemplified the behaviorist commitment towards empirical testing (Russett et al. 1968). The goal was to employ quantitative methods to identify the effect of political environment elements across numerous dependent variables. Several examples from protest studies illustrate such work. In an early piece, Lieberman and Silverman (1965) found evidence that race riots occurred more frequently under at-large electoral systems than in small district ward systems. Other studies produced conflicting accounts of the predictive power of "environmental" variables. Palley and Palley (1969) found that objective indicators of social and economic deprivation were unreliable

predictors of urban strife. This contradicted Downes' (1968) finding that the incidence of riots and protest fluctuated systematically with economic prospects and educational attainment of black adults. These contributions, and many others, constituted the first generation of quantitative protest studies. However, the findings often conflicted, a problem exacerbated by the lack of explicit theorizing. As Peter Eisinger (1973) noted, the connection between environmental variables and protest patterns was "seldom made explicit theoretically" (1973: 11). Absent a theoretical framework, scholars were unable to carry on productive debate and refine studies to account for disparate results.

Peter Eisinger's work brought clarity to early structural studies of protest onset and created one of the three major strains of Social Movement Studies; he provided a pathway beyond atheoretical work in the political environment tradition. Eisinger restricted the definition of political environment, merging the empirical goals of Lieberman and Silverman, the Palleys and Downes, with Lipsky's dedication to explicit theory crafting. Eisinger theorized that each American city held a particular structure of political opportunities, which shaped protest behavior. This original formulation included specific institutional factors: for example, whether the chief executive is an elected mayor, or a manager hired by the city council, and whether elections are ward aldermanic or partisan. Such formal arrangements defined the political opportunity structure for each city. Protest is here not primarily the product of resources, even resources generated by protestors. Protest is instead primarily a function of "openings, weak spots, barriers" (1973: 20).

Political opportunity structure, under Eisinger's theory, conditioned the likelihood of protest through mechanisms of frustration and rationalist cost-benefit calculation. Protest erupted as a reaction to frustrated groups' inability to gain access to political processes, an inability to influence political outcomes through conventional means. However, rational protestors would choose not to protest under hopeless conditions, conditions in which neither conventional nor unconventional actions have an effect on policy. The joint theory generated two rival hypotheses. First is a linear relationship between political opportunity structure openness and protest

prevalence. As groups are increasingly blocked from policy creation, frustration sends them to the streets. Second is a non-linear, U-shaped relationship between the two variables. This hypothesis holds that very open systems prevent the rise of frustration, and very closed systems prevent the rise of hope. In both cases protest onset will be limited. In middle ranges, however, a combination of frustration and expectation spur onset. To test the hypotheses, Eisinger constructed a dataset from newspaper reports in forty three American cities. His statistical tests support the U-shaped hypothesis, and refute the linear hypothesis. The 1973 article is still widely cited in modern work—according to GoogleScholar, the article has been cited over 1500 times. The study is a landmark in the exploration of structural causes of protest onset. Thus, it directly provides guidance for an exploration of protest onset in Russia, or any other context.

Eisinger's work set a precedent by connecting to work outside of protest studies—a precedent that is unfortunately ignored in modern Social Movement Studies. Specifically, the author engaged with work in the tradition of rebellion studies. At first glance, this interdisciplinary move appears surprising. In his work, Eisinger advocates for the study of protest as a standalone phenomenon. In the 1960s scholars studied protest alongside related violent events, particularly race riots. Eisinger contends that protest events and their violent counterpart were two forms of collective action that should be “distinguished conceptually and empirically” (1968: 44). The foundational article introduces the tense relationship between protest and other forms of political conflict in academia; the article demonstrates how scholars can fruitfully draw tools from parallel fields without jeopardizing the independence of protest as a phenomenon.

Interdisciplinary linkage connected political opportunity theory with Ted Robert Gurr, one of the founders of rebellion studies. Gurr's (1970) *Why Men Rebel* is a comprehensive investigation into the causes of collective violence. As reviewers were quick to point out, the boundaries of the collective violence category were fuzzy (Tilly 1971; Black 1972). The study's dependent variable sprawls to include revolutions, civil wars, strikes, and street demonstrations. The dependent variable of protest studies thus falls under the broad umbrella category. For each

form, the author theorizes the potential for collective violence as a function of relative deprivation, or the disparity between “justifiable expectations and perceived value capabilities” (1970:43). Gurr wagers that the processes underlying various forms of contentious expression are similar enough to warrant aggregated treatment. Despite Eisinger’s clear rejection of the aggregate position, he entertains Gurr’s hypotheses. Even though Eisinger strongly argues that protest should not be studied alongside violent rioting, or the numerous phenomena that make up collective violence, Gurr’s work provides a potentially useful theoretical tool, or resource. A search for structural causes of protest onset must similarly consider the arguments put forth in rebellion studies.

By citing Gurr’s work, Eisinger brought the second strain of modern Social Movement Studies, grievance, into the mainstream. Theories from revolution studies informed Eisinger’s foundational political opportunity structure work in two ways. First, Gurr’s relative deprivation hypothesis offers a theory for statistical testing. In his article, as mentioned above, Eisinger finds support for an inverted-U relationship between political opportunity structures and protest, rather than the linear relationship associated with relative deprivation theory. However, elements from revolution studies inform a broader articulation of political opportunity theory. In a closing note Eisinger brings elements of grievance into his model. Political opportunity structure is narrowly constructed from formal institutional attributes. However, the author posits that opportunity is also related to “social considerations which breed deviance” (1973: 17). Even under the original formulation of political opportunity theory, Eisinger outlined a broader definition that included societal elements of grievance. Even while introducing a single, parsimonious explanation, the author recognizes the importance of a broader theoretical model. Political opportunity structure expanded even more through contributions from sociology and collective behavior studies.

The full triad emerges for a second time in a move to expand upon political opportunity structure. Charles Tilly built on Eisinger’s work to offer the beginnings of a more dynamic theory of social movements. In *From Mobilization to Revolution* Tilly (1978), echoing Eisinger, contended that the frequency of protest and other collective behavior charts a curvilinear

relationship with political openness. When the state offers individuals and groups access to conventional politics, few will select more costly, unconventional alternatives. When the state offers absolutely no access to politics, even unconventional politics may fail to achieve results. Again, protest occurs in the middle ground, where ample obstruction breeds motive, and ample openness breeds hope. Tilly's formulation of tri-part opportunity structure, however, expands well beyond formal political features. First, the interest dimension represents potential gains from participation. Second, Tilly defines organization as the cohesion of community networks. And third is opportunity, defined as the likelihood of repression, and the vulnerability of the state. Two of these dimensions roughly correspond to Eisinger's broader theoretical position. Interest resembles grievance, and opportunity serves as a much broader take on Eisinger's political opportunity measures. The third dimension, organization, reestablishes Lipsky's resources as a central feature of social movement theory. Tilly's opportunity structure theory thus recast the preceding theoretical strains of grievance, political opportunity structure, and movement resources.

In broadening the concept of political opportunity structure, Tilly also introduced a novel statist element to protest studies. Lipsky's state was capable of repression. Eisinger's state comprised of formal institutional elements. Now, in the alternative formulation, the state became a complex actor as well as a set of political institutions. In fact, Tilly (1976) conceptualizes collective action of all kinds as a push and pull between the state and its constituents. The author takes a historical view to describe the rise of the modern nation-state as a narrative of political conflict. For Tilly, "reactive forms" of action, such as revolution or civil wars declined when the modern state won a battle for resources and control. With a monopoly of force established, early states in Middle-Ages Europe no longer feared existential challenges from rival groups. Any potential challenges had, by that time, lost the organizational power to mobilize territory, arms or popular allegiance. However, the tension between state and constituents did not disappear with reactive forms of collective action. Proactive forms of dissent, protest and strikes, continued to occur in

modern states. Indeed, according to Tilly, the "social movement" as understood in the U.S. and Western Europe co-evolved with relatively stable popular democracies (1976). In such contexts, organization and interest often align to produce collective action. And at the same time, such opportunity in advanced democracies is open enough to prevent repression. Tilly's three elements configure to produce a continued push and pull in which the state is an active participant; protest is the manifestation of an ongoing struggle to establish the boundaries of control between ruler and ruled.

Like Eisinger, Tilly's work clearly identifies potential structural determinants of protest events. An exploration of protest onset in Russia, or in any geographical context, would benefit from the author's theoretical work. Efforts to operationalize the rich framework outlined in *From Mobilization to Revolution* would need to include elements of interest, organization, and opportunity, as well as proactive state capacity. It is clear the theoretical position is much broader than Eisinger's. Unfortunately, subsequent authors have reduced the three elements to a shallow version of Eisinger's theory. For example, in their widely cited paper on civil war onset, Fearon and Laitin join the two authors in parenthetical citation (2003). They write that "rebellion is better explained by "opportunity" than by grievance (cf. Eisinger 1973 and Tilly 1978)." In casting the two studies as counter to grievance this interpretation loses much of the richness inherent in both Eisinger and Tilly's work. Instead, political opportunity structure appears as a stand-in for any explanation obscuring contentious actors themselves.

The final piece of the modern theoretical triad appeared as focus shifted back to actors. In the late 1970s Lipsky's resources approach made a comeback under the title of resource mobilization theory. The shift started with Mancur Olson's (1965) application of marginal utility theory to socio-political contexts. This work produced the collective action problem, a situation in which a group would benefit from cooperation, but the rational outcome of cost-benefit analysis leads any one person to refrain from acting. In the classic prisoner's dilemma, communication restrictions prevent former accomplices from achieving their optimal outcome. In the game, the

two individuals face a simple payoff matrix. If both cooperate with the police both receive a moderate sentence. If only one cooperates, the silent partner receives a very harsh sentence. However, if both remain silent, the authorities will lack evidence to convict either one. In order to avoid the harsh punishment, with no method of assuring cooperation, the rational outcome is an undesirable equilibrium; rational individuals will not bear the cost of working towards a collective good. Would-be protestors, rebels, and revolutionaries face variants of this game. Collective action events only emerge when the “rebel’s dilemma” (Lichbach 1994) is solved. According to this position, analytical frames must focus attention on mobilization challenges and group dynamics. Focusing on other factors, like political opportunity structures, or individual grievances, is misguided.

Working in the area of protest studies, John McCarthy and Mayer Zald produced a theoretical solution to the collective action problem—and in so doing provided an enduring tool for structural applications. In a journal article McCarthy and Zald (1977a) published the touchstone piece, and provided the title, for resource mobilization theory. The two authors focus analysis on resources available to collective actors in advanced industrial societies. Only armed with sufficient resources could individuals solve the collective action problem and engage in protest or other group action. Under this framework personal wealth and free time, professional training and external financial support, allow passionate citizens to create professional movement associations. These movement entrepreneurs create associations to alter potential recruits’ cost-benefit processes. A resource base and mass communication networks allow participants to avoid costs associated with mobilization, and increase the chances that others will join the cause. Here the entrepreneur does not necessarily suffer from grievances, and might even have deliberately created the appearance of grievance. Here the entrepreneur’s resources hold analytical priority over any political opportunity structure.

McCarthy and Zald’s framework operates in opposition to political opportunity and grievance theories. Social mobilization was a self-conscious departure from the erstwhile “main

tradition in social movement analysis” (1977: 1213). According to the authors, grievances are ubiquitous. Formation of social movement associations, and by extension likelihood of protest events, are a function of the absolute amount of resources available; as funds are available for entrepreneurs, as communication networks facilitate recruitment and organization, these groups will form (1977). The authors explicitly aim their attack at work in the grievance tradition. McCarthy and Zald’s critique would apply as well to political opportunity structure positions, however. This analytical lens obscures the political structure facing a group as well as grievances. Resource mobilization sees emergence result from the tasks of transforming the population into adherents and adherents into constituents. In other words, McCarthy and Zald argue that resources are the *sine qua non* for social movements: “only if survival is guaranteed can other goals be pursued” (1977: 45). Like preceding work in Social Movement Theory, McCarthy and Zald’s work offers suggestion for identifying contextual protest onset. A structuralist working with resource mobilization theory would focus on elements of social movement organizations (SMOs), resource streams, and informational connections between constituents.

Returning to a recurring theme, McCarthy and Zald include a broader version of their position; returning to a recurring theme, even the broader articulation ignores Tilly’s insights vis-à-vis state capacity. The foundational resource mobilization articulation includes reference to statist elements. McCarthy and Zald mention that social movements’ ability to mobilize is contingent on state responses. Any organization’s potential for mobilization “is also affected by authorities and the delegated agents of social control” (1977: 56). This is to say, mobilization is contingent upon actions of police or government surveillance organizations. The authors describe repressive measures dampening population motivation through the demonstration effect. As the state as actor punishes protestors, cost-benefit calculations change, despite the best efforts of movement entrepreneurs. Thus, much like political opportunity theory, and grievance theory, resource mobilization indicates the importance of a confluence of factors. And, most importantly, like the previous two frameworks, it fails to account for the state as more than repressive force.

More recent work on protest has explicitly established the three strains of theory as parallel explanations, as the core of comprehensive empirical work. Here the triad appears for the third time. One strain of literature published since the early 1980s falls into what is referred to as the “political process model.” Douglas McAdams introduced this label in his *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970* (1982). The author lauded the progressive, but in his view incomplete, turn towards resource mobilization. His attempt to offer a more satisfying theoretical account joined the major streams of Social Movement Studies. For McAdam, “movements develop in response to an ongoing process of interaction between movement groups and the large socio-political environment” (1982: 40). McAdam elucidated his theory with the case of African American civil rights activism. Civil rights movements only emerged when external circumstances provided sufficient openness to allow mobilization. Favorable changes in policy and the political environment, including the collapse of the cotton economy in the South, African American migration to Northern cities, and a decline in the number of lynchings, for example, lowered the costs and dangers of organizing for African Americans and increased their political value as an electoral constituency. Secondly, the movement thrived with increases in indigenous organizational strength, increases in communication networks and financial and human resources. Here political opportunity structure and resource mobilization appear in tandem.

McAdam rounded out his account of mobilization with a third insufficient but necessary element: insurgent consciousness. This element, novel in Social Movement Studies, updated the concept of grievance. Insurgent consciousness activated through the process of “cognitive liberation,” the belief that a set of circumstances are “unjust and subject to change through group action” (1982: 51). In the case of the American civil rights movement, visible events led to liberation. For example, the landmark case, *Brown v. Board of Education*, which declared de jure racial segregation in public schools unconstitutional, brought widespread attention to the issue. The court decision triggered subjective grievance, while simultaneously triggered collective attribution, the recognition that one’s grievance is widely held. McAdam’s description of insurgent

consciousness connected to constructivist theories of framing. Constructivists emphasized the indeterminacy of material conditions because individuals "often misunderstand or experience considerable doubt or confusion about what it is that is going on and why" (Snow and Bedford 1988, 212). Scholars used frames to describe the processes through which people define and experience material conditions. Under this theory re-framing social movement context could influence protest onset potential as much, or more than, shifts in material conditions. While McCarthy and Zald were correct to establish the insufficiency of objective grievances, McAdam argued that this subjective variant deserved consideration, alongside the other theoretical elements.

The political process model represents the culmination of major preceding work. McAdam's work united the three main contemporary streams of Social Movement Studies. Similar to Tilly's conceptualization, McAdam brought together political opportunities and organizational strength. Also following Tilly, McAdam's concept of opportunity expanded well beyond Eisinger's formal politics. McAdam's opportunity includes statist elements of repression. The third element, subjective grievance formation, reintroduced Gurr's concept in a new light.

This complex, position moves away from competing independent variables, towards a multi-dimensional understanding of structural conditions leading to protest or other contentious political events. Despite its considerable lack of parsimony, the complex model has endured. McAdam's synthesis places in the foreground the conjuncture mentioned as an aside in earlier work. Eisinger, in his political opportunity theorizing, and McCarthy and Zald, in their resource mobilization theorizing, briefly mention the importance of a complex, or conjunctural, understanding of protest drivers. As I shall discuss below, the complex position has become the core of social movement theory.

State of the Field

The political process model is recognized as the modern state of the field in Social Movement Studies. As such, it offers an exhaustive set of theoretical tools for structural work—exhaustive within narrow disciplinary guidelines. This set is, unfortunately, incomplete. Tilly's innovative statist approach, comprising of reactive and proactive elements, appears in a very weak articulation. As I will argue in the following section, Gurr's willingness to reach across disciplinary boundaries offers a clear solution.

Today the political process model holds pride of place in social movement studies. The privileged position of McAdam's synthetic framework is clear from comprehensive summaries of the field, and from critiques. For example, the *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*, edited by Neal Caren, includes a section on social movements. The section's author, George Ritzer, labels political process theory the "standard explanation" for social movement formation and protest onset (2012: 3). Ritzer describes political process as incorporating three foundational elements: opportunities, resource mobilization, and framing (of grievances). David Meyer (2004) came to a similar conclusion in his field review for the *Annual Review of Sociology*. Meyer writes that work that explores the interaction of a social movement with its context has accumulated within the "political process" tradition (2004: 125). McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald (1996) tried to unite the main strands with their collection *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements*. The book is divided into four sections, one section each for the triad of opportunities, mobilization resources, and subjective framing, and a fourth section arguing for synthesis. State capacity is conspicuous in its absence.

Analysts of the field agree on the three core theories—see social movement reviews in recent handbooks of political science (Ishiyama and Breuning 2010) and comparative politics (Boix and Stokes 2009). However, some analysts reject the move towards synthesis. In a recent book-length review of Social Movement Studies, Karl-Dieter Opp (2009) prefers positing a competition between political opportunity structure and grievance and resource mobilization

theories. So where do structural scholars stand today, given the current state of the field? How do scholars leverage the resources provided by major theoretical contributions to social movement studies?

Theoretical tools identified in the above literature review offer clear guidelines for structural work. Scholars often attempt to create observable indicators of the three leading theories: political opportunity structure, resource mobilization, and grievance. Equipped with variables they proceed to test hypotheses using statistical analysis. Scholars have continued Eisinger's attempt to test political opportunity theory. Protest scholars studying formal political opportunity structure variables established a connection between protest onset and partisan party structure (Arce and Mangonnet 2013), voting patterns (MiKyoung Kim Park 1997; Machado, Scartascini, and Tommasi 2011), and level of electoral competitiveness (Lankina and Voznaya 2015). A third group of scholars has explored the connection between the active and institutional state. They argue that sham elections serve as a political opportunity opening, increasing the likelihood of protest (Tucker 2007; Robertson 2010; Bunce and Wolchik 2011). In the grievance tradition, Walton and Ragin (1990) established a link between austerity measures and political protest in 65 countries. Other structural work in the tradition explores the economic inequality and political conflict nexus. Protest and political conflict scholars who cast grievance as within-country report mixed results (Lichbach 1994). Moving away from simple measures of inequality, however, others have established a connection between "horizontal inequalities," the overlap of inequalities and other group characteristics, and violent and nonviolent political conflict (Goldstone et al. 2010; Buhaug, Cederman, and Gleditsch 2014). Moving to the third element, scholars have evaluated hypotheses linked to resource mobilization theory. Studies have explored the link between political unrest and demographic growth and urbanization (Urdal 2006; Wallace and Weiss 2013), and the spread of information communication technology (Meier, 2007). Work on diffusion also falls under the mobilization tradition, as scholars have traced regional and

international spread of protest (Beissinger, 2002) and violent political conflict (Gleditsch and Ward, 2006).

Thus, over half a century of theoretical work has provided structuralist scholars with ample theories to test the methodological position. Numerous studies have evaluated the core structuralist wager, that contextual factors can systematically shape protest onset potential. Through their work, scholars have made progress towards defining the contours of the relationship. Concepts pioneered by Eisinger, Tilly, McCarthy and Zald, and McAdams today appear in quantitative form, as independent variables in statistical studies. Scholars have realized Lipsky's hope that protest would be studied systematically, under the organizational guidance of theory. Unfortunately, the theoretical resources provide only incomplete guidance to structuralist explorations of protest onset.

Not In Circumstances They Choose

The current state of affairs in protest studies suffers from two problems, one procedural and one theoretical. First structural scholars have failed to adequately test the political process model, the leading strain of social movement theory. And secondly, the leading theory is itself flawed. Recent consensus on the elements of political process has failed to adequately represent the statist position, originated by Tilly, that the state as an actor shapes protest potential.

For these two reasons structural studies fail to adequately analyze social movements and contexts in which they are embedded. Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte claimed dictatorial rule of France through a coup in 1851. Karl Marx was appalled to see a man he deemed a "grotesque mediocrity" play the role of national hero. Members of society, from the landed to the indentured, united to support military rule, in contradiction with their class interests. According to Marx, fear of bloodshed lay at the root of this puzzling turn of events, puzzling from the perspective of Marxian revolutionary theory. Events from this 18th *Brumaire of Louis Napoleon* have become a common allegory for the agent-structure dilemma in political science (Katzenstein 1977; Ruggie 1998).

Modern-day scholars often make use of the famous observation that, “men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already” (1869: 10). A take on this quote opens David Meyer’s assessment of the political process model. Meyer’s coyly writes: “social protest movements make history, one might paraphrase an earlier analyst, albeit not in circumstances they choose” (2004: 125). What structuralist scholars of protest onset must do, then, is sketch the contours of these circumstances. Only by expanding hypothesis testing, and expanding the theoretical base can scholars accurately capture effects of structure.

Structuralist studies have failed to adequately test the political process model. As recent overviews of Social Movement Studies demonstrate, as mentioned above, the consensus view of the field includes political opportunity structure, resource mobilization, and subjective grievances. Scholars do not agree on whether the triad operates as three necessary but insufficient causal factors, or three competing explanations. From either stand point, however, it is unjustifiable to restrict testing to one or two elements of the accepted wisdom. A fair test of structural conditions of protest onset, a test that adequately leverages the extant stock of theoretical tools, must evaluate all three. Of all structural studies of protest, which tend to employ quantitative methods, only two studies evaluate the complete triad. Kurt Schock (1996) produced a test of a “conjectural model” of protest and political violence onset. Schock explored the interaction effects between political opportunity, operationalized as state repressive tendencies, grievances, operationalized as economic inequality, and mobilization capacity, operationalized as ethnic community ties. The author reported that inequality increases the likelihood of conflict, especially in open political structures. And more recently, Erica Chenoweth and Jay Ulfelder (2015a) evaluate all three elements, arranging them as competing explanations. Chenoweth and Ulfelder determine that none of the factors effectively predicts the onset of maximalist non-violent protest movements. Other than these two studies, structuralist scholars have failed to give the political process model its due.

A second, more serious problem is that the current state of the field has incompletely incorporated Tilly's statist elements. This problem is more difficult to overcome because it fundamentally restricts the shape of scholarly inquiry. Or in other words, the set of theoretical tools available to the structuralist and the "context" are not co-terminus. Academic research is the product of a chain of steps. Scholars form theoretical models of the phenomenon of interest. Scholars operationalize their models as concepts turn to observable data points. Then scholars test theories. In the final step scholars turn back and amend their theories on the basis of findings. A flaw in the early part of the chain will negatively affect all future work. Existing statist elements appear under the political opportunity structure heading. The field has moved towards a consensus definition in response to critiques that "political opportunity threatens to become an all-encompassing fudge factor for all conditions and circumstances that form the context for collective action" (Gamson and Meyer 1996, 281), or that "opportunity is seldom defined" (Koopmans 1999, 96). Scholars often rely on dimensionality to order complex concepts. In his overview, McAdam identified the constituent elements of political opportunity structure, across numerous articulations. McAdam identified a list of four dimensions. First is relative openness of formal political institutions. Second is the stability of elite alignments within a polity. Third is the presence of allies, among elected officials and among civil society groups. And fourth and finally, state capacity and propensity for repression. The problem is that only the fourth dimension describes the state as actor.

Since Tilly's (1976,1978) path-breaking work the state as actor has done more than repress. After the formation of modern nation states in Europe the process of state-making did not end. Recall, under Tilly's theory, reactive forms of political expression like protest are actions that determine the boundaries of state control. And the state is an active participant in reactive political expression, through repressive action or ameliorative responses to protestor demands. Ameliorative responses would capture changes across political, economic, educational or health policy realms. Tilly's fellow statist theorists Charles Bright and Susan Harding eloquently

summarized the position: “statemaking does not end once stately institutions emerge, but is continuous...contentious politics both define the state vis-à-vis other social and economic institutions and continually remake the state itself” (1984, 12). Repression is a single part of the state’s repertoire. Repression is a single facet of the ongoing exchange between ruler and ruled that continuously constitutes the state. Responses from the state condition the likelihood of future contentious political events.

Thus, the consensus view of political opportunity structure described by McAdam (1996), that the state-as-actor only acts through repression, is incomplete. Structuralist scholars hoping to evaluate the ways in which the state conditions protest onset cannot rely on the tools provided by Social Movement Studies. Instead, they need to operationalize the full range of state responses; they must place the full range of responses within a clearly organized framework. Lipsky valued theoretical frameworks as means to “assist in ordering data” in the 1960s. Theoretical frameworks are just as important today. A need for order and clarity is especially clear for such a sprawling conceptual domain as state action.

Three of the major social movement theorists offer a possible way forward. In their 2001 book *Dynamics of Contention*, Douglas McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly introduced the umbrella category of contentious politics to highlight similarities between distinct phenomena including revolutions, protests, strikes, and ethnic and non-ethnic civil wars. The authors hoped to pool theoretical resources across the boundaries of sub-fields. The authors called for a focus on recurring mechanisms—such as social mobilization, identity shifts, and accreditation/de-accreditation of political entrepreneurs—across the various forms of contention. The vision of academic work outlined in the book concerns the dynamic unfolding and outcomes of contention. However, as Eisinger demonstrated by connecting to Gurr and revolutionary studies, theoretical cross-pollination is equally effective for structural studies of event onset. Following McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly, following Eisinger’s older example, I will reach outside of Social Movement Studies for theoretical resources. I will turn to civil war studies and the Copenhagen School of

international relations to craft a comprehensive structural theory of protest onset. These two areas of study features a concept of state capacity that is much more robust than the variant featured in the modern political process model.

State Capacity Theory

Compared with other disciplines, Social Movement Studies' treatment of state capacity appears thin, simplistic even. The concept of state capacity entered international relations and comparative politics through two related sub-disciplines. In the decades following the Cold War, international relations scholars were forced to focus on a "new" type of conflict: civil war. Since the 1950s and 1960s the accumulation of protracted wars and the eruption of additional conflicts greatly increased the total number of active civil wars (Fearon and Laitin 2003). According to one widespread designation, post-Cold War civil wars were qualitatively "new." They were criminal rather than military, ethnic and religious rather than secular (Kaldor 2007). As the threat of interstate war and nuclear annihilation appeared to fade, pundits predicted a "coming anarchy" (Kaplan 1994). In the anarchic scenario collapsing states gave rise to international security threats. Poor countries in Africa and elsewhere no longer represented a site of superpower competition. Angola, Cambodia, Mozambique, Uganda, and other countries now represented areas of concern in their own right, as breeding grounds for military and epidemiological threats. As the international community began to intervene in intra-state conflicts scholars initiated the discipline of peace-building and state-building studies. Both groups of scholars, those exploring the onset of conflict, and those studying the reconciliation phase, place state capacity at the center of their theoretical models.

State capacity and the study of civil wars entered the discipline of international relations simultaneously. And much like protest studies in the tumultuous post-war decades, the shift followed historical developments. Since Kenneth Waltz's 1952 *The Man the State and War*, international relations theorists had organized their discipline around the study of war. In the mid-1990s Kalevi Holsti led a reassessment of the field. Holsti hoped to maintain focus on war, which

would remain, for him, the “central problem of international relations” (1996, 19). However, he argued that changes in the frequency of conflict forced analysis to the domestic level. Since 1945 over three quarters of wars broke out internally (Ibid.). Theories of international relations, to the extent that they were applicable to domestic events, could only place the causes of civil war at the international level. Holsti acknowledged that international phenomena of superpower competition, the flow of arms and the flow finances, shaped domestic conflict. The author argued that domestic institutional strength, domestic state-society relations, held causal primacy, however. So international-level theories such as realism and neo-realism should be supplemented with theories of the state.

Holsti produced just such a theory. In *The State, War and the State of War*, he introduced a robust theory of state capacity. State capacity is often conceptualized in material terms, such as military power or repressive power featured in Social Movement Studies. Holsti, alternative, defined state capacity in ideational terms. As he writes, “the critical dimension of state strength is *legitimacy*, which is an idea or feeling” (1996: 33). Legitimacy arises when constituent members of the state recognize the rightful nature of officials, and obey state commands not only out of fear, but also out of moral authority. Thus, state capacity becomes a measure of citizens' attitudes towards authority, whether they withhold or grant the 'right to rule' to those who act in the name of the state. This framework clearly goes well beyond the state as repressive force. Repression is not absent from Holsti's state capacity. Instead, it is one part of the complex set of state-society relations that establish legitimacy.

Holsti imported a nuanced understanding developed by statist theorists working in comparative politics. Through his work, Joel Migdal revitalized the theoretical treatment of the state in comparative politics. Working in the post-Cold War context, characterized by civil war and failed states, Migdal addressed the question: “why have so many third world countries been so ineffective in accomplishing what their leaders and others have expected of them?” (1988, 9). According to the author, the contemporary set of theoretical resources vis-à-vis the state

precluded effective exploration of the question. In short, as states themselves had deteriorated, so too deteriorated the utility of the ideal-typical state. Scholars could no longer effectively turn to the Weberian ideal of the state as holding a monopoly on the legitimate use of force. Since the end of World War II, the collection of 200 formal states produced such a range of outcomes that terms like failed, fragile, or collapsed state arose. As a replacement for the outdated ideal, Migdal provided a tri-part definition of the state. The first element is the familiar concept of repression appearing in the political process model: the state as a field of power marked by the use and threat of violence. The second element brings in Tilly's concept of a continuously redefined state, shaped by recurring transactions between ruler and ruled. Migdal's second element is transactional loyalty, achieved through contentious and conventional politics. The first two elements lead naturally to the third: the actual practices of state representatives and organizations. This is a dynamic framework that captures the state as actor and institution—thus incorporating insights of Reuschemeyer, Stevens and Skocpol (1985) and Tilly's application in social movement theory. The framework was created intentionally to be as broadly applicable as possible. Analysts could describe and compare the capacity of advanced industrial states or so-called failed states using a single conceptual vocabulary.

Structural scholars studying civil war onset have applied this robust theory of state capacity, offering a way forward for Social Movement Studies. Fearon and Laitin's (2003) model of insurgency—mentioned above—serves as the touchstone example. The authors famously claimed that “not cultural differences and ethnic grievances, but rather the conditions that favor insurgency” (2003: 17) determine the onset of civil war. The authors conceptualized the structural conditions as the state's ability to patrol and control territory, and the state's ability to discourage recruitment. Since Fearon and Laitin's foundational piece, numerous studies have posited more accurate measures of state capacity; numerous scholars have attempted to improve upon Fearon and Laitin's application of state capacity, producing variants that resemble Holsti and Migdal's

framework more closely. I will discuss the operationalization techniques in depth in the following chapter. Here however, it is important to note the theoretical underpinnings.

The numerous, diverse approaches to state capacity developed since Fearon and Laitin's work can be organized neatly, multi-dimensionally. Fjelde and de Soysa (2009) introduced a typology that places various elements of state capacity within the dimensions of coercion, co-optation, and cooperation. These three dimensions nicely represent Holsti and Migdal's theories of state capacity. Coercive state capacity signifies, as usual, military and financial resources, and the state's ability to extend official presence throughout territory. The second dimension, cooptation, consists of the state's ability to strategically placate segments of the population through public expenditure. The author's final dimension, cooperation, represents the level of trust between the state and the populace. Civil war scholars have treated the state as a rich actor as well as a set of institutions.

Protest and the Idea of the State

Lipsky began the study of protest with a call to organize data in a broad, clear theoretical framework. Generations of scholars, working over decades, have followed his directive. The amount of data required to test the comprehensive framework is daunting, however. An effective structural study must operationalize all three components of the political process theory.

Even that is not enough. An effective study must operationalize all three state capacity components to create an integrated model. The actions of the state, which according to Tilly shape the likelihood of onset, appear in truncated form under the political protest model. An effective structural study of protest must, following Holsti and Migdal's' lead, reflect a rich understanding of state capacity—moving beyond repressive capacity. The triad of coercive, cooptational, and cooperative power is an essential part of any comprehensive theoretical framework of protest onset.

State capacity may even hold more explanatory power than rival explanations. Grievances build a reservoir of discontent that may drive people to the streets. Social mobilization capacity catalyzes discontent, while at the same time offering a channel through which movements gain momentum. Open political opportunity structures offer the space for protest movements to originate and grow. Each theoretical driver increases the likelihood that protests will occur. State capacity should dampen protest potential and interrupt causal chains. Local governments' coercive, cooptational, and cooperative capacity should, theoretically, snuff out protests before they begin. Grievances lose their catalytic aspect when states effectively ameliorate feelings of injustice; where social services address sources of anger, impetus for congregation fades; where citizens are cowed or satisfied, open political opportunity structures will remain devoid of dissident action.

Barry Buzan articulated this position, distinguishing weak states by "their high level of concern with domestically generated threats to the security of the government; in other words, weak states either do not have, or have failed to create, a domestic political and societal consensus" (1983: 64). Rather than the ability to win an external war, state capacity here coincides with socio-political cohesion. As state capacity strengthens, protest frequency falls—according to the theoretical position. Buzan argued that a complex idea of the state determined strength. I will utilize this formulation as an umbrella theoretical framework for protest onset. In the remaining chapters, Idea of the State signifies a broad framework including political opportunity structure, grievance, social mobilization capacity, and multi-dimensional capacity. Each polity holds a unique Idea of the State, where underlying elements produce frequent protests, the Idea is weak.

A synthesis of Social Movement Studies and state capacity work will allow me to explore what some describe as the unfathomable enigma of Russia (Zekulin 2009). In the next three chapters I will operationalize the idea of the modern Russian state in an attempt to establish a structural understanding of protest onset. The complexity inherent in the position will allow me to

contribute to several academic traditions. My work will encounter—and collide with— theories proposed in Social Movement Studies and state capacity studies. Perhaps most significantly, my work will suggest whether or not scholars of protest onset can unravel enigmas working from an abstract, structural level of analysis.

III - Operationalizing Core Concepts

Introduction

Good social science research requires both abstract concepts and precise observable variables. Without abstract concepts, researchers cannot formulate theories and testable hypotheses, cannot form general understandings of how the social world works. A social science discipline without concepts would lack cohesion. John Gerring, in a recent treatise on methodology, argued that political science, economics or sociology without abstract concepts “would be a series of disconnected facts and micro-theories” (2001, 38).

In order to proceed from theorizing to testing, researchers must bring their concepts from the realm of the abstract to the realm of the concrete. Noumenal and phenomenal, mental and sensual, ideal and empiric, each pair defines the two realms. Scholars use operational definitions to cross the boundary. An operationalization clearly defines an observed quantity and guides measurement. Theories and variables are thus co-constituted. Indeed, Gerring eloquently wrote that “large-order concepts comprise the scaffolding on which we hang observables” (Ibid. 38). The choice of how to make a concept operational, useable, is fraught with potential difficulty. Should conflict scholars move beyond military and economic capability to include measures of inter-subjective meaning and control (Barnett and Duvall 2005)? Should state capacity scholars move beyond coercion to measure elements of cooptation and cooperation (Fjelde and de Soysa, 2009)?

Across areas of study, the manner in which concepts are operationalized shapes findings. Critics have called attention to the tenuous link between concept and variable in integration in international relations (Hughes, 1971); the democratic peace (Gartzke 1998); democratization (Teorell 2010); revolutions (Goldstone 2001). When observable variables do not adequately reflect the conceptual scaffolding, even the most rigorous study will produce specious results and conclusions. This raises the concern of construct validity: “the degree to which inferences can legitimately be made from the operationalizations in a study to the theoretical constructs on which those operationalizations were based” (Trochim and Donnelly 2008, 137). This concern is not unique to social scientists. Biologists’ common practice of animal testing represents a potentially catastrophic problem of construct validity. Hypotheses derived from human beings are commonly tested using the decidedly non-analogous subjects of mice, rats or ferrets.

Commonly as well, natural science journals feature assessments of construct validity in the animal model (Cronbach and Meehl 1955; Willner 1984; Ellenbroek, Geyer, and Cools 1995; Nestler and Hyman 2010). Across disciplines, poor operationalization can lead to misleading findings. This chapter argues that protest scholars, and contentious politics scholars more broadly, fail to achieve construct validity. Decades of scholarly work features flawed operationalizations of major theoretical drivers: grievance, political opportunity structure, social mobilization, and state capacity each take underspecified forms, jeopardizing conclusions, blunting the impact of academic work. I will expose threats to construct validity before compiling superior alternative operationalizations.

Two canonical examples of construct validity—the cautionary tales encountered in research methods seminars—underscore the importance of operationalization. As Fordist production practices took hold in the United States, scholars turned their attention to productivity. Elton Mayo hypothesized that workers’ productivity, output per hour, depended on context rather than innate ability. Mayo selected lighting in order to operationalize the concept of working

conditions. He then proceeded to organize an experiment at an electricity factory in Hawthorn, a suburb of Chicago. A conditioned group worked under improved lighting, while a control group worked under usual lighting conditions. Mayo and his colleagues reported a positive correlation between illuminated environment and productivity. Encouraged by the results, Mayo and his colleagues repeated the experiment with changed working hours and rest breaks. Each time productivity increased vis-à-vis the control group. Upon completing the study, working conditions for all workers returned to pre-experiment levels. Surprisingly, the experiment group continued their productivity increases. It appeared that the physical changes were only indirectly responsible for increased production. Instead, the fact that “someone was actually concerned about the workplace” (Adair 1984, 337), motivated workers. Decades later, the Hawthorne effect has been immortalized, though perhaps not in the manner in which the authors of the 1925 study would have anticipated. The effect today signifies that workers who are aware of being observed worked harder, regardless of external environment, regardless of inherent ability.

Renowned biologist Stephen Jay Gould revealed a similar problem in his 1981 book *The Mismeasure of Man*, a discussion of early attempts to operationalize the concept of intelligence. Psychologists working in the early 20th century developed survey instruments, which included questions on current events. One question asked, “in which city do the Dodgers play.” Many Americans living in the 1920s would have correctly identified the city as Brooklyn. This was not the case for recent immigrants. Survey respondents included many Eastern Europeans, recently arrived in the country, lacking an understanding of local sports. Predictably, psychologists inferred that Eastern Europeans had lower intelligence. The intelligence survey creators, like Mayo, failed to capture their core concept in practice. Mayo’s attempt to evaluate physical work environment captured instead attention to environment. Gould’s surveyors only measured how long one had lived in the USA and become acculturated to a popular pastime. These errors in operationalization precluded effective testing of hypotheses; in both cases, scientists failed to

navigate the tenuous link between concept and observable variable, leading to faulty inference and specious conclusions.

Continuing from the preceding discussion, this chapter will operationalize core concepts relevant to protest onset in Russia. Scholars working in contentious politics have, fortunately, begun the work of operationalization. Progress in the field could not occur otherwise. Though useful, these studies also exhibit ample room for improvement in operationalization. Scholars have routinely failed to account for two threats to construct validity. First, contentious politics scholars have often underspecified the dimension captured in variables—for example, GDP per capita as a representation of state capacity in general (Hendrix 2010). And secondly, scholars studying structural causes of protest and violent conflict routinely place their state capacity measurement at the incorrect geographical level (Buhaug 2010). I will use extant quantitative work as a starting point in my attempt to traverse the “perilous span” (Hughes, 1971) connecting concepts and variables.

The Importance of the State

While operationalization is a building block in my study, forming new measures of state capacity is a stand-alone scholarly contribution. State capacity appears across a diverse range of work in political science. Since Evans and her colleagues famously “brought the state back in” to comparative politics and international relations in the 1980s, scholars have treated the concept as both independent and dependent variable. Because it is central to so much work, flaws in construct validity are similarly widespread. This section will motivate the search for new, better measures.

The state is central to political science by definition. Scholars working across the porous disciplinary boundaries connecting American political science, comparative politics, and international relations study the concept. Although politics is difficult to define (Magstadt 2015), two well-known authors provided useful attempts. Max Weber defined politics as the struggle for

power. In *Politics as Vocation*, he writes that politics is “the pursuit for a portion of power or for influencing the division of power whether it is between states, or between groups of people which the state encompasses.” The state enters this first definition as a holder of power—indeed as the sole holder of the legitimate use of violence—and a context in which the struggle occurs. Harold Lasswell alternatively defined politics as involving the state as distribution mechanism. For Lasswell politics was “who gets what, when and how” (1950). Working from either definition, political scientists of any sort cannot help but study the state. In the influential volume, *Bringing the State Back In*, Evans, Reuschemeyer, and Skocpol (1985) attempted to reshape the manner in which scholars approach the state. The authors argued that foregoing work failed to sufficiently account for the state as actor. They argued that, despite its central role in political science, the state appeared in studies as a passive set of institutions.

Whether or not Evans and her colleagues’ critique of the field was accurate (Burnstein 1987), the *Bringing the State Back In* moment serves a useful organizational function. Evans, Reuschemeyer, and Skocpol highlighted the centrality of the state across substantive issue areas. And they exhorted scholars of all sorts to add sophistication to the core concept. Their contribution demonstrates the widespread importance of state capacity as a concept. Furthermore, it implies that problems of construct validity would negatively affect a wide range of studies.

Scholars employing state capacity as a dependent variable clearly rely on effective operationalization of the core concept. Across sub-fields of state-building and post-conflict reconciliation, scholars attempt to elucidate processes through which state capacity develops. For example, some scholars study historical formation of early states, or rebuilding of modern less-developed countries. Charles Tilly (1975) describes the origin of the modern state in the pithy line, “the state made war and war made the state.” Tilly and other contributors to this bellicist tradition of state-building study the development of state capacity to extract taxes, military service, and loyalty through the war making process (Herbst 1989, 1990; Thies 2004). Another

set of scholars, neo-institutionalists, trace the relationship between economic change and state capacity. Focus shifts to the role of the state as an institutional solution to transactional and informational hurdles (North 1982). Others explore the stilted development of state capacity where neither war-making, nor efficiency incentives work to produce a strong state, in environments characterized by informal control structures (Migdal 1998; Reno 2000). Still another strain of work focuses on the sociological drivers of state capacity, to include identity-formation and myth creation (Anderson 1974; Geertz 1981; Ruggie 1993).

A second body of literature explores forward linkages of state capacity, treating state capacity as an independent variable. As I will discuss in detail below, civil war studies, protest studies, and other components of contentious politics commonly explore the effects of state capacity. This strain of work traces the relationship between fluctuations in state capacity and corresponding fluctuations in the onset of conflict (Collier and Hoeffler 1998; Fearon and Laitin 2003; Hendrix 2010), the duration of conflict (Collier, Hoeffler, and Söderbom 2004; Buhaug, Gates, and Lujala 2009), the intensity of conflict (Benson and Kugler 1998; Lacina 2006) and the outcome of conflict (Rouen and Sobek 2004; Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan 2009). Others trace the connections between state capacity and economic development (Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson 2001; Rodrik 2003, 2009), a debate with fraught policy implications in the wake of the international debt crisis (Blyth 2015).

Across a vast swath of academic work scholars rely on the concept of state capacity. They must all traverse the perilous span between concepts and variables; they must operationalize conceptual elements of state capacity. Improving the construct validity of state capacity measures would, thus, mark progress for diverse research traditions.

Leveraging the experiences of others, their struggles and their successes, I build tangible representations of each element present in the Idea of the State framework. As discussed below, early attempts to move from concept to measurement generated threats to construct validity.

Scholars studying protest and contentious politics more broadly occasionally worked with overly general, observationally equivalent measures. Problems associated with GDP per capita serve as a warning: studies in which it appeared produced specious findings, faulty policy recommendations. My measures are more refined. As mentioned in Chapter 2, state capacity itself consists of three dimensions. I operationalize coercive capacity as crime rates. I use government spending directed towards social projects to operationalize cooptational capacity. And for the third dimension, cooperational capacity, I use electoral support for the ruling United Russia party.

My choices are not perfect. Data were unavailable for desired measures of coercion and cooperation. An ideal measure of coercive capacity would evaluate law enforcement's ability to achieve express goals. Crime rates reflect the general physical security environment, and capture the state's monopoly on the application of violence. Rates do not, however, control for official indifference. High crime would prevail in areas where law enforcement possesses capacity to coerce, but not the will. Furthermore, the crime rates measure poses a possible endogeneity problem: if authorities register protests as crimes, the measure would simultaneously capture both independent and dependent variables, jeopardizing causal inference. Fortunately, protests are not considered crimes in the Russian case (Rossstat, 2018). My measure of cooperational state capacity is similarly second best. Social survey data would represent an ideal, direct assessment of regime loyalty. Russian elections get at the phenomenon indirectly. They are notoriously corrupt. Still, I argue that vote fixing primarily exaggerates existing tendencies. High vote shares will appear where the populace supports Putin, even if figures are artificially increased. Take Chechnya for example. The region features an improbably high United Russia vote share, over 95% in 2007 and 2011. Despite the dubious figures, support for the ruling regime has been strong since Putin brutally put down an Islamic insurgency (Seddon 2018). Despite concerns, my choices do not suffer from major threats to construct validity—they are not ideal, but good enough given data restrictions.

I follow best practices in the field to operationalize the remaining three elements of the Idea of the State theoretical framework. Social mobilization capacity becomes concrete measures of total population and urban population percentage, as well as a measure of educational attainment. I use unemployment as a somewhat crude, but common, representation of grievance. And I rely on the Carnegie Institute's Openness Index to capture political opportunity structure, following Lankina and Voznaya's lead.

Though imperfect, chosen independent variables avoid what I consider the biggest threat to construct validity. Each operationalization avoids the all-too-common problem of geographical over-aggregation, or methodological nationalism, discussed in detail below; each is measured at the correct, subnational level. A close look at existing work, at the choices of scholars studying civil wars and protests, reveals the problem's scope and magnitude. Geographical abstraction, measurement at the incorrect level, produces a significant threat to construct validity, and thus, to causal inference. In order to preserve the value of academic inquiry, the field must carefully move from concepts to measurement.

And, as early studies of productivity and intelligence demonstrate, operational improvement is a critical component of knowledge generation. This overview should convey the room for cross-fertilization between my study of protest onset in Russia and a wide range of other studies. In the following two sections I shall demonstrate common problems in operationalization afflicting contentious politics work.

The Tenuous Link

To generate useful knowledge, scholars must construct observable variables that effectively capture their conceptual and theoretical frameworks. Studies situated within protest studies, contentious politics, state-building, and peace-building all require an operationalization of state capacity that meets construct validity standards. Otherwise, the inferences drawn from any of these studies will be faulty, the hypotheses will remain untested, and any conclusions will be

incorrect at best, misleading at worst. Over the preceding decades contentious politics scholars have encountered several threats to construct validity. Some threats have been identified and addressed; others have not been taken seriously enough. I will here discuss operationalization challenges appearing in structural contentious politics work. The study of Russian protest events fits directly into this research tradition. Critiques and measures of state capacity discussed below apply directly to contentious politics work. Contentious politics scholars have identified related problems of observational equivalence and over-aggregation. A third problem, however, inappropriate geographical specification, remains a major problem in the field. This discussion pertains to any work incorporating state capacity concepts, on either side of the regression equation.

In structural contentious politics studies early operationalizations of state capacity failed to adequately reflect the core concept. These studies have become touchstones in the field, despite their flaws. Civil war studies in the early 2000's established state capacity as a driver of conflict. These same studies established poor operationalization, variables failing basic construct validity tests, as a central feature of quantitative work. Structural scholars defined the so-called greed versus grievance debate. Funded by the World Bank, Collier and Hoeffler (1998, 2004) found that economic contexts—including overall level of development, GDP per capita—outperformed measures of grievances in large-n statistical studies of civil war onset. Collier and Hoeffler employed the theory of instrumental rationality to explain the correlation. For them, as economic development increased the benefits associated with non-rebellious activity increased. Individuals would, all else equal, earn a living and even obtain wealth legally, rather than risking punishment for taking part in violence. The catchy greed-grievance dichotomy drew other contributions. Writing shortly thereafter Fearon and Laitin (2003) argued that state context, state capacity, conditioned the likelihood of civil war onset, not economic context. Fearon and Laitin argued that GDP per capita is negatively related to the probability of civil war onset because it serves as a useful proxy for a state's capacity to project coercive force. States with greater levels

of material resources, they argue, can leverage military force to deter would-be insurgents, and to crush existing insurgents. A quick look at citation records underscores the influence of Fearon and Laitin's article. According to GoogleScholar, as of March 2017, the article has been cited over 6,200 times. This figure approaches the gold standard in social science citation. Seymour Martin Lipset's "Some Social Requisites of Democracy," published in the *American Political Science Review* in 1959, holds the distinction of most cited journal article. Lipset's place-holding article totals over 6700 citations. In their widely-cited contribution, Fearon and Laitin captured the concept of state capacity with the observable variable of GDP per capita. GDP is, of course, an estimate of the total value of goods and services produced by an economy. It seems a perilous span indeed that connects the concept of state capacity and the population weighted sum of private consumption, gross investment, government investment, government spending, and net trade balance.

The weakness of the GDP operationalization was visible from the beginning. It featured two related threats to construct validity: observational equivalence and over-aggregation. First, the operationalization facilitated multiple interpretations. Fearon and Laitin's central finding was not novel. Collier and Hoeffler had already published the negative correlation between overall economic development and civil war onset. Fearon and Laitin's interpretation of the finding was novel. Troublingly, the two disparate interpretations, the two causal stories, emerge from an identical evidence base. The theory of economic opportunity and the crude version of state capacity theory generate the same observable implication: as overall economic development rises, civil war rates declines. The argument that GDP per capita captures coercive capacities and the argument that GDP per capita captures economic capacity to compete for the labor of rebel recruits are equally plausible at first glance; the correlation could represent state success in coercing compliance just as easily as it could represent state success in purchasing compliance. The empirical evidence cannot serve to distinguish between two rival explanations, precluding productive debate.

The problem of observational equivalence can even lead to weak or misguided policy recommendations. Government and international organization groups attempting to reduce the onset of civil war have limited resources. These groups will have to carefully select an actionable strategy. Collier and Hoeffler's explanation implies a focus on job opportunities. Fearon and Laitin's would divert resources to government military command and control structures. But, again, the policy recommendations derive from an identical evidence base. Policy makers lack the confidence that either causal story is correct, and thus lack confidence that either policy will work. Worse still, the problem of observational equivalence can even jeopardize the integrity of social science. Evidence cannot distinguish between policy recommendations, and evidence cannot definitively rebut counter explanations. Operating in a vacuum of objectivity, policy makers or scholars are free to let ideological and political biases guide their conclusions. Mark Blyth levies such a claim at scholars who advocate for pro-austerity economic policies (2015).

Indeterminacy brought on by observational equivalence is the product of over-aggregation, the problematic practice of subsuming disparate elements into a whole. GDP per capita captures supporting evidence for disparate theoretical positions. Even a scholar restricting analysis to the state capacity explanation would find evidence for multiple competing explanations. The operationalization captured a crude, aggregated concept of state capacity. Employing GDP per capita transforms state capacity into an undifferentiated monolith. As discussed earlier, theorists recognize numerous interrelated but distinct dimensions or elements of state capacity. They have responded to Margaret Levi's call to disaggregate the state. She argued that "good analysis requires differentiating among the features of the state in order to assess their relative importance; the state becomes less than the sum of its parts" (2002: 34). My Idea of the State framework employs Fjelde and de Soysa's (2009) tri-part break down of coercion, cooptation and cooperation. Several other scholars, however, produce alternative dimensional categories. Hillel Soifer (2008) adapted Michael Mann's (1984) infrastructural power to develop dimensions of central state capabilities, the territorial reach of the state, and the

effects of the state on society. Cullen Hendrix (2010) presented dimensions of military capacity, bureaucratic administrative capacity, and the quality and coherence of political institutions. Hanson and Sigman (2013) preferred extractive capacity, coercive capacity, and administrative capacity. Despite their differing organizational categories, all of these authors agree that state capacity is best conceptualized as featuring dimensionality. That is to say, state capacity consists of sub-components that do not consistently covary, and that operate through distinct causal mechanisms. An increase in, say, coercive capacity does not imply a corresponding increase in cooptation or cooperation. And as their labels indicate, the three dimensions condition social cohesion through unique processes.

Fearon and Laitin's initial article, along with other studies, demonstrate the perils of eliding dimensionality in state capacity. The GDP per capita variable precluded the observation of differing mechanisms. Returning to the problem of observational equivalence, the operationalization blocked attempts to adjudicate between the options. For example, Cameron Thies demonstrated that either extractive capacity and military capacity, or a combination of the two, could explain the original findings of the greed-grievance literature. He argued that individual dimensions or combinations of dimensions could lie concealed within the crude indicators of GDP per capita (2010). A disaggregated operationalization of state capacity is the only way to expose the causal mechanism at play. The problem of over-aggregation appears likewise in the related strain of work that explores the link between regime type and conflict. The "murder in the middle" hypothesis (Fein 1995) posited that regimes falling in between the poles of autocracy and democracy experience highest rates of violence. Echoing the political opportunity structure theory in Social Movement Studies (Eisinger, 1973), the hypothesis sees conflict emerge from inadequate capacity for repression with insufficient ability to accommodate opposition through institutionalized channels. Scholars have operationalized the theory using regime type, reporting that semi-democratic regimes correlate with the highest risk of conflict (e.g., Mueller and Weede 1990; Reynal-Querol, 2014). Again, this over-aggregated operationalization obscures multiple

causal processes. Only equipped with more nuanced variables can scholars determine whether repressive capacity, representation, or another aspect of regime type drives the relationship (Hegre 2014).

Suffering from observational equivalence and over-aggregation, the original operationalization of state capacity was clearly problematic. GDP per capita has, nevertheless, become a mainstay in structural studies of state capacity since the early 2000's. As recently as 2014 Camber Warren could opine that the "operationalizations of state strength utilized in the quantitative literature on civil war have generally relied on measures of economic advancement, such as gross domestic product per capita, as proxies for state effectiveness" (2014, 115).

Since Fearon and Latin's foundational piece, numerous studies have posited more accurate measures of state capacity. The crude, problematic operationalization created an opening for future contributions. Dozens of alternatives offer tools for scholars hoping to overcome the problems of construct validity. Measures of state capacity include: anocratic regime type (Goldstone et al. 2010); extractive capacity, measured in terms of taxation rates, and the size of government, in terms of total spending, and type of spending (Bethke and Bussman 2011); tax/GDP ratio (instrumented by geographical features to control for endogeneity or reverse causality) (Hendrix 2011); total revenue/GDP ratio (Thies 2010); relative political capacity, or RPC, the ratio of actual tax revenue to expected tax revenue, estimated as a linear function of the structure, size, and social spending in the national economy (Buhaug 2006); strong revenue mobilization capacity coupled with low levels of corruption (Hughes et al. 2014); the share of money held in savings deposits and legal paper, rather than currency, as a measure of trust in institutions as credible guarantor of property rights and contracts (Fjelde and de Soysa 2009); economic freedom (de Soysa and Fjelde 2010); frequency of irregular leadership transition (Gleditsch and Ruggeri 2010); total welfare spending, and welfare spending as a percentage of GDP (Taydas and Peksen 2012); positive credit rating, and global liquidity (DiGiuseppe, Barry, and Frank 2012; Shea 2014); "soft" state capacity, or the presence of economies of scale in the

market place of ideas, measured by mass media penetration (Warren 2014); military capacity, measured through military personnel, military expenditures, and military expenditures per soldier, and administrative capacity, measured through a bureaucratic quality index (Hendrix and Young 2014); lack of economic autonomy, measured by the presence of IMF conditionality (Abouharb and Cingranelli 2007); exposure to the international economy (Flaten and de Soysa 2012). This lengthy, though far from exhaustive, list demonstrates that improving measures of state capacity has become a growth industry in political science. The popularity of state capacity variable development indicates that the field recognizes problems of observational equivalence and over-aggregation. The studies mentioned here span the breadth of contentious political studies. Scholars interested in civil wars, ethnic conflicts, and protest have all attempted to better translate state capacity from concept to observable variable. A separate threat to construct validity, and thus to causal inference, has received far less attention. Contributions to the field routinely ignore sub-national dynamics of contentious politics onset.

Methodological Nationalism

The second threat to construct validity in studies of state capacity is geographical. Contentious politics scholars routinely operationalize the concept of state capacity at the level of the nation-state. As others have pointed out, this wide-spread, seemingly innocuous aggregation technique can negatively affect the quality of causal inference. Andreas Wimmer and Nina Schiller identified problems associated with nation-state level data in the discipline of anthropology, and the narrow field of migration studies (2003). The authors use the term methodological nationalism to signify the assumption that the nation-state is the natural social and political form of the modern world. Working from this assumption, scholars would naturally construct their variables at the nation-state level, creating a corresponding “reduction of the analytical focus to the boundaries of the nation-state.” As migration scholars, Wimmer and Schiller were concerned with the loss of trans-border connections. The truncated analytical focus elides the trans-national. Or more importantly from the contentious politics perspective, elides the

sub-national. As studies have established, state capacity along these dimensions varies widely within countries (Buhaug, Cederman, and Gleditsch 2014). Theories of civil war, political violence or protest onset connect structural conditions of coercion, cooptation, and cooperation to onset potential at the sub-national level—to the region in which the event actually occurs, not the abstract aggregate level of the state. To the chagrin of anyone looking for progress in the “scientific study of civil wars” (Hegre and Sambanis, 2006), the problem was identified in several high-impact studies, and then largely ignored.

Methodological nationalism represents a serious threat to state capacity variables’ construct validity by way of ecological fallacy. The practice severely undermines the ability of observable variables to reflect corresponding concepts, and thus undermines inference, conclusions, and policy recommendations².

Quantitative contentious politics scholars’ inappropriate employment of a type of methodological nationalism creates an opening for more scholarly work. The mismatch between theory and methodology erodes the strength of inferences and conclusions drawn in this area of study. By explaining sub-national events with national-level indicators, scholars have, at best, poorly captured hypothesized explanatory mechanisms, and at worst, generated decades worth of specious findings. Positive findings in the field may provide the basis for misguided policy recommendations. Negative findings may prove to be incorrect. Indeed major findings have been. In the civil wars literature, one of the most robust positive statistical findings is a correlation between national levels of economic development and conflict. The World Bank spends aid money in accordance with Paul Collier’s ‘economics of civil war’ approach, which promotes

² An ecological fallacy occurs when conclusions about individuals or component parts derive from aggregate data (Trochim and Donnelly 2008). Imagine, that a particular high-school class reported the highest state-wide math scores. An observer, running into one of the high-schoolers on the street, would be mistaken to congratulate the student on his or her performance. The individual could be a dunce in a class full of math wizzes. Aggregation can conceal meaningful variation among the parts. This insight is simple but important.

economic growth as the cure for preventing civil wars (Collier, Hoeffler, and Rohner 2009). However, because the scholars ignore the sub-national level, it is possible that an omitted variable accounts for the relationship between overall development (GDP per capita) and domestic peace—say stronger local governments or stronger local employment prospects. Devoting resources to a national project would be a mistake if a third factor drives the statistical relationship; a rise in per capita GDP that obscures regional inequalities could, in fact, exacerbate grievances associated with relative deprivation. Another often-cited finding in quantitative civil war studies is that geographic features such as mountainous terrain facilitate conflict. What, though, if the conflicts do not occur near mountainous regions? By locating both independent and dependent variables at the national level, large-n, quantitative work on contentious politics has failed to adequately confront these scale problems. As discussed in depth below, one of the most robust negative findings in the civil wars literature has been debunked. Throughout the 2000's the greed-grievance dichotomy purported to prove the irrelevance of grievance on conflict, as measured by latent ethnic strife or vertical inequality. Numerous studies have reversed these findings, studies which shift focus away from the national level.

The remainder of this section will further outline the scale problem in structural studies of contentious politics. I will first discuss the problem in civil war studies. This strain of contentious politics is an unlikely site for a problem linked to variable operationalization. A long sequence of contributions has been rigorously self-reflective at the methodological level—even explicitly striving to create a “scientific field” of research (Hegre and Sambanis, 2006). By thoroughly tracing the prevalence of methodological nationalism in this high-profile area, I hope to underscore the threat to contentious politics of any sort. The persistence of methodological nationalism in civil war studies is particularly puzzling given the work of Halvard Buhaug and others, who identified the problem in the mid-2000's. The authors' most recent contribution demonstrates that the sub-national movement has not gone far enough, that leading scholarly

work is still operating under the assumption of methodological nationalism. In closing the discussion I identify the problem in the narrower field of protest studies.

At first glance, the quantitative study of civil wars is an impressive strain of political science research, approaching the orderly accumulation of knowledge demonstrated by the natural sciences. A chain of inquiry stretching back over four decades has produced knowledge, which has been challenged and refined as new contributions directly engage the old. Scholars employ cutting-edge statistical analysis tools. Conclusions have driven policy, as evidenced by the World Bank's connection to Collier's work. And the discourse has taken place across the pages of high impact journals including *American Political Science Review*, *International Organization*, *International Studies Quarterly*, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, and the *Journal of Peace Research* among others. For these reasons, scholars refer to "decades of scientific debate" (Buhaug, Cederman, and Gleditsch 2014) on the topic. Unfortunately a missed opportunity to adequately address the scale problem associated with methodological nationalism has marred the sub-field with weak inference and logical failings.

The counter-intuitive finding that grievances are irrelevant to the onset of civil war was derived from national-level statistics. As discussed in Chapter 2, Gurr introduced his relative deprivation theory in the 1970 *Why Do Men Rebel?* According to the theory, individuals become aggrieved when value expectations do not match value realities—a rethinking of Davie's (1962) J-curve hypothesis. Expectations are driven by visible experiences of other individuals, groups, countries, or past personal experiences. Quantitative support for relative deprivation includes findings based on inequality of income (Muller and Seligson 1987), or more recently immobile assets like land (Boix 2008); and based on socio-political access measures derived from the Minorities at Risk Project (Gurr and Moore 1997). However, since early literature on revolutions, mobilization capacity theorists (Tilly, 1978) and statist theorists (Skocpol, 1979) complained that aggrieved populations were ubiquitous, too common to hold explanatory purchase. Explaining conflict through individual or group grievances was to mimic the methodologist who, having

achieved a hangover with a water and whiskey and water and vodka started taking her drinks neat (Aya, 1979). In the early 2000's two landmark studies purportedly provided strong evidence for this over-prediction critique, winning the day for greed (or perhaps the similar state capacity position) against grievance.

Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler's (2004) *Greed Grievance and Civil War* gave the debate its enduring label. The authors found that proxies for grievance—inequality and political repression (captured by the Polity Index)—did not increase the likelihood of conflict in their sample. Ethnic diversity as a measure of latent identity-based grievance even reduced the likelihood of conflict, except in situations of “ethnic dominance,” in which one group comprised a large majority of society. Greed indicators on the other hand—overall economic development, growth rates, education levels, oil exports—explained significant variation in civil war onset. Fearon and Laitin (2003) offered additional support for the opportunity structure position, further bolstering the greed-grievance dichotomy. The authors demonstrated the statistical power of their state-capacity model in which police and counter-insurgency weakness is proxied by GDP per capita, and insurgent strength is proxied by mountainous terrain and large populations. A rival grievance-based model again failed to show a significant relationship between latent ethnic tension and inequality and civil war onset. Koubi and Böhmelt's recent *Journal of Peace Studies* article exemplifies the way in which the field has interpreted these two studies: “scholars interpret the non-finding as a confirmation that grievances are largely irrelevant for explaining civil war (Fearon and Laitin 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2004)” (2014: 21). However this conventional wisdom rested on weak inference. Other weaknesses in proxy variables aside, both groups of scholars ignored the potential scale problem underlying their work.

Scholars in the field attempted to bolster their findings against critique of inferential weakness, and in the process hoped to solidify their scientific credentials. In 2006 Harvard Hegre and Nicholas Sambanis conducted a sensitivity analysis of the correlates of civil war onset. A quote from Ed Leamer, UCLA economist and frequent critic of social sciences statistical work,

opens the piece: “a fragile inference is not worth taking seriously.” Results surviving Hegre and Sambanis’ testing would form a baseline of the conventional, accepted knowledge in the field. The ensuing set of correlates included large population, low per capita income, recent political instability, rough terrain and anocratic regime types—closely resembling the drivers identified by Fearon and Laitin and Collier and Hoeffler. The authors conclude with a sense of renewed confidence: “some of the empirical results in the civil war literature are fragile, but others are not, and they are worth taking seriously” (2006: 531). Unfortunately, this confidence was misplaced. The rigorous attempt to establish a “scientific field” should not have given warrant for findings to be taken seriously. An inference is a conclusion reached on the basis of evidence and reasoning. The statistical analysis did nothing to improve faulty reasoning and poor evidence. The dependent variables were country-year format, based on 1,000 or twenty five battle deaths. Of the more than eighty independent variable operationalizations, not one evaluated sub-regional effects.

The enduring weakness of Hegre and Sambanis’ findings emerged alongside challenges to the conventional wisdom. It is telling that these challenges emerged from scholars employing sub-national logic, logic that rejected methodological nationalism. In the late 2000’s and early 2010’s, studies overturned the purported irrelevance of both commonly-captured grievance factors: inequality and ethnic strife. In the process these studies brought the broader scale problem to the attention of the field.

In 2011 four researchers from the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) laid down the framework for the modern study of civil conflict. Siri Rustad, Halvard Buhaug, Ashild Falch, and Scott Gates argued that “all conflict is local.” The authors argued that contributors to civil war studies, “traditionally apply a rigid country-level approach whereby aggregate country data are used and any resulting conflict is assumed to affect the entire country” (2011: 20). A number of peripheral conflicts in the contemporary world illustrate the limit of such an assumption—conflicts located on isolated Philippine islands or in Nepali mountain valleys. Using Southeast Asia as

exemplar, the authors demonstrated that the estimated probability of observing intrastate armed conflict varies substantially not only between states, but within most states. In order to abandon methodological nationalism, the authors were forced to abandon national-level indicators. Thus, Rustad and her colleagues used provincial-level data on population, GDP (gross provincial product) per capita, infant mortality, and HDI scores from national Human Development Reports. Moving beyond crude national-level measures of ethnic population composition, the scholars used ArcGIS data to identify the dominant ethnic group in each sub-national region under study and calculated the share of the population in the region belonging to the largest ethnic group. With independent and dependent variables operationalized sub-nationally, results showed a political risk map that varied significantly within Nepal, the Philippines, and other Southeast Asian states. In addition to clearly stating the critical position, Rustad, Buhaug, Falch and Gates provide a ready-made plausibility probe for my study: the theoretical drivers of domestic conflict do vary dramatically below the national level.

Roughly contemporaneous work further challenged weak inference associated with the methodological nationalist position. Gudrun Østby's work has provided large-n statistical support for Frances Stewart's theory of horizontal inequality. Stewart (2002) argued that inequalities between culturally-formed groups can activate ethnic group boundaries, drawing evidence from case studies of Mexico's Chiapas region, Fiji, Uganda, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Northern Ireland, South Africa, Brazil, and the United States. Adding an identity-based element to Gurr's logic, Stewart argued that unequal access to political, economic or social resources by cultural groups can engender frustration because individual self-esteem is "bound up with the progress of the group." Østby generated a measure of polarization that captured this effect, for thirty six countries. She argued that a society that is split into two well-defined groups with substantial intragroup homogeneity and intergroup heterogeneity in resource ownership is particularly likely to experience social unrest—such a society would be marked by both strong group identification and sharp divisions between the groups. Her data include economic inequality measured by

asset ownership, and social inequality measured by educational attainment and by ethnic group. Although this initial study does not explicitly consider sub-national geography, the creation of horizontal inequality indicators moves away from methodological nationalism. Østby argues that ethnic cleavages that coincide with systematic socio-economic inequalities may enhance both collective grievances and group cohesion among the relatively deprived, among a specific group. Shifting analysis to the group level entails a move away from the national-level, away from a model of the state as a unified actor or billiard ball.

The sub-national turn gave scholars the tools to continue effectively challenging the prevailing wisdom vis-à-vis ethnic grievance and conflict. Working with Ragnhild Nordas and Jan Rød in 2009, Østby made the disaggregated nature of horizontal inequality work explicit. The authors now positioned their theory as a challenge to national-level measures of inequality such as Gini coefficient: “neglecting or failing to measure the spatial variations and group aspect of inequalities may produce tests that do not capture the essential group dynamics of civil conflicts” (2009: 309). Exploring sub-national regions in 22 Sub-Saharan African Countries, the authors leveraged Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) data to reveal risk factors. Conflict onset was more likely in regions characterized by absolute educational inequality, and horizontal inequality in household assets. By applying sub-national analysis to horizontal inequality theory, Østby and her colleagues’ work resembled S. Mansoor Murshed and Scott Gates’ 2005 work on the Maoist insurgency in Nepal. Murshed and Gates’ single country, large-n statistical study found that fatalities were highest in regions in which life expectancy, educational attainment, road density, and rates of land ownership diverged from national averages. Contradictory new findings accumulated as scholars realized that “all analysis thus far had been conducted at the country level whereas the causal mechanisms are located at the substate level” (Buhaug, Cederman, Rød 2008: 540).

Sub-national work challenged the irrelevance of the second form of grievance as well: socio-economic inequality. In 2009 the *Journal of Conflict Resolution* published a special issue

titled *Disaggregating Civil War*. The issue was a clear call to move beyond methodological nationalism. In their contribution, Hegre, Østby, and Clionadh Raleigh (2009) created sub-national models of the Liberian civil war. Drawing on a single year's worth of data from DHS the authors created a wealth index, comprised of durable goods ownership and educational attainment, measured by GIS grid squares. To disaggregate the dependent variable, the authors used conflict data from the ACLED event database, which includes precise geographic location information. In a complete reversal of Collier and Hoeffler (2004) and Fearon and Laitin's (2003) findings, the authors reveal a positive relationship between development and conflict: in the context of Liberia in 1986, conflict events are more frequent in locations that were absolutely and relatively well off. This finding is consistent with an interpretation of wealth representing target value, or the presence of a strong support base. Hegre and his colleagues then leveraged case study and ethnographic work to expose the causal mechanism at play. This qualitative analysis provided support for the target value interpretation. That a sub-national level study could reverse the so-called conventional wisdom exposes the serious weakness in Hegre and Sambanis' (2006) attempt to create inferences that deserved to be taken seriously.

In two articles, Buhaug worked with co-authors to broaden the attack on methodological nationalism in the civil wars literature. Moving beyond the greed-grievance debate, the scholars provided large-n tests of all sub-regional drivers of civil wars. In a 2006 article Buhaug and Rød attempted to move beyond the flaws associated with the "statistical study of civil war that uses country-level approximations of local phenomena" (2006: 320). Looking at African civil wars from 1970 through 2001, the authors find sub-regional correlates of conflict, which vary by conflict type. Specifically, territorial conflict was more likely in sparsely-populated regions near the state border, at a distance from the capital, featuring sparse road density, and lacking significant rough terrain. Conflict over state governance was more likely in regions that are densely populated, feature dense road networks, near diamond fields, and near the capital city. Later, in a 2011 article published in the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, "It's the Local Economy Stupid," Buhaug et

al. expanded the sub-national quantitative study of conflict to all countries captured in the PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset. The primary independent variable in the study is “gross cell product (GCP),” calculated by GIS, relying on economic production data tied to geographical coordinates. Whereas GDP per capita income provides a population-averaged per capita measure for the whole country, the GCP per capita values for individual local cells reflects spatial variation in income within a country. Unlike Hegre et al. (2009) who focused on Liberia only, Buhaug et al. (2011) found that conflict events were more likely to occur in absolutely and relatively less developed sub-national areas.

In their piece Buhaug and his colleagues provide a hint of what the field would look like if scholars took the problem of methodological nationalism seriously. Conducting sensitivity analysis of their model, they explicitly compare the predictive power associated with gross cell product per capita and gross domestic product per capita. The authors find that minimum GCP (a measures of a state’s poorest sub-region) provides a better predictor for whether states will see conflict than GDP per capita. This is exactly the type of sub-nationally sensitivity test that Hegre and Sambanis failed to consider in their attempt to create scientific consensus in the field.

Sub-national quantitative work on civil war clearly shows the weakness of the “state of the field” as described by Koubi and Böhmelt in 2014. It appears that it is, in fact, the local economy and other local factors that drive the onset of conflict. Indeed, the results of Buhaug et al.’s sub-national sensitivity analysis demonstrates that local drivers of civil war hold more explanatory power than national-level analogues—a finding that is only surprising in light of years of weak inference produced before the article. The push to align theory with methodology in the study of intra-state conflict exposed the weakness of the field’s current state of knowledge production. Unfortunately the insights of sub-national scholars have not become the new conventional wisdom.

Recent work by Buhaug, Cederman and Gleditsch suggests that the sub-national push has not gone far enough. Echoing their earlier work, the authors accuse quantitative civil wars scholars with “pushing square pegs through round holes,” (2014:420) by failing to adequately operationalize both the independent and dependent variables in the grievance-conflict nexus. Buhaug and his recent set of collaborators attempt to remedy these failings by employing group-level indicators associated with horizontal inequality. However, the authors now deem problematic the limited geographical scope of previous horizontal inequality work. They tout their work as “the first to propose global country-level measures of both economic and political horizontal inequality” (2014: 422). The work of Stewart, Østby, and others developed horizontal inequality measures as a corrective to national-level measures of grievances like the Ethnolinguistic Fractionalization Index and Gini coefficient. These scholars obtained valid operationalization of grievances while losing the generalizability associated with ubiquitous national-level data. Østby’s 2009 article is the broadest early work on horizontal inequalities, spanning 22 countries. So, by expanding the reach of the data, Buhaug, Cederman, and Gleditsch are broadening the reach of the more accurate operationalization; they are reducing the generalizability cost of turning to more accurate quantitative measures.

However, a closer look at the study suggests that the move back to the national, generalizable level occurred too soon. The improvements to inference that have occurred for grievance have not occurred for other potential drivers of civil war. For example, in Buhaug, Cederman, and Gleditsch’s recent article, the opportunity structure or state capacity position is represented by crude national-level indicators: level of democracy, GDP per capita, and total population. Only one of the potential drivers of civil war is captured at the sub-national level. Related concerns of generalizability and data availability explain the enduring mismatch between sub-national theoretical mechanisms and national-level variable operationalization. The authors betray the importance of data availability, a decidedly non-theoretical problem, with a strange caveat. Discussing statistical and forecasting models, they claim that “available input data on core

features such as economic development, democratization, and demographic changes almost exclusively pertain to countries” (2014: 423). Economic development and demographics clearly vary sub-nationally, as does level of democracy in anocratic countries, including Russia (Lankina and Voznaya 2015). So, such input data do not exclusively pertain to countries. What may pertain exclusively to countries exclusively is *available* input data. It appears that even the pioneers of the sub-national turn in civil wars are still pushing square pegs through round holes. Despite the sub-national turn in the 2000’s, the problem of methodological nationalism still mars the quantitative sub-field. And in fact, this is a problem that much quantitative work in the broader contentious politics field shares.

The preceding discussion introduced the problem of methodological nationalism with examples from civil war studies, the most voluminous, most widely cited branch of contentious politics. The problem similarly afflicts quantitative studies that focus exclusively on protest onset. Eisinger launched the quantitative study of protest. Since his foundational work in the 1970’s, however, such studies have been relatively rare, until the turn of the century. Patrick Meier (2007) explored the relationship between information communication technology (ICT) and protest onset, defining independent and dependent variables at the national level. Patrick Regan and Daniel Norton (2004) compared the conditions leading to three types of contentious politics onset, protest, rebellion, and civil war, with aggregated predictors drawn from grievance and social mobilization theories. In the same year, Benjamin Smith (2004) conducted a large-n, national-level study evaluating the relationship between oil wealth and protest events. Smith concluded that oil bust periods correlate with relatively high protest frequencies. Taehyun Nam (2007) worked at a more refined geographical level to study the relationship between political opportunity structure and protest onset. Nam focused on Western Europe, rather than the entire globe, but still operationalized variables at the national level. T.V. Maher and Lindsay Peterson (2008), and a year later Sabine Carey (2009), theorized political opportunity structure as repressive regime tendencies. Both studies employ methodological nationalism as they trace statistical relationships

between repression and protest onset. Felix Bethke and Margit Bussman (2011) consider government financial effects in a similar study of repression and protest. The authors restrict analysis exclusively to the national level. Finally, recent work defines grievance as food price spikes and then explore the forward linkages to social unrest. Cullen Hendrix and Haggard (2013) find significant relationships between price increases and increased frequencies of protests and riots. The study operationalize most, but not all, variables at the national level.

The problem of methodological nationalist is wide-spread. It erodes the construct validity of any study. And it must be corrected. By developing sub-national measures of state capacity for Russia, I shall make a contribution to structural studies of protest onset, and contentious politics more generally. The few quantitative studies of protest onset that do operate at the sub-national level do not comprehensively test structural drivers. Wilkinson (2004) evaluated the forward effects of politically motivated transfer rates, ethnic composition of police and federal administration, as well as corruption. He does not find a significant relationship between onset and any of his measures. Bohlken and Sergenti (2010) conducted a more recent study of social unrest in Indian federal states. The authors mimic the initial, invalid operationalization of GDP and report negative results. Gillezeau (2014) analyzed the relationship of federal spending at the state level and both the onset and severity of racially motivated protests in the United States. Recently, Arce and Mangonnet (2013) conducted a sub-national study of political opportunity structure and protest onset in Argentina. The state of the field, then, sees many quantitative scholars of protest onset either operating at an inappropriate level of analysis, or applying an incomplete set of theoretical drivers.

Organizing Operationalizations

The fraught history of quantitative contentious politics studies offers valuable lessons for scholars hoping to traverse the tenuous link between the concept of state capacity and operational variables. Effective work must avoid the short-comings of Fearon and Laitin's (2003) initial contribution. Operationalizations must take the dimensional characteristics of state capacity

seriously. Effective work must avoid the alarming problem of methodological nationalism rife in the field. Operationalizations must appear at the appropriate level—the sub-national level. For my exploration into the drivers of protest events, dimensionality is especially important. I will first outline the state of the art in terms of operationalization. After identifying the most prominent operationalizations and requisite data, I produce commensurate measures for the Russian case. Following the Idea of the State theory outlined in Chapter 2, state capacity consists of 3 dimensions: cooptation, coercion, and cooperation.

The first dimension of state capacity is coercion. State capacity to coerce increases as citizens fear government retaliation, as citizens are deterred from breaking laws. States with high coercive capacity are able to monitor, deter, and suppress dissent effectively. The Hobbesian concept of the Leviathan represents this first dimension. Here legitimacy is attained through the social contract of myth: individuals forgo some portion of their freedom in order to establish a power to overwhelm them all. The power then ensures peace and security. It is the coercive Leviathan that Fearon and Laitin (2003) argue deters rebel organizations, precluding the appearance of dual sovereignty (Tilly 1978). It is the Leviathan that increases the opportunity cost of joining dissident groups according to Collier and Hoeffler (1998). These conceptualizations recall Alexis de Tocqueville's famous claim that, the "sovereign should punish immediately any fault that he discovers, but he cannot flatter himself into supposing that he sees all the faults he should punish."

Scholars have operationalized coercive capacity along military and economic lines. The first, problematic, attempts to capture coercive capacity took the form of general levels of economic development, GDP per capita. Two groups of scholars used distinct approaches to refine the measure. The first group attempted to create more direct measures of military strength. For example, Herbst (1989) and Lacina (2006) compiled military expenditures and military personnel figures in their work. The second group turned to extractive capacity as an alternative. The government's capacity to extract resources from society is a less ambiguous proxy for

institutional reach and, in turn, the capacity of the state to credibly threaten and coerce: “governments rely on revenue to invest in the military, police, and bureaucratic apparatus, which in turn allow them to accumulate power for further penetration and extension of state rule” (Levi, 1988). For this reason Hendrix (2010) described tax capacity as the “sine qua non of state capacity.” The simplest formation of extractive capacity is tax take, measured in absolute or relative terms. As a more complex alternative, over three decades ago, in 1980, A.F. Organski and Jacek Kugler introduced relative political capacity. Organski and Kugler’s measure compares the actual level of tax revenue extraction to an expected level of extraction, given the state’s economic and natural endowments. This formulation controls for advantageous or disadvantageous circumstances. For example, a state rich in oil, or endowed with a wealthy population, would be expected to extract more taxes than a relatively poor counterpart. My sub-national focus precludes the use of military spending. Police competence, on the other hand, varies across federal subjects. I collect data on local crime rates as a proxy for state coercive capacity. As an alternative operationalization, I follow Organski and Kugler and compute a measure of extractive capacity for each Russian subject region.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, a comprehensive statistical model must include the three major strains of Social Movement Studies. The first strain, social mobilization theory, offers a counterbalance to coercive capacity. Armed with resources and propitious environments, activist populations will resist the iron fist of law and order. Across quantitative contentious politics work, scholars have employed a variety of operationalizations. A long—though not exhaustive—list would include: presence of professional movement organizations (McCarthy and Zald 1977b); emancipatory values (Welzel 2013); membership in network-building associations (Norris 2002; McClurg 2006; Kaplan, 2013); educational attainment and transportation infrastructure (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995; Inglehart and Catterberg 2002); access to information communication technology (ICT) (Meier 2007; Earl 2013), especially in light of the Arab Spring revolutions (Chung and Cho 2013; Jansen 2010); urbanization rates and a

demographic “youth bulge” (Goldstone, 2001b); existing protest networks, as measured by history of protests or strikes (Chenoweth and Ulfelder 2015b); demonstration effects, measured by high levels of contentious politics onset in neighboring regions (Gleditsch and Ward 2006). Data availability dictates my selection of social mobilization capacity measures. Of the operationalizations produced across contentious politics studies, I was able to compile sub-national data on population characteristics, educational attainment, and transportation infrastructure. I employ total population, urban population, and tertiary attainment as primary operationalizations. I compiled a measure of annual bus transit volume, to capture transportation infrastructure available to would-be protestors and protest organizers. As alternative operationalizations, I further compiled a measure of population age to capture Goldstone’s demographic variant.

The second dimension of state capacity is cooptation. A state that is strong in cooptation maintains civil peace not merely through the Leviathan’s threat of violence. Cooptation is precisely, “the process by which a group subsumes or assimilates a smaller or weaker group with similar interests” (Selznik 1984). Through this mechanism the state is able to appeal to the interests of would-be dissidents. Dissident groups’ relative socio-economic condition and demands shape the concessions required to subsume or assimilate. In the words of Levi (2006: 9), one of the central challenges of creating capable governments is to “offer constituents enough in the way of benefits to retain their loyalty.” Citizens consent to fall in line, conditional on the government’s provision of political goods in return. The Hobbesian social contract, and underlying feelings of fairness, rest on exchanging freedom for security. The move to cooptation instead involves a broader exchange. The state provides goods, quality of life, in exchange for a feeling of fairness that keeps protestors and rebels off the streets. Recent actions in Saudi Arabia offer a touchstone example. In Egypt, Syria, Tunisia, and Libya unemployed masses played a significant role in social unrest (Goldstone, 2014). In response, Egyptian leaders began paying a generous monthly subsidy to job seekers.

Scholars have produced a wide range of operationalizations of cooptational capacity. This second dimension of state capacity often includes government spending and measures of effective governance. Total spending levels on public goods signal to the population that short-term citizen well-being is a government priority. A relative measure is more common, however, such as a ratio of government expenditure to total GDP or a per capita calculation (Fjelde and de Soysa, 2009). Other studies disaggregate spending by destination. For example, Thyne (2006) suggests that spending specifically on education creates an indirect link to civil peace, working via channels of economic growth, greater social mobility, and lower inequality. I employ data from RossStat from 2007 to 2013 to generate two measures of sub-national capacity to coopt. I follow Fjelde and de Soysa and capture the state's inclination to 'give back' as total government spending per capita. I also follow the disaggregated approach by computing a per capita measure of government spending directed towards socio-cultural projects, which include pensions, subsidized health care, housing assistance, unemployment assistance, and green space construction projects.

The grievance position from Social Movement Studies offers an inversion of cooptational capacity logic. Undesirable living conditions catalyze manifestations of social unrest. In the decades since foundational contributions of Davies and Gurr, contentious politics scholars have developed numerous measures of grievance. The historical list would here include: income inequality and ethno-linguistic fractionalization (Fearon and Laitin 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2004); power balance between politically excluded ethnic groups and dominant actors in terms of group sizes and access to political, economic, and social resources (Buhaug et al. 2011); polarization and horizontal inequality as a measure of ownership of consumer durables and educational attainment (Østby, Nordås, and Rød 2009); retrenchment in government budgets associated with austerity policies (Ponticelli and Voth 2011; Ban 2012); the erosion of elite economic interests (Robertson, 2007); corruption (Neudorfer and Theuerkauf 2014). Explicitly sub-national work on grievance operationalization is scarce, but includes several significant

operational definitions: the risk of conflict onset in a location may increase with larger income deviations from the national average (Buhaug et al., 2011); or may increase with relative electricity shortages (Juan and Bank 2015). I develop several sub-national measures that capture grievance across Russian federal subjects. I use unemployment rates by subject as the primary measure of grievance. I generate two alternative operationalizations: percentage of local populations living in poverty, and annual reported morbidity, as a measure of living conditions.

The third dimension of state capacity is the most abstract. Cooperation signifies the extent to which the state and the populace are integrated. Securing compliance is easier where effective governance allows the populace to trust leadership, as compared to countries where compliance depends on coercion or cooptation (Levi 2006). Fjelde and de Soysa alternatively describe the dimension as “integrative capacity,” which increases as citizens begin to trust the state to be an impartial enforcer of the societal contract, to uphold property rights, and generally, to exercise public authority in a way that is not biased towards particular segments of society (2009). I consider cooperation the degree to which citizens identify with government and trust government officials to remedy social ills. The abstract dimension of capacity has received less attention than the previous two. Scholars have operationalized the dimension in a few ways: a measure of Contract Intensive Money (CIM) in society, as a measure of financial trust (Clague et al. 1999); corruption (Fjelde and de Soysa 2009); and vote shares won by the ruling party (Lankina and Voznaya, 2015). I gathered data on voting patterns to calculate the share won by United Russia in parliamentary and presidential elections, for all federal subjects.

The third major strain of Social Movements Studies similarly concerns political interaction between state and society. Social scientists have been operationalizing political opportunity structure for decades. Eisinger theorized that each American city held a particular structure of political opportunities, which shaped protest behavior. Protest is here a function of “openings, weak spots, barriers” (1973: 20). More specifically, the relationship between degree of openness and risk of conflict should take the shape of an inverted-U, with the greatest risk of violence

among semi-democratic polities that combine insufficient ability to deter violence and insufficient political openness to induce non-violent participation (e.g., Muller and Weede 1990). The core idea connecting earlier and later work is that protest frequencies vary with the relative closure of the formal political system. Measuring political opportunity structure in an illiberal democracy like Russia is particularly difficult. Lankina and Voznaya employed qualitative interviews to operationalize the level of political competition and electoral freedom at the regional level. The pair also included a measure of corruption. Corruption fits under the political opportunity structure heading through the channel of responsiveness: corrupt political dealings can render even competitive, clean elections meaningless. Unfortunately Lankina and Voznaya's results were only available for roughly a third of federal subjects. I leverage a recent study by the Carnegie Center in Moscow to significantly improve on this operationalization. The center published a list of openness indicators, regarding democratic elections, political pluralism, independent media, economic liberalism, civil society, political society, elite cohesion, corruption, and regional autonomy. Each indicator, available for every region, is the result of expert consultation.

Table 1: Independent Variable Operationalization

Theoretical Driver	Operationalization
Coercion	Crime Rates
Social Mobilization Capacity	Population Figures; Transportation Data; Educational System Data
Cooptation	Total Government Spending; Government Spending on Socio-Cultural Projects
Grievance	Unemployment; Poverty; Morbidity
Cooperation	Electoral Support
Political Opportunity Structure	Openness Index

Moving Forward

Structural contentious politics studies have often failed to effectively cross the perilous span between concept and measurement. Facing twin threats of misspecification and methodological nationalism, contentious politics scholars must operationalize state capacity carefully in order to form meaningful inferences, conclusions, and policy recommendations. As I shall discuss in the following chapter, protest scholars studying countries characterized by illiberal press face an additional challenge: official reports of events may be inaccurate. Scholars often rely on newspaper records to identify protest events and to build datasets. They provide a relatively accessible source of data. They are often, in fact, the only available source of data. Several studies have demonstrated that newspapers are not a transparent conduit of protest information, and that systematic reporting biases can affect the types of events appearing on the printed, or digital, page (Barranco and Wisler 1999; Koopmans 1999; Mueller 1997a, 1997b; Maney and Oliver 2001; Koopmans and Rucht 2002; Myers and Caniglia 2004).

Only after identifying and addressing problems associated with protest event data can this study effectively explore the relationship between state capacity and protest onset in Russia. Only then can this study begin to illustrate the shape and strength of the Russian social contract. As Turgenev wrote, "Russia cannot be measured with an ordinary yardstick" (Zekulin 2009). Scholars should interpret the author's warning as a challenge to develop innovative tools, not as cause for despair.

IV - Data Politics

Introduction

In March of 2017, almost six years since the Bolotnaya square events, a tide of mass protest actions spread across Russia. Thousands of people, in dozens of cities, participated in a march against corruption. The Anti-Corruption Fund played a catalyzing role. Fund leader Aleksey Navalny published an explosive piece of investigative journalism, directed towards exposing the staggering personal wealth of former president, current Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev. Touring Tuscan vineyards, luxury condominiums, and a person yacht, the film tells a tale of state funds funneled into a personal empire. Navalny urges viewers to remember, “He Is Not Dimon To You, or Don’t Call Him Dimon (Он вам не Димон),” a play on Medvedev’s personal, playful nickname. The subsequent surge in protest activity comes in the wake of years of calm at the national level. Duma elections held in September witnessed a record low in turnout. Observers wondered if dissident movements had run out of steam (Shevtsova 2012). Large crowds from Moscow, to Yekaterinburg, to Novosibirsk, to Vladivostok in the Far East, highlight the presence of lingering tension between state and society. Official actions in response to Navalny’s campaign, created a counter narrative, a false image of tranquility that starkly opposed reality.

Russian government reaction lays bare an information suppression campaign. The compromising film was immediately banned from all Russian television outlets. In the neutral confines of YouTube, it was viewed 14 million times in less than a month, since publication on March 2, 2017.

Despite mass interest, officials refused to even entertain questions, dismissing the Anti-Corruption Fund as the work of a known criminal, a reference to Navalny's questionable charge for corrupt business dealings. Once protestors hit the streets, officials continued their dampening strategy. Riga-based Meduza News compiled a profile of all major Russian news agency coverage during the mass actions. Russia Channel 1, the most-watched channel in the country, completely ignored the turmoil, with one exception. Over the course of forty eight hours, talk show host Vladimir Solovyov spent 6 minutes denouncing the action in vague terms, avoiding Navalny's name, avoiding the word protest. No other mention appeared. State-aligned television-, radio-, and web-outlet RIA Novost completely ignored the thousands of people marching across the country. Websites Life, Isvestia, Forbes Russia, TASS, and Interfax were likewise meaningfully silent throughout the day. The only sites featuring significant coverage are considered oppositional or at least independent, foremost TVRain (Дождь) (Meduza 2017c). Even a keen observer of current events in Russia would likely consider the wave of protests a minor expression of social unrest.

This chapter argues that traditional media are inadequate sources of Russian protest data. So-called event data projects, based on traditional media, are similarly inadequate. Newspaper accounts in Russia ignore most dissident action, as predicted by news worthiness theory from media studies. Even a single data point is the product of numerous decisions, and each decision is potentially objectionable, fraught with value judgments. Only careful decision making will produce useful data on Russian protest onset. The previous chapter built a connection between independent variable concepts and operationalization. Here the task becomes traversing a second perilous span (Hughes 1971), this time with the dependent variable.

My dependent variable definition—one that includes even micro events—renders traditional news media entirely unreliable. Thanks to the mass scale of events, and thanks to the efforts of dedicated media outlets like TVRain, official suppression did not entirely obscure

Navalny's 2017 marches. Smaller events do not share the scale advantage. Demonstration effects mobilized an anti-corruption march in Krasnodarsk, in a rural area outside Sochi. A film crew from the firmly anti-regime Radio Freedom struck out to cover the event. Before reaching their destination, the group was beaten and robbed of cameras, cell-phones and notebooks by a group of masked men (Meduza 2017a). From the position of social science research, the push and pull around reporting becomes a battle for data creation or data suppression. Recent events surrounding "Don't Call Him Dimon" highlight the political nature of data in social science in general, and contentious politics in particular. Individuals like the battered crew, operating despite official restriction, provide an alternative source of protest data.

Below, I argue for activist-generated data as a viable alternative. Facing censorship, scholars are often unable to study contentious politics in illiberal regimes (Barsalou 2012). The charged, political process of data gathering thus makes allies of dissidents and academics. Without a record of events, dissidents cannot spread their message, to potential sympathizers, to targets within the ruling circle. Without a record of events, academics cannot even begin to answer questions of state-society relations. The Russian coalition Collective Action (*коллективное действие*), a group of liberal activists, journalists, and professors, appreciate the political power of data gathering. The group claims: "we are dedicated to participating in the formation of the Russian future; our weapons are critical thought, information and collective action." Successful scholars rely on the very same arsenal.

With a source identified, this chapter then argues against mainstream collection methodology: automation is an inappropriate method of data collection. The discussion below introduces event data coding, a common method of quantifying protest. Over the last fifty years contentious politics scholars have interfaced with print and web media to build event databases. Striving for efficiency, they leverage automated coding algorithms to dramatically outstrip hand coding speed. As I will argue, however, what is an acceptable error rate for massive datasets is

unacceptable for Russian protest from 2007 to 2013. For this reason, I hand-coded hundreds of articles to compile the updated Lankina and Voznaya dataset.

This study foregrounds the political nature of gathering data, especially protest data. If participants are unaware of sympathetic actors across the country, coordination failure will stymie nascent movements. For example, in the former U.S.S.R. and in Russia today broad anti-regime sentiment has been, and remains, an insufficient condition for mass mobilization. Only when an informational connection appears will sympathizers recognize each other and act. The connection in East Germany and other former Soviet republics took the form of leaked videos depicting resistance and police abuse (Kuran 1991). In Russia today, the connection takes the form of independent news and eyewitness accounts. Putin's social project thus requires censorship, to sever the informational link. If a string of anti-corruption protests breaks out in Novosibirsk or Irkutsk, but censors block national media coverage, Moscow-based organizers may miss the signal of support. A choice to study modern protest, then, is a choice to directly affect the prevailing protest environment.

From Concept to Measurement, Again

My arguments concerning source data and methodology naturally follow a dependent variable definition that includes micro events. This first section presents this definition in detail. International relations scholars have long argued that definitional choices shape research. Choices restrict the questions scholars can ask and the conclusions they draw (Holsti 1964; Buzan 1991; Holsti 1996; M. N. Barnett and Duvall 2005). My choices are driven by the research question: why have certain Russian regions experienced higher or lower levels of protest than others? The answer requires an understanding of when, where, and why protests occur, as a means to sketch the contours of the modern social contract in Russia.

Recent studies offer inadequate definitional resources. Erica Chenoweth's work on protest often employs a "maximalist" variant (2010, 2014; 2015a). Non-violent protest campaigns,

under Chenoweth's definition, hold explicit goals related to removing incumbent governments, and involve more than one recorded event, in which at least 1,000 people participate. As the language suggests, this variant is too macro for my purposes. Campaigns capture protest in a general sense while ignoring individual protest events. Graeme Robertson's definitions, on display in his work on Russian protest, are similarly inadequate. His early work defines protest as contentious political events involving labor organizations (2007). His recent work expands scope beyond labor but fails to provide definitional clarity. Especially troubling, Robertson fails to define a scope of protestor identity (2013). It is not clear if pro-government assemblies fall under his definition, a particularly important consideration in the Russian context (Lankina and Voznaya 2015).

In order to construct an appropriate dependent variable definition, I merge contributions from two studies. A classic study in the social movement literature provides an ideal foundation—as I mentioned in the introductory chapter. Douglas McAdam provided a broad conceptual definition of social protest in his 1982 “Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930–1970.” Protests are, “organized efforts to promote or resist changes in the structure of society [or polity] that involve recourse to non-institutional forms of political participation” (1982: 25). McAdam's definition is sufficiently micro to capture individual events. This form of contentious politics can include demonstrations, marches, picketing, sit-ins, with one thousand, one hundred or ten participants. Moreover, his focus on change highlights negotiation and renegotiation of state-society relations. To this definition, I follow Lankina and Voznaya's recent practice and add an explicit proscription of pro-regime activities. I define protest as anti-regime group action only. Youth marches or counter-rallies organized by the ruling United Russia party would not qualify.

Appropriate temporal and geographic parameters round out the definition. Dependent variable data must include refined geographical information in order to support sub-national inquiry. And moreover, dependent and independent variable specifications must coincide. As I

have argued—in Chapter 3—the Idea of the State theory can only be effectively tested at the sub-national level. The body of social movement studies, developed over the last five decades, posits associations between structural factors and the onset of protest events. Causal mechanisms tied to grievance, state capacity or social mobilization capacity work to increase or decrease onset potential in the immediate area. I thus select Russian province as the appropriate geographical unit. Choosing a temporal unit of analysis is a practical question, rather than a theoretical one. Following tradition in the social sciences, I select yearly increments. My dependent variable dataset organizes protest events, events corresponding with McAdam's definition, into province-year categories.

With a working definition in hand, the next step is dependent variable data gathering. Common data gathering methods in contentious politics studies include participant interviews, archival research, quasi-experiments, and media event coding (Koopmans and Rucht 2002). The last method is widely used to build protest databases.

Effective, Efficient Accumulation

Event data coding has become a viable methodology in political science. Previously the work of human hands, it has increasingly become the purview of machines (Schrodt and Brackle 2013). This transition has advantages and disadvantages. Efficiency, objectivity, and replicability are counterbalanced by inaccuracy and a lack of transparency. Modern data projects carefully process newspaper data to produce reliable data. News agencies and activist reporting networks instantly transmit protest events over even expansive geographic territories, from the west coast of the United States back to Washington D.C., from the center of Siberia or the eastern steppes to Moscow and Saint Petersburg. Event data sources leverage such informational flows to further social science research.

Event data thus represents a logical choice to build my dependent variable database. Despite advantages discussed below, however, it is inadequate for the case at hand. In order to

conduct effective studies of Russian protest onset, scholars must break with tradition and seek alternative sources.

Event data, derived from media accounts, has recently achieved a place in the methodological canon. As recently as the 1980s, event datasets were rarely used in mainstream journals (Earl 2004) despite the fact that methodological development began much earlier (McClelland et al. 1971). Today they are a ubiquitous sight in methods sections. Any retrospective of collective action studies would be incomplete without mention of media data and its development over time. Jennifer Earl and her co-authors describe the event data research tradition as arising to seize “numerous theoretical and methodological opportunities” (2004 65). Scholars could not test leading contentious politics theories without newspaper accounts of protest events. Research questions addressing the internal dynamics of social movements or the calculus of participation often do not require event data. On the other hand, questions addressing onset (Meier 2008; Chenoweth 2003), repertoires of contention (Tilly, 1979; 1995) tactical innovation and diffusion (McAdam 1983) all require newspaper data. There is simply no other suitable source of event data (Franzosi 1987), an insight as true today as it was 30 years ago—at least for those reluctant to embrace recent attempts to crawl and code social media posts (Valkanias and Gunopolus 2013). Only methodological innovation in data gathering allowed scholars to begin to answer many research questions.

Efficiency is the first advantage of event data. Over the last several decades, scholars have attempted to achieve efficiency in data gathering. Large-scale projects gathered contentious political event occurrences in Europe (e.g., Koopmans and Rucht 2005), in the United States (e.g., McAdam and Su 2002), and internationally (e.g., Bond et al. 1997; Jenkins and Bond 2001). Beginning with early projects, scholars exploited newspaper staff labor to increase the volume and speed of accumulation (Taylor and Jodice 1986). A single newspaper issue represents the aggregation of hundreds of observations, filtered through reporters and editors. Editorial staff identify sources, and filter out unreliable stories. Event data pioneers added another layer to this

parsing structure. They took available issues of major newspapers and coded events of interest. Cooperation between academics and journalists later turned explicit. Indexing was an early attempt to improve coding efficiency, a process by which newspapers would prepare brief descriptions of article content. Critical research, however, quickly revealed flaws. Indexing generated data collections that captured neither the total population of events, nor the total population of relevant articles (Earl 2004). Researchers reverted to the previous method of “daily newspaper scans” (Ibid.). Even a rapid look through daily issues of a single newspaper, say the *New York Times*, is labor intensive. As an alternative, scholars moved to sampling techniques, replacing daily papers with Monday editions or weekend editions (Kriesi 1995).

As a second advantage, event data achieves the objectivity and replicability desired by positivist social scientists. Milton Friedman provided the touchstone defense of positivism for a generation of scholars (1966). Social science research of the highest quality, according to Friedman, mimicked the natural sciences. Sociologists, like chemists, like physicists, strove to identify general laws that could explain empirical phenomenon. Only by rigorously testing and re-testing hypotheses could researchers begin to make claims about the presence of laws, or lack thereof. Only by reproducing major findings could social scientists take their results seriously. Event datasets derived from newspaper data corresponded with the doctrine nicely. Newspaper articles are static, freely available sources. Critics can replicate scholarship. Collaborators can expand methods and theories beyond original contexts. Data derived from newspapers thus facilitate comparisons between contentious political patterns across geography and time (Koopmans and Rucht 2002). Innovators in data time-space compression have recently attempted to further the positivist dream. Today, two projects begun in the late 1960's, the Cross-National Time Series Data Archive (CNTS) and the World Handbook of Political and Social Indicators, employ automated parsers rather than research assistants (Taylor and Jodice 1986).

Modern event data developments enhance objectivity and replicability. Modern event databases are populated by automated content-analysis software. Programmers construct

dictionaries of terms, connected by nested algorithms. Logic chains parse text blocks into data fields, regarding the location, timing, and characteristics of contentious political events. By creating links to aggregated newswire feeds, programmers can even create real-time updates to underlying databases. Several high-profile projects have recently emerged as social scientists attempt to bring the tools of the internet and computer programming to bear on scholarly work—with varying degrees of success. The Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) and the Social Conflict in Africa Database (SCAD) feature in mainstream political science and international relations journals such as the *American Political Science Review*, *Journal of Peace Research*, and the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*.

Potential disadvantages are visible in the shift towards increased automation. The fate of a high-profile project, GDELT, has become something of a cautionary tale in the discipline. Its creators overstated its utility and perhaps even committed fraud in the process of gathering data (Spath 2014). Analysts identified twin concerns of accuracy and transparency. Creators defined the data as recording contentious political event onset. Publicized definitions changed after scholars identified puzzling discrepancies between GDELT and other sources. The dataset, as it turned out, recorded reporting about events, rather than onset (Ulfelder 2015).

Currently, leading projects acknowledge these problems. Modern event data projects rest on a tension between breadth and efficiency, on the one hand, and context specificity and accuracy on the other. Developers of the Social, Political and Economic Event Database (SPEED) attempt to harness the advantages of automation, while mitigating the disadvantages. Housed at the University of Illinois' Cline Center for Democracy, SPEED features a combination of machine coding and strategically placed human oversight. Scholars at the Cline Center strikingly frame the efficiency gains offered by machine coding. Peter Nardulli and Matthew Hayes estimated that classifying 5.9 million *New York Times* articles on the basis of civil unrest content would have taken a single human analyst working 24 hours a day and 365 days a year over two decades to complete. Once SPEED's classifier model was fine-tuned, the task was

completed in a matter of hours. This discrepancy is breathtaking. It is no surprise, then, that social scientists have hoped to develop event databases—and similarly unsurprising that such projects continue to receive significant funding from the likes of the government Minerva Initiative (Shellman, Hatfield, and Mills 2010) and private foundations (Nardulli, Althaus, and Hayes 2015). The cost of incredible efficiency is accuracy. For instance, unlike computers, humans usually have little trouble determining which of several named persons any given “she” refers to, or whether a date refers to the day of a protest or the day of the news report covering a protest. The SPEED project provides the most satisfying solution to this tension. Nardulli and Hayes describe their methodology as a “supervised learning system.” In this system, human coders are presented with input data that have been pre-processed by classification software. Then, humans perform only the most difficult coding decisions, leaving the simpler work to automated processes.

Methodological innovations have indeed seized an opportunity to spur knowledge generation in contentious politics; it represents a viable methodological option. Protest event data, from hand coding, to indexing, to machine coding, and back to the hybrid approach, has facilitated a number of landmark studies, on European contention (Tilly 1995), California farm workers (Jenkins and Perrow 1977), the U.S. civil rights movement (McAdam 1982), protest cycles in Italy (Tarrow 1994), new social movements in Western Europe (Kriesi 1995), and nationalist protest in the former Soviet republics (Beissinger 2002). The study of protest in Putin-era Russia could fit into this tradition.

As the following section will argue, however, reliance on newspaper data renders any event data source inappropriate; the study of modern Russian protest cannot rely on traditional media accounts. Even the most sophisticated, reflexive projects like SPEED produce data of unacceptably poor quality.

Event Data Flaws

There are many reasons to doubt the adequacy of SPEED or any other large-scale, machine-coding project. Event data innovators have constructed more and more complex parsing systems. Each attempt to improve efficient data accumulation introduces error. Newspaper staff and research assistants built the first generation of event data projects. Both parties represented a potential source of error. Clumsy reporters or overworked graduate students threatened accuracy of the final product. Automated systems added faulty algorithms to the list. Sociologist Roberto Franzosi conducted a social history of media-based data in the social sciences. He elaborated threats associated with data and discussed scholars' subsequent reactions. The results are worrying. Franzosi concludes that "social scientists involved in quantitative empirical research generally are relatively unconcerned with problems of measurement" (1987, 7). Jay Ulfelder, similarly accused the current cohort of contentious politics scholars of expecting their data to stream onto virtual desktops free of errors, "like manna raining down from digital heaven" (2015).

Only by outlining and explicitly considering each threat to data viability can scholars avoid blindly using flawed datasets. Because they rely on newspaper data, older critiques of newspaper data apply to projects like SPEED. An older literature thus provides a useful set of tools. Scholars working in the field of media studies developed a theory of "news worthiness" that organizes potential sources of bias (Lipmann 1922; Galtung and Ruge 1965). The distortion effect jeopardizes the objectivity of any newspaper, journal or website, even those covering high-profile events like American presidential elections or international military conflicts. Selection bias threatens to push small-scale events out of papers due to lack of interest. When the subject of coverage is Russian protest, however, an additional danger arises: lack of translation can prevent stories from making the move to international news wires. In this section I restrict discussion to automated event data construction in general. In the following section I move on to challenges associated with the Russian environment.

Every news story includes a point of view. Even the most detached rendering of events includes tone. Even the most bare-bones account is the product of deliberate choices. In a reflective moment, the Guardian conducted a study on media's treatment of natural disasters versus armed conflict. Respondents reported that, as fundraising campaigns reflect, victims of floods and earthquakes appear more sympathetic than victims of civil war (*The Guardian* 2014). Media studies scholars dub this the distortion effect. Between occurrence and reporting all events pass through a filter. The filter distorts events by attaching elements of style and association. The degree of distortion is an empirical question, varying on a case by case basis. Contentious politics scholars must be cognizant of distortion effects. Jennifer Earl, Andrew Martin, and their colleagues published an overview of media studies work on distortion bias. The scholars concluded: "newspaper reports are generally accurate in their portrayal of the 'hard facts' of the event" (2004, 67). This optimistic conclusion features an important caveat, however. Even the hard facts—the who, when and where—are less reliable when news stories implicate authorities. Worse still, such events, including anti-regime protests, may go unreported (*Ibid.*).

The second major threat to media data is selection bias³. Event data managers similarly strive to minimize selection bias. Walter Lippmann (1922), regarded as the founder of the news worthiness theory (Earl et al. 2004), counts mainly the characteristics 'proximity', 'surprise', 'prominence' and 'conflict' amongst the influencing factors. The theory expects nearby, surprising, large-scale, violent events to make the news (Galtung and Ruge 1965; Barranco and Wisler 1999).

³ Influential individuals, or so the scene goes, begin each morning with a stack of newspapers and a cup of coffee. According to CNBC Warren Buffett begins his day with a thick stack: the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Financial Times*, *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, and even the *Omaha World-Herald*. Barack Obama drinks his coffee over *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, and the *Atlantic* (Crippen 2007). Even the most reputable sources are incomplete. Editorial boards determine the type of stories that make the cut, a decision shaped by readership and the slate of potential leads appearing on any given day. The selection of each paper is thus biased. Looking for a more complete picture of world events, Buffett and Obama expand their scope. Looking for a more complete picture of local events, the two men turn to sources focusing on Omaha and Washington D.C.

Since at least the 1970's sociologists and political scientists have built a large body of literature, quantifying selection bias, testing Lippmann's theory. Evidence supports the expectation that, as event participants increase, so too increases the likelihood of reporting (McCarthy, McPhail, and Smith 1996). Other factors militating against selection bias include sponsorship by an organization connected to media (Ryan 2010) and the presence of well-known actors (Snyder and Kelly 1977). In line with expectations, the presence of violence increases likelihood of reporting (Oliver and Myers 1999). Evidence has also supported the proximity dimension of Lippman's theory. Over the period 1968-1969 *The New York Times* was thirty times more likely to report events occurring in New York City compared to those occurring elsewhere in the United States (Myers and Caniglia 2004). And in general the distance between media headquarters and the protest site reduces reporting frequency, as does rural location (Ibid.).

Contentious politics scholars must acknowledge risks associated with newspaper data. Any event dataset built on top of newspaper feeds will reflect the distortion effect and selection bias. If proximate, surprising, prominent, violent events are overrepresented in the pages of the *New York Times* and other papers, such events will be overrepresented in event databases as well. Small-scale, non-violent protest events, occurring outside of urban centers fail Lippman's news worthiness test across the board. Working under the assumptions of news worthiness theory, and given empirical testing from sociology and political science, it is unreasonable to expect newspaper data to serve as an adequate base for sub-national protest data.

Not surprisingly, critics have repeatedly deemed media data unsuitable for contentious politics research. Mainstream media have failed to overcome the threats of distortion, selection bias, and translation. In 1996, John McCarthy, Clark McPhail, and Jackie Smith systematically compared newspaper accounts of protest against police accounts. McCarthy and his co-authors concluded that only a small portion of protests receive even cursory mention in mainstream media. The group further reported unstable selection bias across news sources. No major United States source reported more than a fraction of events, and the fraction captured in *The New York*

Times and *The Washington Post* differed (1996). The majority of American protests failed to make the news, even when the events occurred in the seat of government, in Washington D.C. (Mueller 1997b). Across the country, scholars identified specific correlates of bias, including race. American papers tend to ignore riots in cities that have higher percentages of whites in the population (Myers and Caniglia 2004). Underreporting held in other contexts, including in East Germany, where protests only began receiving coverage when the number of participants surpassed the 10,000 threshold (Mueller 1997a). Numerous studies have demonstrated the pitfalls of treating contentious politics data like “manna falling from digital heaven” (e.g., Barranco and Wisler 1999; Koopmans 1999; Mueller 1997a, 1997b; Maney and Oliver 2001; Koopmans and Rucht 2002; Myers and Caniglia 2004). American-based contentious politics scholars face an additional challenge. Large-scale news aggregation feeds include translated stories from international sources. The transition from original language to English erects another hurdle. Only a fraction of foreign language stories ever make the transition to English (Ortiz et al. 2005; Lankina and Voznaya 2015).

A recently study exposes the problems associated with, specifically, non-English language source data. In 2011, Mark Herkenrath and Alex Knoll designed a test of newspaper protest data. They selected a small group of countries, used an alternative source to compile event data, and then compared the findings against LexisNexis archives, a searchable database of major news articles. The study focused on events in Mexico, Argentina, and Paraguay in 2006. The alternate data sources, *Observatorio Social de America Latina*, culls data from local news outlets, as wells as activists themselves. Large-scale, international projects draw on English-language translations of events, overlapping with archives such as LexisNexis. The two authors employed logistic regression to construct a profile for omitted events. Results were striking: in the three Latin American countries surveyed, in 2006, roughly one twentieth of all protest events make it to the international news. Herkenrath and Knoll concluded that such data sources should be used rarely, if ever. Such dramatic results lead inevitably to the conclusion that newspaper

data may not meet acceptable standards for event analysis, that the data can distort findings and misguide theorizing (2011, 22).

Not all critics share Herkenrath and Knoll's dismissal of newspaper data, however. Scholars working with English-language sources often include an optimistic note in otherwise critical articles (Mueller 1997b; Barranco and Wisler 1999; Koopmans and Rucht 2002; Schrodtt and Brackle 2013). Earl, Martin, McCarthy, and Soule's review article, published in the *Annual Review of Sociology* in 2004, serves as a representative example. The authors spend pages and pages elaborating sources of media bias, and recapitulating critical empirical work. In the conclusion however, pragmatism seems to triumph over caution. Earl and colleagues note that, for many research designs, newspapers "remain the only source of data on protest" (2004: 71). The group falls victim to a familiar pitfall. They argue that, precisely because of the news worthiness effect, newspapers are unlikely to omit important protests. Failing to consider the political nature of problem definition, the sociologists fail to question the definition of "important." Others acknowledge newspaper reporting bias, but argue that biases are constant over time. McCarthy et al. (1996: 496) argued that American media "provides an amazingly stable portrait of the churning mixture of protest forms, purposes, and contexts in Washington D.C. during 1982 and 1991"—a finding that has repeatedly come under attack (Oliver and Myers 1999; Myers and Caniglia, 2004). Exploring the biases of newspaper data remains a valuable academic enterprise.

Given media studies theoretical work, and given the strength of empirical work, mainstream media appears a poor source of protest data—in any polity. This section has presented critique leveraged against automated content analysis in general. The following section will focus on challenges related to the Russian environment in particular. Each source of bias enumerated in Lippman's news worthiness theory, when applied to the Russian case, further sharpens threats to data collection. Furthermore, the illiberal nature of the Russian press introduces sources of distortion not considered in the original model. These theoretical concerns are strong enough to preclude newspaper data for my project. My research question and motivation simple cannot

justify such problematic data. Must the inadequate become the standard because “that’s all there is?” This resigned approach seems to undergird the efforts of major event data projects such as SPEED. There exists an alternative. Like Herkenrath and Knoll, I choose to jettison mainstream media for alternative sources, those operating outside of government oversight, often in the murky realm of the internet. In the following section I shift attention to activist-based data sources. In the penultimate section I will use Lipmann’s theory to quantify the expected selection bias vis-à-vis Russia protest coverage. In the Russian context, Earl and her colleagues’ conclusion that important events seldom fail to make the news appears baffling and misguided. Putin’s regime censors media precisely because events are considered important.

The Russian Environment

Even in environments characterized by vibrant, liberal press, newspapers are a problematic source for contentious politics data. As I shall discuss in detail below, the situation in a country like Russia is much, much bleaker.

Classic and more recent media studies models predict high levels of bias in Russia. The news worthiness model expects geographical distance and event size to increase selection bias. The physical distance between the location of the event and news headquarters shapes the probability reporting (Galtung and Ruge 1965; Almeida and Lichbach 2003; Myers and Caniglia 2004). The expansive Russian continent poses a serious challenge for comprehensive news coverage. Secondly, media coverage is most likely when protests are characterized by a large number of participants. In Russia large-scale rallies are illegal without express government permission (Gelman 2010). David Ortiz, Daniel Meyers, Eugene Walls, and Maria-Elena Diaz expanded Lippmann’s (1922) original theory. Their “media process model” describes selection bias as a function of audience demand and media supply (2005). When readers fail to show interest, events fail to appear in even local publications. It is difficult to judge the degree to which the Russian population demands information regarding anti-regime protests. Public opinion polls, conducted by the Levada research center, place interest in dissident actions at a fluctuating level

(*Russian Times* 2014, *Moscow Times* 2015). However, it is certain that media supply represents a significant source of bias. The updated model sees economic and political environments shaping the content that the media is willing and able to provide. For the last several years, the Russian economy has faced stagnation and recession. News agencies, like all businesses, would be forced to trim costs, leading to less coverage over the Russian continent. The political context represents a more significant source of bias. The Russian media has been historically unable to operate independent of the governing regime.

Political leaders closely monitor and shape media supply in Russia. Vladimir Putin has successfully dismantled independent media. The Russian government has used mainstream media as a tool for decades. Literary journal and news outlet, *Snob*, established in 2008 by Vladimir Yakovleva, describes the current media censorship as a return to old practices. The 1996 presidential election in Russia, considered the last—or alternatively the first and last—competitive election in the country's history, captured public attention for months. In the pre-election days citizens found a newspaper waiting in their mailbox, despite the fact that they were not subscribers. The paper was printed in full color and on high quality paper, despite the fact that such materials were luxuries in the early days of the Russian Federation. The mysterious issue was a gift from the sitting president. Incumbent Boris Yeltsin faced faltering support. His response to a hostage situation in Chechnya failed to impress. His economic policy failed to pull the economy out of recession and failed to end the distribution of promissory notes in lieu of salaries. Communist candidate Gennady Zyuganov and his party were confident they could seize the presidency. Today the communists' KPRF party is a minor member of government at best. In the early 1990's however, the party retained millions of loyal supporters. A wide base, coupled with Yeltsin's abysmal approval ratings, presaged change. The unexpected journalistic gift was a preventative measure. Titled, *God Forbid!*, the flashy newspaper contained "a weekly dose of anti-communistic propaganda" (Vasiliev 2017). Readers were treated to condemnations of Zyuganov's political positions, ad hominem attacks, cartoons. The *God Forbid* crossword contest

encapsulates Yeltsin's strategy. Clues attacked political opposition, and the winner of the competition received a vacation package to the Czech Republic (Ibid.). Yeltsin ended up winning reelection with 54% of the vote.

In 2011 God Forbid! returned. Again, the magazine served to support an embattled Russian president, Yeltsin's hand-picked successor Vladimir Putin. The second incarnation of the propaganda vehicle denounced the protestors taking part in the mass protests of 2011-2012. The impact was muted. As Snob writes, "political discussion had left print media for the internet" (Ibid.). In my search for appropriate dependent variable data I follow the shift, to the internet, to non-traditional sources of event data.

Activist Sources

The Russian environment is completely uncondusive to traditional event data gathering. Is there a better alternative? Is there any alternative at all? Jack London is reputed to have said "life is not always a matter of holding good cards, but sometimes, playing a poor hand well" (Millman 2004). Fortunately, social scientists interested in studying protests and other contentious events do, in fact, have other cards at their disposal. Activists themselves often keep records of their activities, and the activities of others. Treated with a skeptical eye, activist sources can become a viable alternative to newspaper data.

Activist content, appearing in print and digital media, takes a number of forms. Some collectives focus exclusively on journalism, providing a digital home for news stories, eye-witness accounts and videos. For instance, change-links.org is the digital form of a Los Angeles area community newsletter. Content includes stories that touch on current national and international events, as well as opinion pieces, and even book and film reviews. All pieces are written from the point of view of the progressive, non-violent activist. There are no direct calls to action or meeting announcements on the website. Others use their web presence as an organizational tool, attracting participants, scheduling rallies, and generally building public influence. The Ruckus

Society, host of ruckus.org, describes itself as a “toolbox of experience, training and skills.”

Through the website, consumers can book classroom instruction or live roleplaying scenarios directed towards building non-violent action competency. The site even includes a bird-dogging instruction manual. Pushing the boundaries between contentious and mainstream politics, bird-doggers attend public events and pressure elected officials to change their stance on important issues. Other activist-based web sources combine elements of the two archetypes: their missions consist of both journalistic and organizational elements. As one example, elksoft.com publishes news content as well as calls to action. Site organizers employ the combined approach to further their goals, a cessation of logging in the redwood forest region of the United States. The site includes upcoming gathering announcements, boycott instructions, and news briefs regarding political and commercial action in the area. The three examples mentioned here give a glimpse into the set of English-language based activist media sources, a small population of at around twenty sources (Almeida and Lichbach 2003).

Activist websites and newsletters correct the sources of bias identified in Lippman’s news worthiness model. News agencies provide information about Los Angeles area events, national politics, and deforestation in the United States. Members of change-links, the Ruckus Society and elksoft, however, refuse to accept the distortion effect and selection bias inherent in mainstream sources. Instead of accepting journalists’ point of view, activists create their own. Instead of journalists determining just what constitutes an important story, activists take selection into their own hands. International activist organizations even attempt to correct the translation bias. One particularly interesting example arose during the Egyptian Arab Spring. Launched in early 2011, Tahrir Documents is a collaborative effort to archive and translate activist papers from the Egyptian uprising and its aftermath. Volunteers collect materials from demonstrations in Cairo’s Tahrir Square and then publish complete English translation alongside scans of the original documents. The project is not affiliated with any government organization, Egyptian or otherwise. I sat down with founding member Elias Saba to discuss the initiative. Saba, a doctoral candidate

in the Near Eastern Studies department at the University of Pennsylvania, felt a responsibility to chronicle these contentious events. Otherwise no record would appear in local news sources in Arabic, much less in international sources in English. By inserting themselves into the news generation process, the Tahrir documents team generates data that would otherwise not exist.

Contentious politics scholars who rely on mainstream newspaper data are indeed playing with a lousy hand. Even local news sources often miss the occurrence of contentious events (Earl et al. 2004; Ortiz et al. 2005; Chenoweth 2010). And, as scholarship has shown, as the purview of news organizations expands, the number of omitted cases rises. Reuters international newsfeed missed major contentious African events captured in two local sources: the *African Research Bulletin* and the *Zimbabwe Herald* (Sommer and Scarritt 1999). These findings extend to Palestine and Germany, where local sources are again more reliable than international news wire services (Gerner et al. 1994). Alternative news sources, activist-generated and otherwise, reduce scholars' reliance on flawed reporting. Police agencies can supplement incomplete reporting from local news sources (Maney and Oliver 2001). Eye witness accounts and official state reports provide another option (Day, Pinckney, and Chenoweth 2015). Activist organizations, however, like change-links.org, elksoft.com, or Tahrir documents, offer perhaps the most comprehensive, easily-accessible alternative data source (Ortiz et al. 2005).

Evidence suggests that activists can effectively produce a parallel chronicle of contentious events. Paul Almeida and Mark Lichbach tested the discrepancy between mainstream media and activist sources by focusing on a single contentious campaign, the so-called Battle of Seattle, a series of protests held in response to negotiations in the World Trade Organization headquarters, spanning November and December of 1999. The primary battle saw tens of thousands of protesters cause the closure Seattle's retail district, millions of dollars in property damage, and eventually, the failure of trade negotiations. Outside of the battleground dozens of parallel protests occurred through the United States, and in other countries. Almeida and Lichbach created a master list of news sources, from local outlets like *The Seattle Times*, to

the national *New York Times*, to the international aggregators Global Newsbank and LexisNexis. The alternative, activist-driven sources took the form of three websites, identified by the authors. Careful comparison led the authors to the conclusion that, “activist websites have a much lower threshold for reporting transnational protest events at the local, national, and international level” (2003: 267). And furthermore, not all activist sites are equally effective chronicles. The authors found that the most useful activist websites were those that focus primarily on news information and reporting. Patterns of omission in mainstream coverage, selection bias, support Lippman’s model. Large, urban events characterized by violence were most likely to appear in major newspapers.

It is important to address the possible drawbacks to activist-generate news accounts. Perhaps the most significant drawback concerns data reliability. Data generation, data collection, is always a political process. Activists record contentious events in a conscious effort to effect the political environment in which they operate, in an effort to achieve their goals. These actors, naturally, have incentive to over-represent or plainly fabricate events. The only solution to validity issues is triangulation. Scholars argue that media coverage may provide a means to crosscheck activist-based reports (Franzosi 1987; Mueller 1997b; Sommer and Scarritt 1999; Oliver and Myers 1999). This technique can only provide limited validation.

The second major concern regards temporal availability. Parallel chronicles of the 1999 Battle of Seattle, the Arab Spring, or the 2013 anti-election protests in Moscow and Saint Petersburg all occupy space on the internet. Despite its ubiquity in modern life, the internet is a relatively new technology. Department of Defense technicians added TCP/IP protocol to Arpanet in the early 1980s. It was not until the late 1980s that civilians gained access to the technology (Ryan 2010). Some data sources—Tahrir Documents, for example—contain digitalized version of paper documents. Such sites could house primary documents with provenance dating from the 1980s and even earlier. However, the lack of the internet as an aggregation and dissemination medium in previous periods reduces the likelihood. For these reasons all of the

activist-based data sources that I have encountered cover events beginning in the mid-1990s or later.

Concerns notwithstanding, activist data is the only promising source of contentious politics data in the Russian case. Traditional media would be a very poor source for my dependent variable. Both Lippmann's (1922) news worthiness model and Ortiz et al.'s media process model predict insurmountable obstacles for traditional event data collection. General restrictions to press freedom, massive geographic scale, and active informational suppression tactics, as seen in the recent Don't Call Him Dimon protests, render traditional methods inadequate. Small-scale events are often not covered in national or international media. The events I wish to study are often small. Geographic distances introduce bias. Russia is the largest landmass on earth. And most importantly, the Putin regime has dismantled independent media outlets, enforced strict anti-assembly laws, and is in the process of deeming protest coverage "a terrorist or extremist act" (Gessen 2013).

March of the Discontents

In order to cross the second perilous span, between definition and operationalization, I choose to depart from common event-data gathering practices. Despite significant selection bias and underreporting, most contentious politics datasets rely on mainstream news sources (Herkenrath and Knoll 2011; Day, Pinckney and Chenoweth 2016). Drawing inspiration from Almeida and Lichbach, Ortiz and others, I turn to activist-based news sources operating in the fraught Russian political environment. Two promising options are available, each of which has received scholarly attention. Though the collective action institute and namarsh are both promising, the latter is a superior source of sub-national Russian protest data.

First, namarsh.ru is a web-collective, founded in 2006, dedicated to promoting awareness of dissident activity across Russia. Site organizers include a social movement founded by Gary Kasparov, the United Civilian Front (Объединённый гражданский фронт (ОГФ)). Membership in

the movement is connected to the broader collective action group Another Russia (Другая Россия), and smaller offshoots Solidarity and Charter 31. The United Civilian Front has attempted to alter the course of politics, first through conventional means, supporting Kasparov's presidential campaign, and thereafter through non-traditional channels, organizing numerous protests. The namarsh website proudly displays a banner announcement: "the server works without Kremlin censorship."

The second source is a similar activist web presence, organized by a different group. The collective action institute (коллективное действие) is a group of sociologists and activists dedicated to progressive politics. The group's manifesto espouses support for socio-economic equality, transparent elections, and labor reform. This range of causes forged a connection between various strands of civil society, between leftists, professional unions, ecological activists, and youth groups. In today's Russia, membership in such an organization entails professional and even legal risk. Nevertheless, ikd.ru, the central website, includes a list of founders, all of whom work as professors, either in political science or sociology departments. These individuals believe that social rights and solidarity are "not empty words and abstract phrases, but values that must be brought to life". Through free information exchange, the founders hope to accomplish their goals. And by leveraging this information, I hope to adequately operationalize my dependent variable.

Namarsh.ru, like the redwood forest conservation activists at elksoft.com, includes both logistical and media resources. The site consists of sections titled dissident march, agitation, general protest in Russia, and eye-witness accounts. Dissident march (марш несогласных) is the title of a campaign waged by the website organizers. The movement began with street protests in 2005, in Moscow, Saint Petersburg, and around the country. Protestors called for an end to United Russia's reign. Rallying cries of "Russia without Putin" began at this time and remain a standard of liberal protest marches. The agitation section includes advice for gathering supporters and carrying out successful campaigns. The two remaining sections serve a

journalistic function. Under general protest appear news reports culled from Gary Kasparov's independent media project. Banned in Russia as "extremist propaganda," Kasparov.ru is an "independent socio-political information-analysis web publication." The chess-master turned politician organizes a network of regional correspondents to generate a counter narrative, providing coverage of contentious events, and opinion pieces addressing local and national Russian politics. Namarsh.ru culls only protest stories from the site, a collection representing a fraction of overall content. The final section, eye-witness accounts, is original material, gathered by individual contributors working across the country.

The collective action institute's website offers similar content. Ikd.ru includes resources for would-be organizers, as well as news stories. The organizational sections of the two sites are very similar. The collective action institute includes announcements and overviews of sponsored events. Under a news-wire section, ikd.ru organizes stories describing protest events. Unlike namarsh.ru, however, the site's digital archive includes non-protest topics, the release of protest-inspired music, or a local election, for example. Each story is written by a contributing author, a member of the collective action institute.

Each of the websites is a potentially useful resource for scholars of Russian contentious politics. Indeed, a small group of scholars, Graeme Robertson, Tomila Lankina, and Alisa Voznaya, have recently employed the activist sources to circumvent the severe biases described above. Practicalities of research drove the scholars to work exclusively with either ikd.ru (Robertson) or namarsh.ru (Lankina and Voznaya). Working with an alternative news source eliminates, or at least mitigates, the numerous biases associated with newspaper data. Unfortunately, the two sources overlap only partially: events captured by Kasparov's group are not always captured by the collective action institute and vice versa. It is important to note then, that Robertson, Lankina, and Voznaya do not overcome reporting bias entirely, a common sacrifice to the "economics of research" (Dasgupta and Maskin 1987). Practical constraints force

me to follow their decision. With limited time, with limited resources, I am forced to choose one of the two sources, rather than merging the two into a master list.

Gary Kasparov's namarsh.ru is superior for three reasons. First, and indeed foremost, is data coverage. ikd.ru has dramatically decreased its output of news coverage over the last several years. At the time of writing, in August, 2016, the collective action institute published only seven articles for the entire year. Over the same period of time, activists working at namarsh.ru published over 200 web articles. Political pressure may be responsible for the decline in material on ikd.ru. Stanislav Markelov, human rights lawyer, liberal activist, and founding member of the institute was murdered in Moscow in 2009, in the middle of a busy street, in broad daylight (Harding 2009). The second reason concerns broader media integration. Stories appearing on namarsh.ru frequently include links to related stories appearing in mainstream, state-supported publications, as well as other independent sources. For example, accounts of wage protests may include mention of Ria News articles on declining economic conditions. Such cross-references are less frequent on the collective action institute site. Thirdly, Lankina and Voznaya's existing work serves as a solid foundation on which to build. The pair provides clear coding documentation, and their data is easily accessible in convenient format. The same cannot be said of Robertson's work. For these three reasons, I selected to work with, and augment, the Lankina and Voznaya protest dataset.

With an activist data source identified, the problem of data reliability remains. Research on media bias has determined that, while event details and descriptions are often distorted, journalists consistently get the core of a descriptive story "right" (Earl et al. 2004). No corresponding research that I know of has addressed activist-based news sources. Major news organizations construct layers of quality control to vet stories. A widespread readership creates a second layer of validation. Activist-based news sources do not enjoy either check to content validation. And furthermore, the political nature of underground journalism creates incentives for dissimulation. Lankina and Voznaya write that "namarsh.ru is maintained by opposition groups in

Russia and is thus potentially subject to some degree of bias in its reporting of protest events” (2015, 23).

What is to be done? Moving away from commonly-used newspaper-based data sources improves the researchers’ “hand of cards,” so to say. But is this the point at which scholars must play with the cards, flaws and all? I believe it is time to play the game. It will never be possible to have complete confidence in the quality of activist-generated data. It is clearly impossible to validate the veracity of each article on *namarsh.ru*, *ikd.ru*, or on any other analogous site. And furthermore, working with my definition of protest, a definition that includes very small-scale events, it will never be possible to capture every event; even the most thoroughly vetted dependent variable dataset will be a partial reflection of reality. There are two methods, however, that at least begin to address reporting bias.

The first option is cross-discipline triangulation. Lankina and Voznaya note that regions ranked as having comparatively high levels of civil society activism in previous studies also appear among the most actively protesting regions according to *namarsh.ru* (Lankina and Voznaya 2015). Democracy scholars have followed the trajectory of contentious politics and begun to build a body of sub-national literature. Kelly McMann and Nikolai Petrov, an American political scientist and a Russian geographer, used a survey tool to quantify provincial levels of democracy in the Russian Federation. In their work, McMann and Petrov gathered data on non-institutional political participation, including protests. Using this limited corroborative data, *namarsh.ru* data corresponds with public opinion polls. Areas in which respondents express interest in protest participation exhibit relatively high protest frequencies (*Ibid.*).

The presence of two disparate datasets creates another opportunity for cross validation. Should the *namarsh.ru* data confirm general trends that Robertson found when employing *ikd.ru* data, it would validate both datasets. Lankina and Voznaya conduct a very brief—puzzlingly brief—comparison of the two datasets. The two authors note that both sets present increasing

protest concentration in Moscow, particularly over the last two years, 2011–2012. The comparison begins and ends here. I conducted my own attempt at cross validation. The differences were significant. The collective action institute data, gathered by Robertson, produces consistently higher protest frequencies than namarsh.ru, over the period 2007-2011. Discrepancies range from a low of 267 in 2011, to 451 additional events in 2010. Many of the additional cases appear in the two capital cities. Still, considering only additional events recorded in other regions, the increase is significant: around 100 cases each year.

What explains the disparity between the collective action institute and namarsh datasets? I hand-coded every article appearing on the two websites over a two-week period, chosen at random, for a glimpse into reporting discrepancy. Namarsh.ru published thirty five articles, compared with seventy five on ikd.ru. These 110 articles produced a common pool of thirteen protest events, with each site reporting an additional, unique set. Contributors to namarsh.ru reported ten events not reported in ikd.ru, and contributors to ikd.ru reported fifteen unique events. I was not able to identify any common characteristic among unique articles. It appears that the two networks simply catch different events, and further, that the collective action institute's network is larger. Another potential explanation regards methodology. Robinson does not include coding decision details in any of his publications. He does not mention whether or not his dataset includes pro-regime demonstrations. Divergent coding rules could partially account for greater frequency counts. With more time and resources I would like to systematically study the discrepancies between the two sources.

It is clear that both datasets are incomplete. Neither source provides a complete picture of protest in modern Russia. Despite the lack of overlap, Voznaya and Lankina are satisfied that namarsh.ru "data provide a reasonably accurate portrait of the general temporal and spatial trends in protest activism" (2015: 43). There is thus expert opinion on the side of the activist data source. Still, I would stress that only additional research can quantify the gap between protest activity and reported events. Even with unlimited time and ample resources it would likely be

impossible to eliminate the gap altogether. This is an important epistemological admission, an admission that the ability to generate knowledge in the area of protest event onset will always remain, at best, incomplete.

I do share some of Voznaya and Lankina's optimism, however. The partial overlap in events, revealed during my brief exercise, provide a preliminary data validity check. It does not appear that the activists are inventing events to report. Rough similarity in overall frequency counts provides further weak corroborative evidence. Discrepancies of around 200 cases per year are much smaller than the discrepancies between activist sources and large-scale automated programs—as discussed below. No single data source can create a perfect reflection of reality. Incomplete data can still be useful, fortunately. To conduct statistical testing scholars must eliminate “systematic bias” that shape reporting frequencies in certain areas (Little 1992). If omitted cases are randomly distributed, if observed patterns approximated patterns in reality, the dataset will not produce spurious conclusion. Social mobilization capacity represents a possible source of systemic bias. Where communication networks are thin, where chances for inter-personal communication are limited, namrsh.ru contributions could systematically fall. By recognizing and framing potential systematic bias, incomplete data can serve as a basis for correlational analysis. The incomplete nature of dependent variable data only strengthens the imperative, inherent in all social science research (Brady and Collier 2010), to supplement correlational analysis with a qualitative process tracing exercise.

The Coding Decision

After choosing to augment the existing namarsh.ru dataset, a major methodological decision arises. Despite the allure of machine coding, hand coding is the best way to gather sub-national protest event data. My experience demonstrates the superiority of the human approach. This section presents a data vetting exercise, which exposes the relative shortcomings of leading automated projects, validating predictions from news worthiness theory.

To reiterate, automation is much, much more efficient than hand coding. Large-scale international event-data generation projects employ machine coding to benefit from returns to scale. Machine coding increases speed by a breathtaking margin. Automated coding processes like GDELT or SPEED process millions of articles, from thousands of news sources. Coders take advantage of the relatively constant format of major news articles. A flexible template can parse headlines from the *New York Times*, *El Monde*, or *RIA Novost* with relative ease. Country-specific event collections, often the product of activist-based news sources, are the product of hand-coding. This is not a coincidence. Generally country or area specialists focus on a small, contained area of the world, a small, contained set of contentious political events. The efficiency gains won through automated coding decline sharply with the number of cases at hand. Instead, scholars and their teams of research assistants read articles and code using the oldest processor, the human brain. The labor-intensive research variant requires no template. Researchers are not even aware of varying html tagging structures or spacing patterns.

The best approach would combine human and machine strengths. Merging the sheer power and efficiency of the machine, with the local source and language knowledge of the human, this combination could vastly improve the accumulation of research on contentious politics. The TABARI program can code 26-million articles in 6 minutes (Schrodt and Van Brackle 2013). Russia specialists have a lifetime of contextual knowledge. Can the two advantages align?

The coding choice cuts along the fraught quantitative-qualitative boundary in the social sciences. Debates on the topic usually concern the centrality of statistical methods and their epistemological foundations (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994; Brady and Collier 2010). Just as important to the quantitative toolkit, however, are computer programming skills, especially when directed towards data management, collection, and analysis. Programming avoids the ubiquitous discussions of r-squared values and causality. But like more traditional quantitative methodological tools, programming brings up the question of academic training. The split is not an artificial talking point. It touches on academic identity. It touches on hiring and promotion

decisions—it is “incontestable that quantitative training makes scholars more productive, as measured by articles per year, than qualitative workers” (King, 2011). If a question of training accessibility separates the two sides, computer programming creates an even deeper rift. Gary King lamented the state of quantitative education. He saw universities offering an array of mathematical and statistical courses. Programming did not make the list.

For this set of content, an error rate of 20-25% is unacceptable⁴. The total source set consisted of thousands of articles, not millions. The unquantifiable bias of missed reporting is unavoidable. Knowingly embracing a second source of bias was, in my view, unjustifiable. Aside

⁴ Leveraging coding skill and contextual knowledge, and relying on Phil Schrodts Open Data Alliance for guidance, I created an automated data gathering program. Written in Python, the program logged onto the protest events section of namarsh.ru, sequentially accessed each article, and stored each one on a hard-drive. Python Natural Language Processing Toolkit (NLTK), configured for Cyrillic, processed each article, one word at a time, and pulled out important information. Each article became a data record, holding the location, date, and type of protest event. Lankina and Voznaya’s existing dataset served as a useful sounding board. An automated run of a single year’s worth of Russian protest events produced a set of over 1,200 articles.

The margin of error between computer- and hand-coded results was acceptable for the quantitative methodologist, unacceptable to the qualitative methodologist. After a lengthy dialectic process, of calibration, evaluation, recalibration, and reevaluation, the success rate eventually rose to 80-85% for the trial year. This figure compares favorably with large-scale coding programs. For example, the Open Data Alliance’s TABARI system marks success at 80%, in an accuracy contest horserace against the Department of Defense’s Integrated Conflict Early Warning System (ICEWS) (Schrodts and Brackles 2013). Lockheed Martin has employed TABARI as an institutional resource. The defense contractor conducted a number of accuracy tests. Initial results were disappointing, clocking in at 58%. A concerted effort to improve the results, consisting of enhancing coding dictionaries, achieved an overall precision level of 75% with a 3% confidence interval (Ibid.). Human coders are themselves far from perfect. Scholars have devised projects that quantify the degree of inter-coder reliability, or the ability of coders to match a set of rules. Surprisingly, a reliability test, for the Comparative Manifestos Project, reported correspondence is less than half of cases, and for some indicators correspondence drops as low as 25% (Gemenis 2013). This is an extreme case, but the point holds: human coders are fallible. Concerns around research assistant training and inter-coder variability do not apply to my small-scale project. Even working against my own coding rules, however, it is naïve to think that I would match Voznaya and Lankina’s data with 100% accuracy. Schrodts notes that machine coding has crossed the threshold into utility, but “remains a work in progress” (Schrodts, Beiler, and Mark 2014). Lauding an error rate of between 20 and 30% may seem surprising. Surprise dissipates when considering the scale of material. Indeed, the scale is so striking it warrants one last example. Schrodts describes the arithmetic as follows: six minutes of automated coding compares with 500,000 labor-hours of manual coding, probably costing on the order of \$10 million when labor and administrative costs are taken into account (Ibid.).

from error, hand-coding offered a second significant benefit. Reading through thousands of articles gives the reader access to rich, contextual detail. Aside from specified details, automated coding obscures general processes at play. Hand-coding allowed me to develop a feel for Russian protest events and offered material for a qualitative exercise. Lankina and Voznaya's (2015) dataset includes coverage for five years, 2007-2012, coded from reports published on Kasparov's *namarsh.ru*. I hand-coded roughly 1000 source articles, translating from Russian to English, noting the most refined geographical information available, along with the date and reason for protest. Following my working definition of protest, the dataset includes anti-regime events of any size.

A comparative exercise demonstrates the utility of the updated Lankina and Voznaya dataset. Such an exercise contributes to media studies and contentious political studies alike. Like Lichbach and Almeida's work, the exercise systematically compared reporting of transnational protest in activist-based web sources to the coverage in conventional media sources. Comparisons of this nature quantify the difference between mainstream and alternative event data sources. This particular comparison provides a look at coverage provided by two major projects. Scholars have uncovered serious flaws with the GDELT program (Spath 2014). Even critics of past event data projects have lauded SPEED, a mixed-method event data aggregation project, one that has the highest likelihood of avoiding major pitfalls associated with automation (Ulfelder 2015). Scholars still use mainstream news sources, many of which featured automated parsing (Day, Pinckney, and Chenoweth 2015). This brief comparison can support, or challenge, the practice. The results were startling. GDELT and SPEED both performed terribly. This simple exercise indicates that both projects are completely inappropriate sources of contentious politics event data.

Even before beginning the data gathering phase, GDELT appeared to be an unreliable data source. In light of this data validation exercise, the decision was well justified. I compared GDELT data against my updated Lankina and Voznaya data for the years 2007 to 2013. At first

glance, the two sources differ dramatically. The automated coding program reports 10,000 more events over the six-year period. One of the two has to be incorrect, and badly. Brief analysis revealed major problems with GDELT's Russian protest data.

A brief presentation elucidates the problems facing large scale web-scraping and coding projects. False positives in the GDELT database immediately called to mind problems that arose in the development of my Russian-language coding algorithm. An event dataset should include one record for each event of interest. Newspapers, however, may include several mentions of planned events, before the fact, articles describing the event itself, and often, a set of articles discussing the event after the fact. Trimming articles surrounding the central event is an important error correction technique. This represents a problem for the automated database. An article describing a planned protest march in Moscow is recorded as the event itself (*Sputnik News* 2010). The Greenpeace protest aboard *Arctic Sunrise* spawned several follow-up articles, incorrectly appearing as protests (*BBC* 2013). The GDELT database even includes a protest event tied to an interview with an Australian protester after he had returned home (*Nelson Mail* 2013). The incarceration and trial of Pussy Riot, the art collective responsible for several high-profile acts of civil disobedience, offers another example of erroneous article proliferation. Over the course of the women's time in prison, protest events were incorrectly generated by articles discussing court proceedings, demands, and eventual amnesty (*The Guardian* 2012, *Jobs&Hire* 2013). Perhaps the most colorful example of failed coding algorithm came from an article titled "Putin: On Top Of the World." According to the author, an opinion piece writer for *Dawn*, a Pakistani political weekly, Putin was enjoying the apogee of his powers, despite recent protests in Moscow. The fact that this op-ed became a protest event after flowing through the coding pipeline highlights the extent of GDELT's problem.

Where GDELT's failure was overreporting, SPEED's failure was dramatic underreporting. The SPEED team at the University of Illinois currently makes available only a small subset of data. I was able to access Russian data for years 1998 and 1999. Unfortunately, corresponding

years are not available from the updated Lankina and Voznaya dataset. Robertson's ikd.ru dataset thus offers basis for comparison. SPEED reports dramatically lower frequencies across these two years. In 1999 the total frequency is 117 compared to Robertson's value of 800. Even more striking is the comparison for the last year of Putin's first term, 1998. Robertson's value, over 1,300, dwarfs the ten events reported by SPEED. The source column reveals the source of discrepancy. Each of the records appearing in the civil unrest database originated with an article in the *New York Times* or the *Wall Street Journal*. These results are all the more striking because the SPEED campaign includes a range of event-types, only a portion of which correspond with the definition of protest used here. Border incidents, assassinations, public executions, and kidnappings or hostage situations appear in the automated database. Even with an expanded definition, SPEED's reliance on mainstream, English-language news sources leads to extreme selection bias.

Ideas for Further Study

This chapter echoes earlier claims regarding newspaper data reliability, while making novel claims about automated data projects. Consensus holds that researchers should carefully approach the biases inherent in newspaper data (Earl et al. 2004; Ortiz et al. 2005; Ulfelder 2013). Still, mainstream newspaper sources are widely used in the field (Almeida and Lichbach 2003; Day, Pinckney, and Chenoweth 2015). This chapter suggests that, at least in the Russian case, scholars cannot use mainstream news sources to build representative contentious politics event datasets. I have presented an argument for activist-generated event data sources as a viable alternative. Furthermore, in my experience, hand-coding was more appealing than automation, given a relatively small number of cases, and given a relatively large error rate. I thus follow Lichbach and Almeida in urging scholars to approach activist-based data with hope and caution. As recently as 10 years ago, before the advent of web archives, newspaper issues were accessible to those enjoying a surplus of financial and temporal resources. Before the spread of cheap, accessible web-domains, activist sources were available only to local actors, or dedicated

communities like Tahrir Documents. Today, both mainstream and alternative media is readily available. In today's technological climate scholars must make use of all possible resources.

Comparison indicates that, for Russian protest events, activist sources are the most reliable. I acknowledge that scholars will never be able to precisely evaluate the gap between reality and observation. If incomplete activist-generated data represents the best hand available to scholars, is there hope for improvement? There are ways forward. Programming savvy scholars can continue to refine tagging algorithms, continue pushing towards 100% accuracy. Hand-coders can improve reliability by pooling and vetting complementary datasets. Given time and resources, I would merge ikd.ru and namarsh.ru data, hand-code each article, removing duplicates and false positives. The result would be the best approximation of reality available to Russian contentious politics scholars.

Activist-based datasets are the product of collaboration, explicit or not, between activists and scholars. This chapter's findings have important implications for both groups. The cumulative weight of mainstream news biases, discussed in this chapter, matters for Russian scholars, and it matters for Russian activists. In order to create reliable event data sources in contentious politics, scholars must end the practice of bystander scholarship.

They must actively work with alternative news sources to improve research. Unless activists themselves circumvent censorship, their message will remain unheard. It is only when the "bystander public" receives accounts of protest that activists can hope to win public support (Koopmans 2004). Whether trying to improve the human condition, or trying to improve knowledge accumulation, scholars and activists must leverage alternatives to mainstream media.

V - Structural Conditions of Russian Protest, 2007-2013

Introduction

The structural methodological position is an attempt to dramatically decrease the complexity of the social world. Faced with a nearly limitless amount of data, the structural lens creates broad, abstract concepts that explain events of interest. The position emerged over a century ago alongside the academic discipline of sociology. Emile Durkheim founded the first French department of sociology at the University of Bordeaux in 1895. Durkheim advocated explanations that obscured entirely the motivations and desires of individuals. It was instead, for the Frenchman, “social facts,” or the prevalent structures of norms, values and behavior, that shaped outcomes (1895). In this context, the word structure signifies the patterns or milieus in which individuals’ lives are embedded. Durkheim himself focused on ideational rather than physical structures, a move that would exclude mountainous terrain, infrastructure networks or weather patterns. The foundational work nevertheless serves as an exemplar of structuralist epistemology, a particular approach to knowledge generation.

The reward of an analytical shift from individual to structure is parsimony. Examples of the position span the history of social science, from the classical period to modern day. In his influential book, *The Spirit of Laws*, French philosopher Montesquieu proposed that geography and climate shape the nature of “men and societies” (1748). The theory emerged from his observation that people living in warmer countries exhibited emotional, violent personalities, whereas northerners appeared more staid.

Montesquieu's conclusions and logical reasoning processes appear misguided to the modern student of social science. That slavery proliferated in unusually hot countries due to a weakening of the body and subsequent "slothfulness of mind" appears as outdated as Ptolemy's geocentric universe, the phlogiston theory of combustion, phrenology, or the miasma theory of disease. To the modern student, still, the analytical power of Montesquieu's gamble is remarkable. Instead of spending years' worth of time and funding on field work, the social scientist could turn to the thermometer for explanation. Contemporary scholars have continued to test the analytical gamble. Examples of high-profile structural work include the correlates of war project (Singer and Small 1968; Vasquez 1987); modernization theory (Lipset 1959, 1994); political risk indicator creation (Gurr and Moore 1997); the quantitative study of civil war (Fearon and Laitin 2003a; Hegre and Sambanis 2006) and political protest (Eisinger 1973; Walton and Ragin 1990; Arce and Mangonnet 2013).

Correlation analysis is one method used to implement the broader structuralist methodology. The methods employed by a social scientist serve to gather evidence, in support of hypotheses, which derive from theory. For a structuralist theory, hypotheses take on the following generic form: conditions *X*, *Y* and *Z* increase or decrease the likelihood of event *A*. The structuralist begins the process of gathering evidence by quantifying important concepts. Once both the independent and dependent variables are quantified, the scientist can evaluate whether conditions do, indeed, shape the likelihood of events. Correlation is, of course, this characteristic held by variables that occur or change together. As defined in the Merriam-Webster dictionary, correlation is "a relationship existing between phenomena or between mathematical or statistical variables which tend to vary, or occur together in a way not expected on the basis of chance alone." This is the evidence needed to validate the structuralist gamble. It is not surprising, then, that Durkheim pioneered the use of correlational statistics in the social sciences. The sociologist's early theory posited that suicides were more likely to occur under conditions of anomie, in which social groups were poorly integrated. Durkheim's evidence took the familiar form: suicide rates

appeared higher in societies in which Protestants outnumbered Catholics and the Jewish, in societies in which marriage rates were relatively low. These simple results provided support for the analytically powerful structural position. Of course, additional research would explore causal mechanisms and rule out spurious relationships.

The greedy structuralist wager, its potential for explanatory power, has drawn more and more scholars to quantitative methods over recent decades. Gary King collected data on every article published in the *American Political Science Review* from 1906 to 1988. From 1906 to 1960, 24.5% of the 2,500+ articles involved quantitative analysis. Then the 1960's behavioral revolution erupted, and the proportion of articles using quantitative data and methods increased from under a quarter to over half. Behavioralists popularized the idea of quantification, and applied it to many new substantive areas. For King, this methodological shift reflected a growing appreciation of the benefits inherent in quantitative approaches, the fact that "they are abstract representations of the political world and are, thus, much clearer" (1998, 43). More recently, in 2003, Andrew Bennet, Aharon Barth, and Kenneth Rutherford undertook a similar survey of the top ten American political science journals. The authors tracked a stark continuation of the trend identified by King decades previously. They reported that the number of quantitative studies has continued to climb (2003).

Structuralist quantitative studies simultaneously evaluate two propositions. First, does statistical evidence support specific, proposed hypotheses? Do indicators of group cohesion covary with suicide rates? Secondly, and by extension, such studies evaluate the structuralist gamble itself. Can scholars generate compelling explanatory accounts while working with abstract categories? Across the broad field of contentious politics, scholars have published thousands of quantitative studies, suggesting that the data-savvy analyst can, to some extent, gain explanatory value from structural models. Stock-taking exercises have accumulated a set of insights derived from studies of civil war and state failure (Robert Adcock and David Collier 2001; Hegre and Sambanis 2006; Dixon 2009). In the field of social protest studies, the field in which this study

appears, evidence of the structural gamble is less clear. Scholars working at the national level (Maher and Peterson 2008) and sub-national level (Eisinger 1973; Arce and Mangonnet 2013) have produced positive results. However, Ponticelli and Voth (2011) and more recently Chenoweth and Ulfelder (2015a) produced negative results, suggesting greater emphasis on context specificity and agency over structure in explaining movement onset.

This chapter will apply the Idea of the State theory of protest onset, to the Russian case. Through traditional correlational analysis, I will produce evidence of the sort common in the social sciences since the behavioral revolution; I will attempt to “find significant statistical effects even in the presence of noisy data” (Dixon, 2009: 713). This chapter will thus evaluate the general structuralist position, as an alternative to agent-centered theories. More specifically, this chapter will produce what I believe to be the only comprehensive test of social protest onset. Leading theories of social mobilization capacity, grievance or political opportunity structure all offer explanations. As Chapter 2 outlines, the Idea of the State is a promising alternative. Leveraging my original sub-national Russian data, and the updated Lankina and Voznaya protest data-set, this chapter will evaluate the promise of the full set of theories, in Russia, over the recent six year period 2007-2013.

As the previous two chapters have argued, scholars often fail to adequately test structuralist theories in contentious politics. While the structuralist position simplifies reality, scholars have relied on simplistic quantifications of independent and dependent variables. Every quantitative study must address problems associated with missing cases and model selection. Chapter 3 demonstrated, however, that methodological nationalism represents an even more serious, and more widespread, threat to valid inference. Chapter 4 highlighted the importance of carefully selected dependent variable data, data that include refined location tags, data that are not restricted to mainstream news sources. Only equipped with such sub-national datasets, which are rarely easily accessible, can scholars evaluate the relationship between structural conditions

and the onset of contentious political events. This chapter brings together the preceding theoretical and quantitative work to test hypotheses.

The first section presents state capacity profiles for all eighty three Russian federal subjects. The Idea of the State Theory expects correlations between protest onset frequency and a triad of driving factors. Each descriptive profile thus includes operationalizations of state coercion, cooptation, and cooperation, along with operationalizations of grievance, social mobilization, and political opportunity theory. Profiles also include descriptive statistics of the dependent variable, protest event frequency from 2007 to 2013. The second section briefly restates theoretical expectations; it presents a set of hypotheses derived from the Idea of the State and the big three from Social Movement Studies, as well as several rival explanations from Russian area studies work. Employing a negative binomial regression model, the third section evaluates the strength of correlations between state capacity and protest onset. A concluding section discusses policy implications and directions for further research.

Descriptive Trends

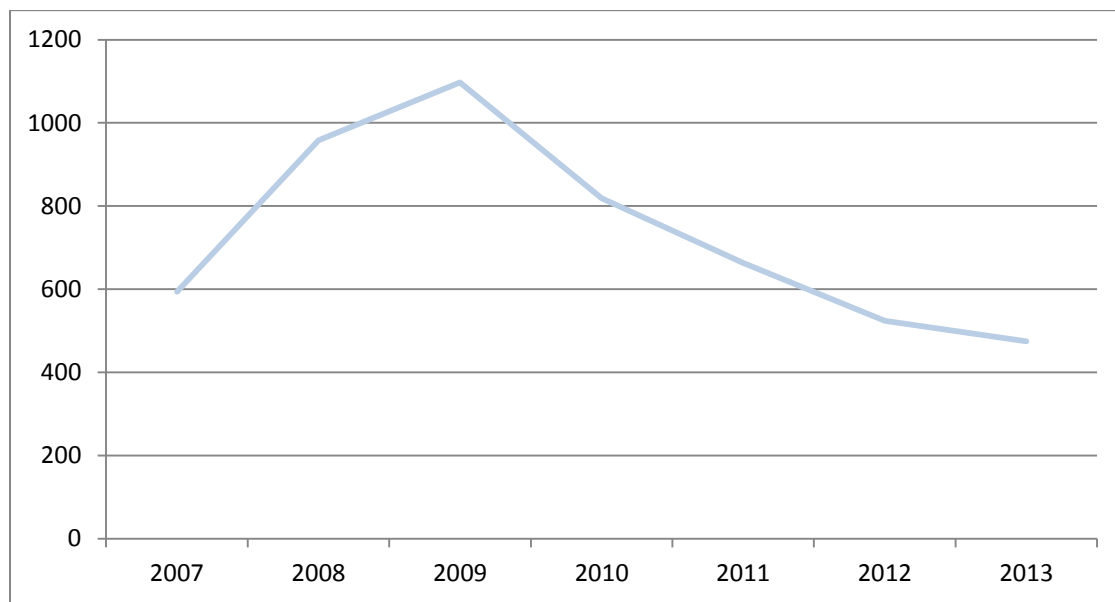
As the Latin translation “something given” indicates, data are the foundation of any inquiry into the social world. By recording the occurrence of events, and mapping trends over time and space, scholars move beyond notional thinking, or intuition. As observations become data points and data points become lines, invisible patterns of human events become visible. Doctor John Snow, a 19th century British physician, produced a touchstone example of the value of descriptive statistics. In the 1850s, a sudden and severe cholera outbreak baffled doctors in London’s Soho district. At the time the transfer of cholera infections, and infectious disease in general, were not well understood. Prevailing wisdom regarding cholera identified airborne miasma as the method of transmission. Snow began investigating the problem by mapping incidence locations, marking each case on a Soho street plan. Gradually, the collection of marks presented a clear picture. Hash marks clustered around a central hub, the Broad Street water pump. Snow subsequently determined that a nearby sewage line had contaminated the water

source. The traditional story often involves colorful accounts of Snow puzzling over the immunity of local brewery workers, who consumed treated water, and then, in a flash of understanding, demanding authorities remove the well's pump handle. Modern commentary has removed some of the luster from the romanticized descriptive statistics legend. Edward Tufte, statistician, political scientist, and author of several data visualization guides, argued that Snow's map failed to control for the number of people living in the Broad Street region. John Snow's captivating study nevertheless illustrates the power of empirical observation in the social sciences.

An exploration into the structural causes of Russian protest events naturally begins with data. While the Idea of the State theory operates at the abstract conceptual level, effective testing requires precise data gathering. National-level operationalizations of state capacity and protest frequency are easily accessible, but they are not useful. The exploration requires, first, a quantification of protest onset frequency, reported at the level of federal subject. And secondly, given the Idea of the State theory of protest onset, the exploration requires quantification of coercion, cooptation, and cooperation. This section will first explore trends in protest onset across Russia at the national level and at the federal district level to offer a high-level overview. Next, the lens will focus on the federal subject level. A state capacity profile will describe the structural conditions in each of the eighty three subjects.

By quantifying state-society relations at the local level, I follow the example of perhaps the forefather of Russian descriptive statistics, Peter the Great. Tsar Peter Alexeyevich earned his superlative sobriquet for a set of modernizing reforms in the economic and military spheres. Peter's reforms began with empirical observations, in the form of census application. An effective population count was necessary to plan military conscription, plan tax programs, and gather forced laborers for factory work during war time. The Tsar utilized census figures to solve problems facing the country. Protest and state capacity profiles of the Russian federal subjects similarly begin my inquiry. The dataset underlying the profiles, however, could serve as a foundation for any number of inquiries into the forward and backward linkages of state capacity.

Figure 3: Annual Russian Protest Events, 2007-2013



Source: Updated Lankina and Voznaya Protest Data (Appendix i)

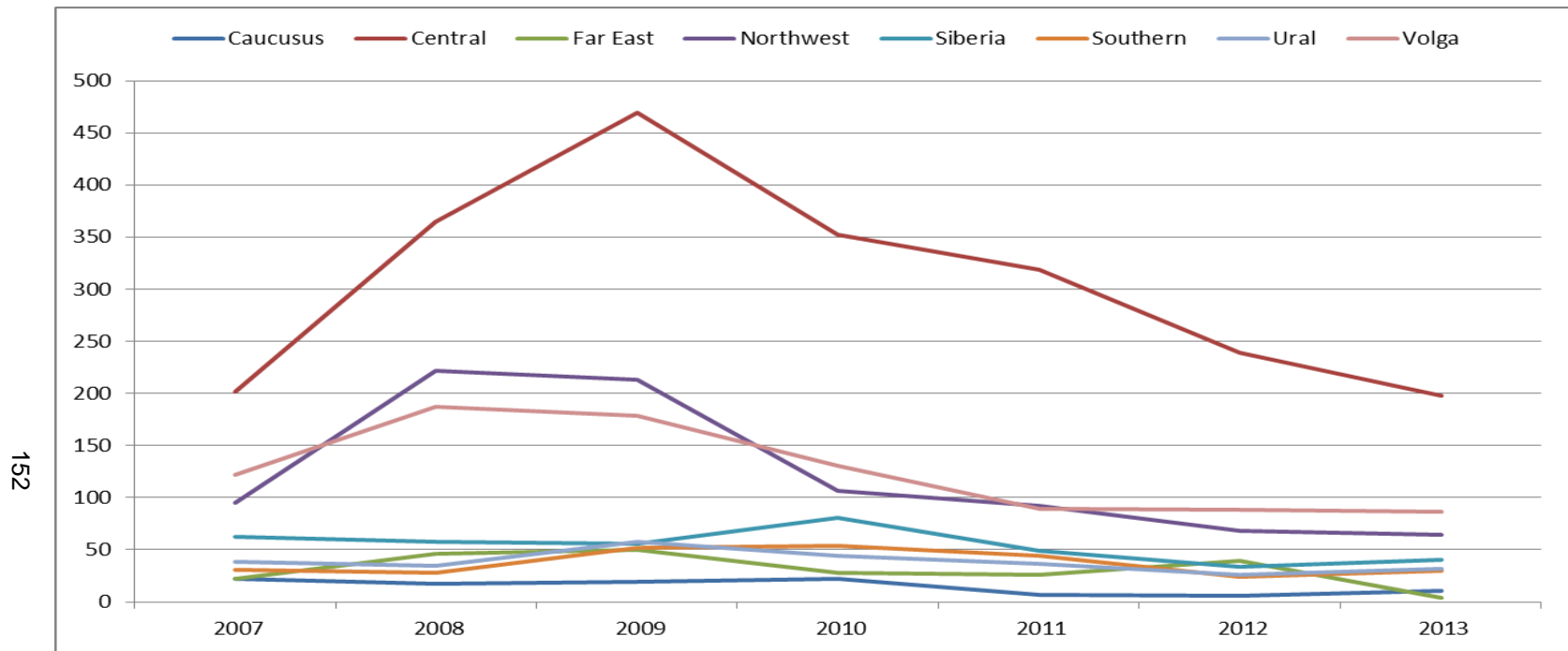
The national level provides a general impression of protest-onset trends. Figure 1 plots event frequency data from the updated Lankina and Voznaya dataset. As discussed in Chapter 4 this collection represents the only modern event dataset of Russian protest. I have extended the coverage to include 2013, using source articles from the internet-journalist community operating Namarsh.ru. The chart indicates that protest events are relatively common. Even the lowest annual value, 475 protests in 2013, is a high enough frequency to satisfy two important criteria for structural inquiries into the social world. Charles Ragin's (2008) exhortation to study phenomenon that are common clearly holds—see Chapter 1. More practically, the number of observations, in total and per year, is high enough to warrant the use of statistical methods.

The national level aggregation of protest events shown in Figure 3 renders the object of study visible, but in a crude focus. Describing protests as having occurred in Russia can be a useful heuristic when comparing frequencies across countries, or looking for a snapshot of longitudinal trends. For any effort to understand where and why protests occur, the national-level aggregation is not useful; for the purposes of evaluating the relationship between state capacity

and protest onset, it is not useful. The structural conditions that shape the likelihood of these events—according to the Idea of the State theory—do not exist in Russia. They exist in local municipal bodies of Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Novosibirsk, Magadan, or Altai Krai. Durkheim theorized a structure of inclusive relationships driving the onset of suicide. Montesquieu theorized a climatic structure driving the development of personality traits and institutional development. In order to test the theories, the Frenchmen each quantified structural variables. Quantifying the Idea of the State, the structure of the social contract, requires federal subject statistics, along the dimensions of coercion, cooptation, and cooperation.

The following section disaggregates Figure 3, showing the onset of protest events by federal districts. Vladimir Putin created these divisions (федеральные округа) in 2000 by presidential decree. Putin hoped to bring federal authority to the subjects, and streamline economic planning and enforcement of Russian federal law. So far the goal remains unattained. Russian legal scholar Gordon Hahn notes that "federal authorities' effort to reintegrate Russia's legal space suggest that a mix of administrative and judicial means is being used and that the results to date are likewise mixed" (2002:501). Here, the seven districts serve to disaggregate protest frequencies in a step-wise manner. Moving in steps from macro to micro gradually reveals regional variation driving major national trends, as contentious political scholars have demonstrated across contexts, for example from Mexico to Argentina (Arce and Mangonnet 2013).

Figure 4: Protests by Federal District



Source: Updated Lankina and Voznaya Protest Data (Appendix i)

Figure 4 begins to reveal the “rich spatial-temporal palette” (Lankina and Voznaya 2015: 15) of protest activism across Russia. Disaggregating dependent variable data adds nuance to national trends. It is immediately clear that the dramatic spike in protest, in 2009—as displayed in Figure 3—is the product of events in the high frequency Central region. This region includes Moscow, and not surprisingly accounts for a large portion of total events reported each year in the updated Lankina and Voznaya dataset. In the Ural and Volga districts the peak is less distinct, matched by a similarly high value in 2008, before declining over the next several years in accordance with the national pattern. The remaining six federal districts—the Far East, North Caucasus, Siberia, and Southern—exhibit no noticeable conformity with the national trend. These districts, which report between 10 and 100 events each year, hold relatively constant over the 2007-2013 time horizon. The federal district level of analysis reveals uneven geographic distribution of protest frequency. This lack of uniformity is not surprising given the Idea of the State theory. The theory expects sub-national municipal units to reflect underlying differences in structural characteristics associated with coercion, cooptation, and cooperation. What Figure 3 suggests, then, is that the federal districts exhibit variation along independent variable indicators. Even if a common exogenous factor influences all regions simultaneously—say the global financial crisis—the theory expects local drivers to shape the linkage to protest. Of course, protest events do not occur at the district level either. In order to describe the structural drivers of Russian protest, only the federal subject level will suffice. This second refinement in analytical scope will increase the number of regions by a factor of ten, from eight to eighty three.

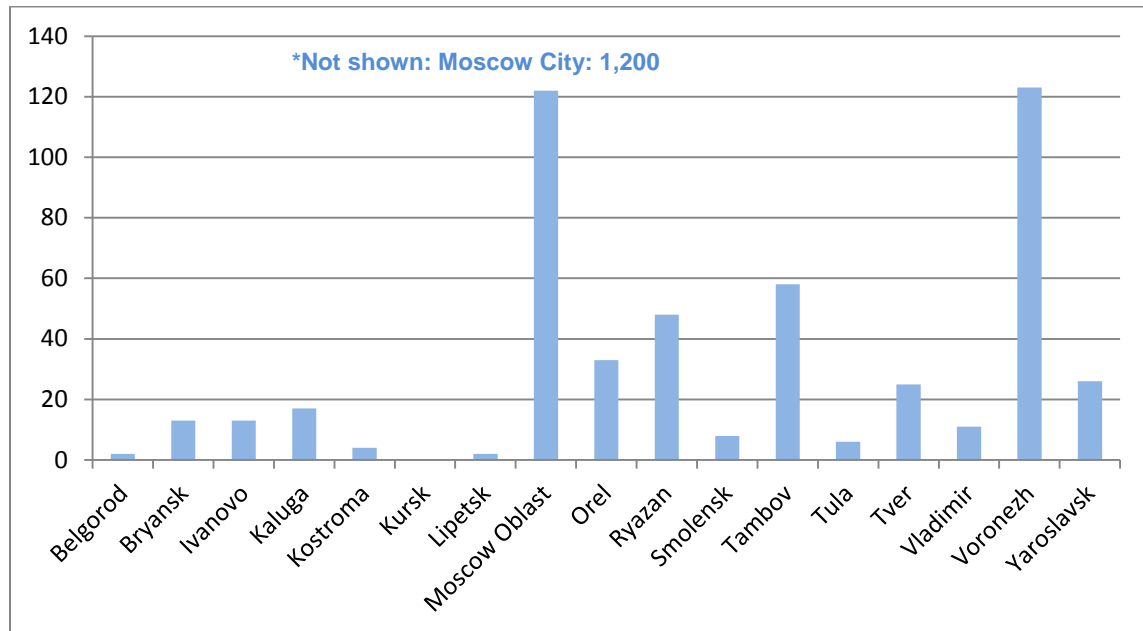
Abandoning national and even federal district levels of aggregation comes with a cost: complexity. The loss of parsimony is apparent in the moves from one to eight to eighty three cases. Increased complexity is a requirement for answering the research question at hand. The goal of this project is to evaluate a structural relationship between Russian protest event onset and a three-dimensional conception state capacity. Coercive, cooptation, and cooperative capacity only exist at the immediate location in which protestors take to the streets, organize sit-

ins or otherwise demonstrate civil disobedience. In order to test the theory, I will conduct correlational analysis of the variables that shape the relative protest frequencies across federal subjects⁵ from 2007 to 2013. Subject level disaggregation represents the smallest geographical unit featuring the financial and political characteristics necessary to test the full set of structural theories. This is the first such test. Even Lankina and Voznaya themselves, creators of the original dependent variable data-set, restricted their analysis to trends in onset and anecdotal observation. Before moving to statistical testing the following section presents state capacity profiles for each region. In order to preserve clarity of presentation, the section will display profiles of each federal subject, grouped by federal district. The following demonstration is necessarily lengthy. It is necessary as a lead-in to hypothesis testing. It is further necessary, because—as Chapter 3 argues—developing local-level measures of state capacity is an inherently meaningful academic exercise.

⁵ As mentioned in Chapter 1, Russian Federal subjects encompass numerous designations. Despite varying nomenclature, legal and practical differences are minor. Russian federal scholars treat the subjects as generalizable, choosing to rely on financial and political indicators to capture autonomy (Stepan 2000). The two most common types, krais and oblasts, were formed as primary districts during the early years of the USSR. Originally, krais were territorially larger than oblasts, and located on the edges of Federation Land—the word Край means edge or frontier. Republics were originally created as homelands for non-Russian ethnic groups. As such, the regions maintain the right to establish their own official language. Some, Tatarstan for example, continue to feature a large titular ethnic population. Others have become nothing more than historical relics. This is especially true of the farcical Jewish Autonomous Oblast, created by Stalin as a homeland, which never attracted many residents and today features a Jewish population of less than 1%. Upon their creation, republics were also given autonomy not found in other federal subjects. Agreements limited federal oversight on taxation, judicial system, police force, citizenship, and diplomatic connections. During Vladimir Putin's reign, all agreements have expired.

Central

Figure 5: Protest Events, Central District



Source: Updated Lankina and Voznaya Protest Data (Appendix i)

The Central federal district contains 16 federal subjects, situated in the European section of Russia, bordering Ukraine and Belarus to the west. The title “Central” is more historical than geographical. The region made up the core of the Grand Duchy of Muscovy, the medieval predecessor to the Russian Federation. As Figure 4 indicated, the district reports significantly more protests each year than any other. Much of the discrepancy emerges from the inclusion of Moscow City, which averages over 220 events across the modified Lankina and Voznaya dataset. The capital city is geographically embedded within an oblast of the same name, Moscow Oblast, but remains a separate political entity. Figure 5 presents the values of yearly protest onset for each federal subject. For purposes of scaling and readability Moscow City values do not appear on the plot. The capital city’s values dwarf all other regions, with over 1,200 reported events. Voronezh and Moscow Oblast each report over 130 events over the time horizon. In a second tier, Tambov, Orel, and Ryazan report more than fifty events over the time horizon. The

remaining regions—Belgorod, Bryansk, Ivanovo, Kaluga, Kostroma, Kursk, Lipetsk, Smolensk, Tula, Vladimir, and Yaroslavl—each report fewer than twenty five protest events.

With the dependent variable captured and visualized the next step is to explore state capacity structures present in each region. Using a number of data sources—primarily the Russian national statistical office—I have created operationalizations for the tri-part structure described by the Idea of the State theory, as well as major strains of Social Movement Theory. The following table displays values for each indicator, for each federal subject in the Central region. The dataset includes entries for each year from 2007 to 2013, corresponding with the dependent variable data. For ease of interpretation and spacing Table 1 contains mean values across the seven years, with the exception of electoral support for United Russia in the 2008 presidential election, located in the final column.

Table 2: Central District

Federal Subject	Population	Urban Population	Secondary Education	Crimes Per Capita	Unemployment	Social Spending Per Capita	United Russia Vote	Carnegie Openness Index
Belgorod	1532	66%	9.1	1148	4.3	22323	65.3	25
Bryansk	1275	69%	7.9	1791	7.0	17013	61.7	26
Ivanovo	1062	81%	5.3	1768	6.6	18103	60.7	29
Kaluga	1010	76%	4.8	1811	5.3	23307	61.6	36
Kostroma	669	70%	3.5	1490	5.4	19800	56.3	30
Kursk	1132	65%	6.5	1691	6.3	19273	62.7	36
Lipetsk	1172	64%	6.2	1418	4.3	20845	62.3	29
Moscow City	11589	100%	.	1755	1.4	52794	54.1	30
Moscow Oblast	7060	80%	32.1	1695	3.2	30078	60.2	35
Orel	788	66%	4.3	1852	6.9	19643	59.9	32
Ryazan	1155	71%	6.0	964	6.2	20289	57.1	27
Smolensk	987	73%	4.4	2061	6.7	19692	53.9	40
Tambov	1092	59%	5.9	1369	7.3	17423	59.7	27
Tula	1554	79%	7.7	1039	4.6	19818	61.7	34
Tver	3797	75%	6.4	1679	5.4	23168	81.0	39
Vladimir	1441	78%	6.7	1785	5.9	18910	56.7	34
Voronezh	2337	64%	12.5	1356	6.2	18334	57.4	33
Yaroslavl	1278	82%	5.6	1803	5.4	25433	53.1	39

Recall, the Idea of the State framework theorizes state capacity as the product of three dimensions, coercion, cooptation, and cooperation—which must be considered alongside the dominant three positions from Social Movement Studies. Coercion represents the government’s ability to restrict the behavior of its population. Coercive tools are water cannons, batons, barricades, jail time, and fines. This dimension represents the state as police officer. Table 2 contains Central district values for an indicator of coercive capacity, crime prevalence, as well as three measures of social mobilization capacity, total population, urban population percentage, and number of secondary education graduates, those passing the Unified Governmental Exam (Единый Государственный Экзамен, or ЕГЭ). A set of benchmarks frame the table values. Percentiles facilitate quick data comparison by displaying relative standings within a group of observations. A percentile reports the percentage of scores in a dataset that fall below a particular score. For example, an SAT score in the 90th percentile is higher than 90% of all scores. Each state capacity profile table will highlight relatively high and low values when they appear. Red shading indicates a score in the bottom quintile, that is, at or below the 20th percentile. Green shading indicates a score in the top quintile. The Idea of the State theory dictates the valence for each indicator. Red(green) scores represent particularly low(high) levels of state capacity, not necessarily low(high) numerical values.

Coercive capacity and social mobilization capacity vary within the Central District. Most of the subjects hold populations close to the national mean. The populations are remarkable, however, in their urban clustering. Of the fifteen central subjects, only three fall in the first quartile, and a full seven fall in the third quartile. The crime measure is the number of reported crimes per 10,000 people in the region. On this second indicator Moscow city loses its usual position as an outlier. The subjects exhibit a range of values from 964 in Ryazan, to over 2000 yearly, populated-weighting crimes reported in Smolensk. Education profile results hint at significance: Moscow and Voronezh, sites of far and away the highest protest frequencies, both exhibit high graduation figures.

The second dimension of the Idea of the State framework, cooptation, similarly varies among federal subjects in the Central District. Recall, that state capacity to coopt signifies the ability to “buy-off” potential dissidents. Cooptation in practice takes the form of government subsidies, pension payments, and government spending targeted towards public education and health systems. This dimension describes the state as provider. Like coercion, the state’s ability to coopt is shaped by society. Table 2 includes an operationalization of cooptation capacity, a measure of government spending directed towards socio-cultural projects, expressed in per capita terms. For grievances, the table displays the unemployment rate of each subject.

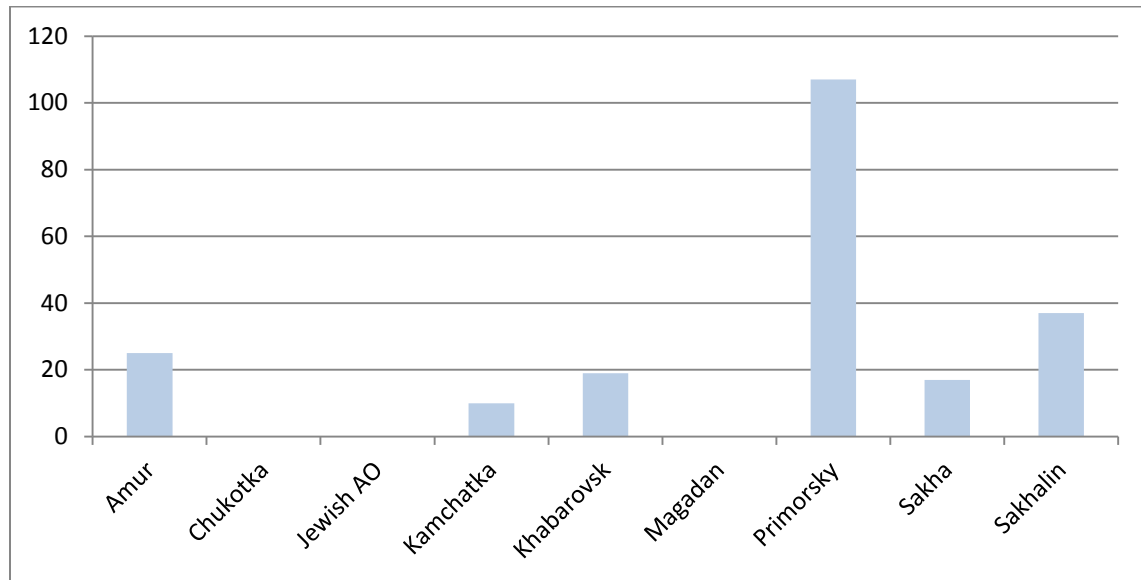
Table 2 suggests that, across the region, federal subjects possess high cooptation capacity and low levels of grievance. None of the subjects in the region possess high levels of unemployment, relative to national percentiles. In fact, nine of the federal subjects are among the highest performers Russia-wide on unemployment. On the final indicator, social spending per capita, members of the region are decidedly middle of the pack. Only two fall into the extreme quartiles. Bryansk’s leadership spends relatively less on socio-cultural projects, and Moscow’s leaders spend relatively more.

The third and final element of the Idea of the State is cooperation. Cooperation is the internalized acceptance of the social contract on the part of citizens. Table 2 includes a single measure of cooperation: the percentage of the vote won by the governing United Russia party in 2008, the party of Vladimir Putin and Dmitri Medvedev. The Carnegie Center’s Openness Index operationalizes political opportunity structure, the final theoretical position from Social Movement Studies.

The final two columns suggest that Central District local governments do not enjoy high cooperation capacity, and face relatively open political opportunity structures. Seven of the thirteen federal subjects reported voting totals that appear in the 1st quartile of all subjects. None of the remaining subjects report totals that place them among the most supportive of United Russia. On the Carnegie Index, subjects fall close to the mean, or in the relatively open category, with the exception of Belgorod, Bryansk, Ryazan and, Tambov.

Far East

Figure 6: Protest Events, Far East District



Source: Updated Lankina and Voznaya Protest Data (Appendix i)

The Far East Federal District, located near the American, Chinese, Japanese, and North Korean borders, reports an uneven frequency of protests over 2007-2013. As a whole, the region accounts for 200 of all 1700 Russian events, or just over 11%. Within the region Primorsky dominates the picture, with over 100 reported events. Meaning maritime in Russia, the Primorsky Krai includes Vladivostok, a trading hub connected to Asia countries and the largest city in the Russia east. Conversely, three Far Eastern subjects failed to report a single event over the seven year time span. Chukotka, Magadan, and a peculiar historical relic, the Jewish Autonomous Okrug, appear quiescent in the updated Lankina and Voznaya dataset.

Table 3: Far East District

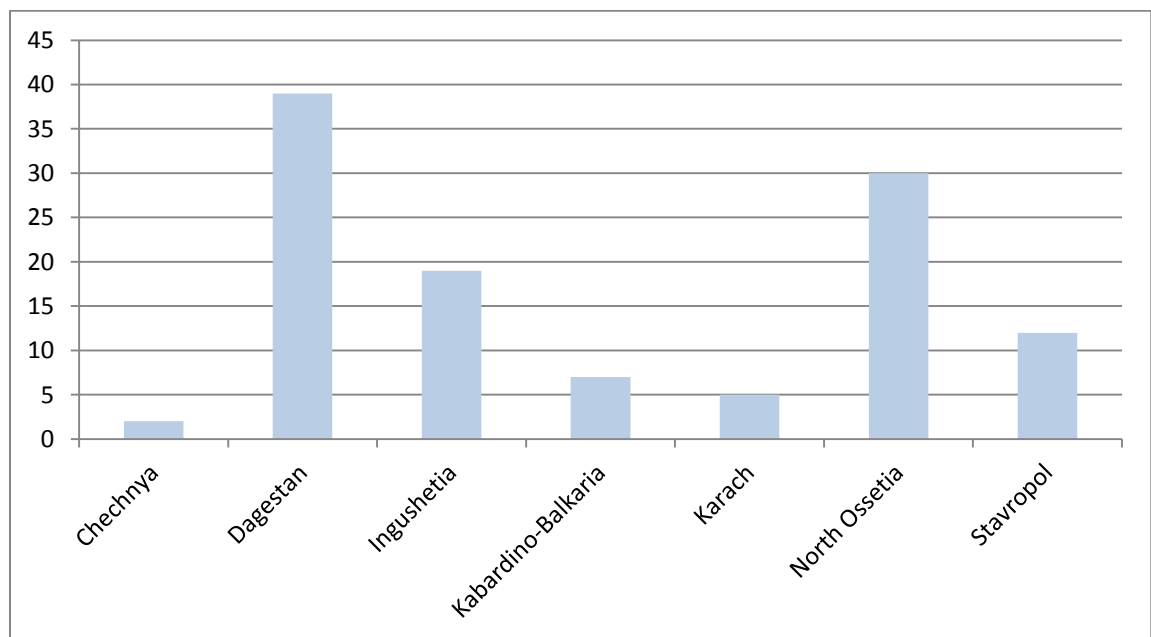
Federal Subject	Population	Urban Population	Secondary Education	Crimes Per Capita	Unemployment	Social Spending Per Capita	United Russia Vote	Carnegie Openness Index
Amur	829	67%	2.3	2325	6%	34240	69%	29
Chukotka	51	65%	1.7	1716	4%	136778	78%	18
Jewish AO	176	68%	2.3	2374	9%	32143	66%	22
Kamchatka	324	77%	1.8	1802	7%	66296	63%	32
Khabarovsk	1348	82%	2.8	2849	7%	35186	60%	26
Magadan	157	96%	2.4	2400	5%	70314	55%	25
Primorsky	1959	76%	2.8	2864	8%	22603	54%	35
Sakha	956	64%	1.7	1764	8%	65647	63%	36
Sakhalin	500	80%	2.4	2413	7%	61649	62%	37

Table 3 shows the state capacity profiles of Far Eastern District member regions. The table reveals a fairly uniform weakness along the coercion dimension and strength along the cooptation dimension. Six of the nine regions appear in the top quintile of urban population percentage—though all nine feature very low education graduation figures. Five of the nine regions similarly fill ranks among the most crime-ridden Russian regions, with over 2300 reported crimes each year, per 10,000 inhabitants. Member regions exhibit greater variability along the unemployment indicator. Average unemployment in the Jewish Autonomous Okrug, Primorsky Krai and Sakha are relatively high, and all other regions except Magadan report mid-range values. However, regional governments enjoy natural resource wealth. Far Eastern subjects host oil, gas, and precious metal mining operations, which catalyze government revenue and spending. The subjects all fall in the top quintile for socio-cultural spending per capita. Chukotka province offers an example of regional state-society relations. The region exhibits the highest per capita social spending of all regions, with a staggering 136778 rubles.

Oligarch Roman Abramovich served as governor of Chukotka, during which time he instituted training programs and attracted investment in local oil, natural gas, coal, and tungsten plants. As governor, Abramovich was named person of the year by the Russian business journal Expert (Эксперт). Cooperation indicators, the percent of the vote garnered by United Russia, was correspondingly high in Chukotka, as well as Amur and the Jewish Okrug. Of the remaining regions Magadan and Primorsky Krai reported relatively low support for the ruling party. Political opportunity structures appear closed, not conducive to protest, with the exception of Sakha and Sakhalin.

North Caucasus

Figure 7: Protest Events, North Caucasus District



Source: Updated Lankina and Voznaya Protest Data (Appendix i)

The North Caucasus federal district, bound between the Black Sea to the west, the Caspian Sea to the east, Georgia and Azerbaijan to the south, and the Russian Southern District to the north, is more often associated with war than protest. The region has a history of civil war, and more recently, insurgent violence. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, leaders in

Chechnya declared independence. Deep-seated local resentment stemmed from the World War II years. In 1944, Chechens were among the groups Stalin accused of collaborating with the Nazis. Half a million Chechens were forcibly herded onto cattle cars and sent to western Siberia. As Masha Gessen writes “the exiles were literally dumped into the open snowy fields and left to fend for themselves” (2013). Boris Yeltsin led the Russian army to suppress independence claims, starting a civil war that would last nearly two years. A tense ceasefire lasted only two more years, before the second Chechen War erupted in response to the invasion of Dagestan by the Islamic International Brigade. Today, tensions in the region remain. An active insurgency has claimed responsibility for terrorist attacks in Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, and North Ossetia. The members of this region feature a small portion of the protests reported in Russia between 2007 and 2013. With the highest figures reported in Dagestan and North Ossetia, the modified Lankina and Voznaya dataset features forty events in the North Caucasus, or just over 2% of all protest events.

Table 4: North Caucasus District

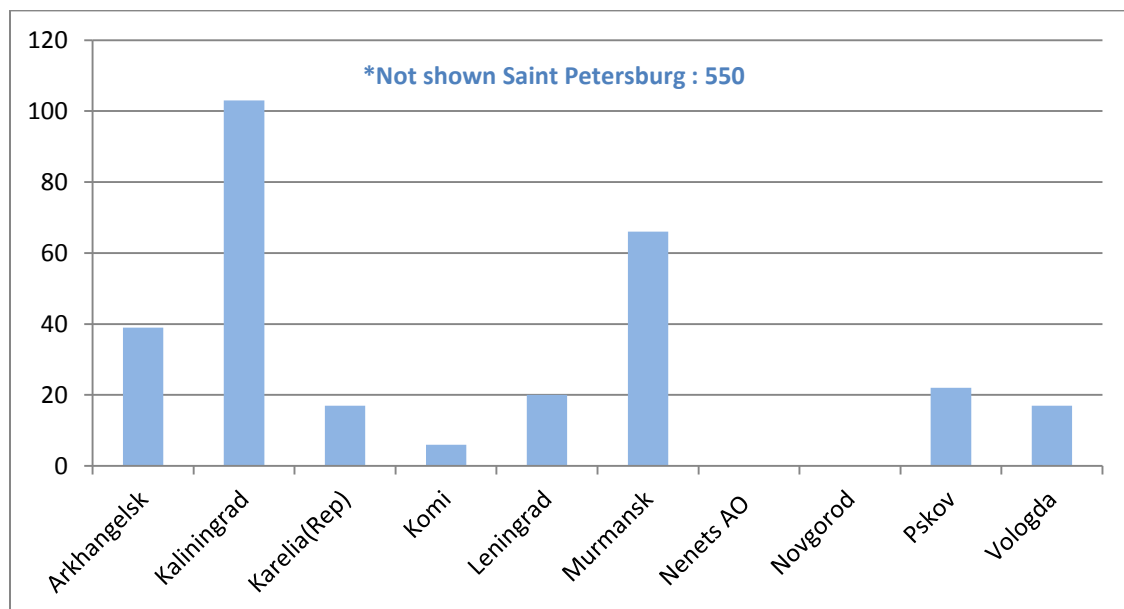
Federal Subject	Population	Urban Population	Secondary Education	Crimes Per Capita	Unemployment	Social Spending Per Capita	United Russia Vote	Carnegie Openness Index
Chechnya	1275	35%	8.9	356	37%	29409	99%	16
Dagestan	2890	45%	23.6	460	13%	13933	89%	28
Ingushetia	427	38%	3.3	436	49%	19432	98%	19
Kabardino-Balkaria	861	54%	7.2	1038	13%	15495	96%	20
Karachai	471	42%	2.9	994	12%	18403	92%	27
North Ossetia	709	64%	5.3	1034	9%	16485	71%	32
Stavropol	2781	57%	14.8	1403	6%	17096	62%	42

Again, Table 3 displays the state capacity profile of each federal subject in the North Caucas District. A quick glance at the percentile shading reveals a clear uniformity across subjects, from Chechnya to Stavropol. The legacy of civil war appears to have produced a set of local governments possessing very high coercive capacity. Crime rates in each of the seven federal subjects are among the lowest in the Russian Federation, a trend that is exemplified by very low rates in the most historically violent regions of Chechnya, Dagestan, and Ingushetia. Social mobilization capacity influences the state's ability to control protests. Each of the seven federal subjects fall among the least urbanized, and Dagestan and Stavropol alone produce high secondary graduation figures. Ramzan Kadyrov embodies the iron fist of North Caucasian states. After years of terrorist violence, including an attack that killed his father, the previous governor of Chechnya, Kadyrov launched a hardline anti-insurgency program. In the early 2010's the number of yearly casualties has steadily declined, while the number of alleged human rights violations has risen (Amnesty International, 2015). For his commitment to harsh social order Kadyrov has received the monikers "Putin's Dragon," (*The New Yorker*), "The Putin of Chechnya" (*The New Yorker*), and "Putin's Willing Executioner" (*The Atlantic*).

Kadyrov's Chechnya further reflects high cooptation capacity, with a very high level of socio-cultural spending per capita. The remaining six regions, however, exhibit low or medium scores on the spending indicator, and nearly all of the North Caucasian subjects report low scores on the grievance operationalization, unemployment rates. Strong state capacity reemerges on the cooperation dimension. Each of the seven federal subjects, with the exception of Stavropol, reported high levels of support for United Russia in the 2008 election. Political opportunity structures are correspondingly open, with the exception of Stavropol.

Northwestern

Figure 8: Protest Events, Northwestern District



Source: Updated Lankina and Voznaya Protest Data (Appendix i)

The Northwestern Federal District occupies the northern section of European Russian. The district borders Finland, Norway, and the Baltic states to the west, the Central and Volga Federal Districts to the south and east, and the Arctic Ocean to the north. This region contains a variety of dissimilar federal subjects. Kaliningrad is the only non-contiguous land mass, situated between Poland and Lithuania. Saint Petersburg, or Peter in slang, the second capital, a cosmopolitan hub, accounts for 550 protests, second only to Moscow City. Arkhangelsk is the home of Arctic

Circle research centers and remote fishing villages. Inhabitants of the northern region live through more than 160 days of snow each year on average, and spend winter months in complete darkness. Bolstered by Saint Petersburg, the Northwestern District accounts for 850 protest events over 2007-2013, or just around 50% of all events. The remaining eleven federal subjects report a variety of protest frequencies. Kaliningrad and Murmansk report high frequencies of 102 and 70. Nenets Autonomous Okrug and Novgorod do not report a single event. And Arkhangelsk, Karelia, the Republic of Karelia, Komi, Leningrad, Pskov, and Vologda report between seventeen and thirty events.

Table 5: Northwestern District

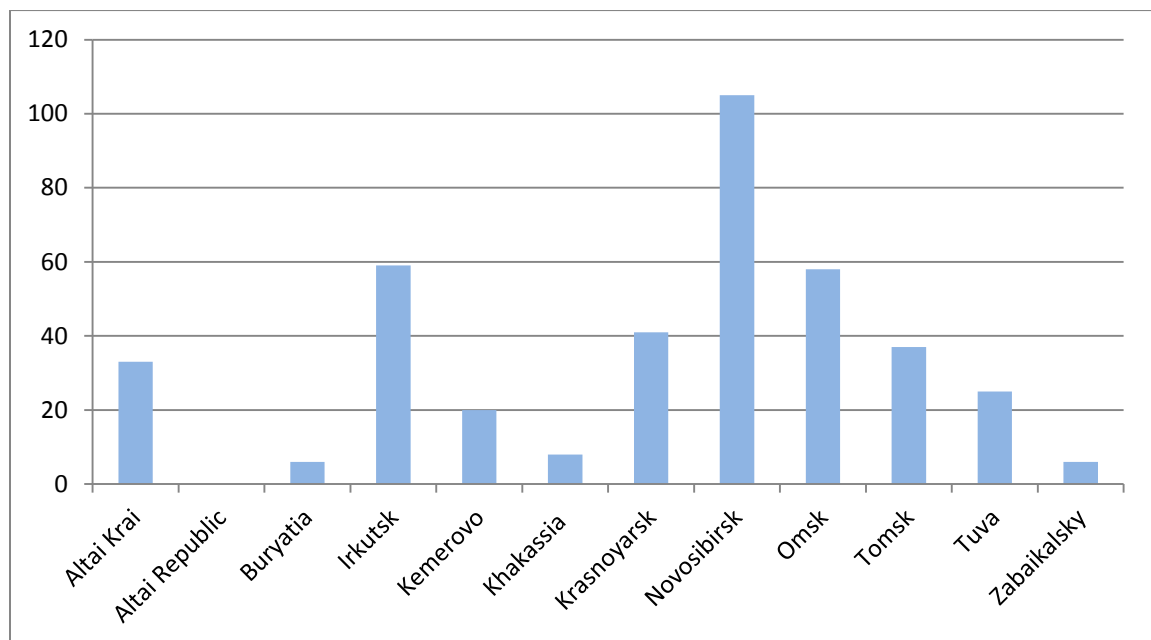
Federal Subject	Population	Urban Population	Secondary Education	Crimes Per Capita	Unemployment	Social Spending Per Capita	United Russia Vote	Carnegie Openness Index
Arkhangelsk	1225	76%	6.8	2156	6.3	30518	56.7	35
Kaliningrad	947	78%	4.9	1850	7.9	23040	57.3	36
Karelia(Rep)	646	78%	12.9	2082	8.2	32165	57.2	
Komi	902	77%	5.6	2327	8.7	37546	62.0	27
Leningrad	1726	66%	6.7	1651	4.9	23390	59.2	29
Murmansk	796	93%	4.3	2046	7.6	41176	55.1	29
Nenets AO	42	67%	.25	1859	7.6	143178	48.7	38
Novgorod	636	71%	3.11	2046	5.1	23575	63.1	39
Pskov	676	70%	3.66	1832	7.9	22096	56.7	26
St. Petersburg	4927	100%	.	1486	2.2	36194	50.3	31
Vologda	1205	71%	5.5	2239	6.4	26958	60.4	29

Table 5 shows the state capacity profile for the twelve Northwestern federal subjects. The quartile shading reveals a fairly consistent pattern across indicators. Urban population percentage and population-weighted crime statistics suggest low to medium coercive capacity. Five of the twelve subjects contain over 77% urbanization, placing them in the top quintile. Of the remaining regions, only Leningrad and Nenets Autonomous Okrug fail to cross the median urbanization value of 70%. Social mobilization capacity scores are uniformly middle-of-the-pack, with the exception of Saint Petersburg's relatively low value, and with the exception of education outliers Karelia and Nenets. Trends in the following indicators are similarly uniform, but high rather than low. Five of the regions report average unemployment of under 6%, the value corresponding with the 80th percentile.

Cooptation capacity produces a set of values near the mean, with the expectation of Saint Petersburg, and Nenets, which reports a dramatically high value of socio-cultural spending per capita. Located within the Arctic region of Archangelsk, Nenets' local economy is dominated by oil and gas. According to Rossstat, over 95% of economic output in the region is tied to oil and gas production. Government rubles flow to local spending projects, particularly infrastructure development projects. The third dimension of state capacity, cooperation, is uniformly low throughout the region. The Northwestern federal subjects do not identify with political leadership—as proxied by support for United Russia in the 2008 election. Outside of Komi and Pskov, closed political opportunity structures characterize the area.

Siberia

Figure 9: Protest Events, Siberian District



Source: Updated Lankina and Voznaya Protest Data (Appendix i)

The Siberian Federal District occupies a land mass in Asian Russia, covering over 5,000,000 square kilometers, or roughly half the size of the United States. The district borders the Ural District to the west, and the Far East District to the east. The northern border is the Arctic

ocean, and the southern border includes Mongolia, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan. Despite holding a reputation for desolation and emptiness, the Siberian district accounts for 400 protests according to the revised Lankina and Voznaya dataset, or roughly a quarter of total events. The twelve member subjects report protest frequencies ranging from over 100 to zero. The high mark appears in Novosibirsk Oblast, home to a metropolitan hub of the same name, which features a large international airport and a lively international scientific enclave in Akademgorodok. The low mark, on the other hand, appears in Altai Republic, a sparsely populated mountain region known for seismic activity and eco-tourism. Three other member regions, Buryatia, Khakassia and, Zabaikalsky Krai reported fewer than five events between 2007 and 2013. And Altai Krai, Irkutsk, Kemerovo, Krasnoyarsk, Omsk, Tomsk, and Tuva all reported between twenty and sixty events. All of these federal subjects are closely nestled in the southern edge of the district. The Siberia of Cold War and literary fame, of forced labor camps and endless taiga expanse, can be found in the northern section of Krasnoyarsk.

Table 6: Siberian District

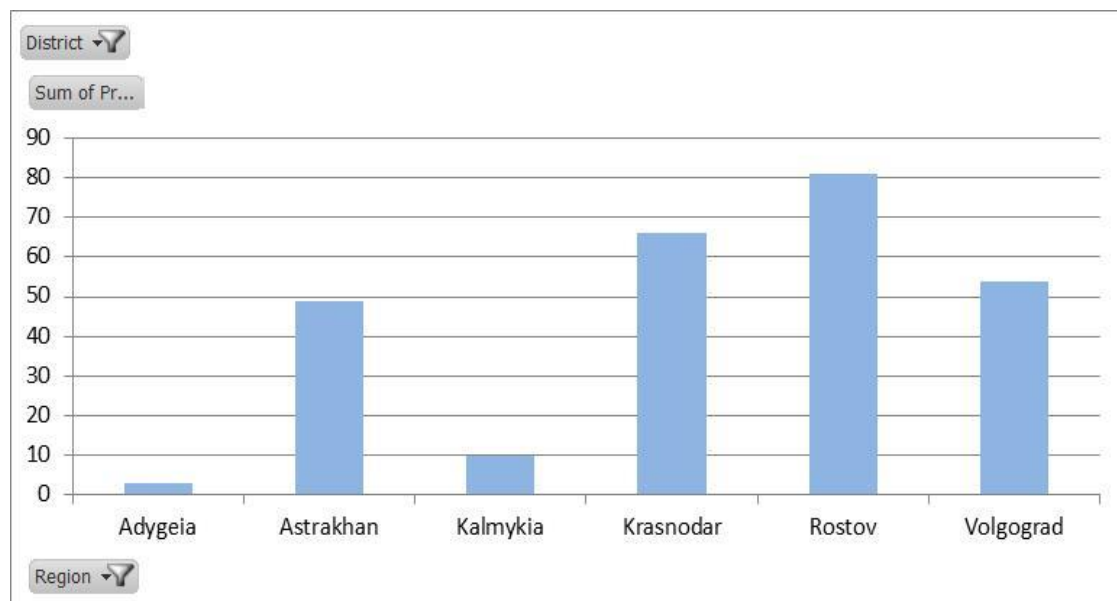
Federal Subject	Population	Urban Population	Secondary Education	Crimes Per Capita	Unemployment	Social Spending Per Capita	United Russia Vote	Carnegie Openness Index
Altai Krai	2424	55%	14.8	2131	8.4	18614	54.6	35
Altai Republic	207	28%	1.5	2594	11.9	35796	69.4	31
Buryatia	971	58%	6.5	2921	10.6	27384	65.6	31
Irkutsk	2436	80%	13.2	2925	9.0	26478	58.5	42
Kemerovo	2761	85%	13.6	2371	7.5	25008	76.8	30
Khakassia	533	67%	3.1	2429	7.6	23884	59.5	32
Krasnoyarsk	2843	76%	18.0	2525	6.8	35476	60.0	23
Novosibirsk	2683	77%	14.1	2569	7.2	24879	59.0	28
Omsk	1983	71%	11.3	1810	7.7	22372	60.1	28
Tomsk	1051	70%	6.3	2558	8.1	25080	58.4	30
Tuva	1354	75%	6.4	2238	5.7	22426	59.7	23
Zabaikalsky	1104	66%	6.8	2843	11.4	33475		29

Keeping with the sequence, Table 6 displays the state capacity profiles for each member of the Siberian federal district. Coercive state capacity for the twelve federal subjects appears to be uniformly weak. Strong social mobilization capacity increases the difficulty of controlling protest. Seven of the subjects exhibit relatively high or mid-level concentrations of urban population. The exceptions are Altai Krai, Altai Republic, and Buryatia, each of which exhibit urban population concentrations of less than 60%. Indeed, the mountainous Altai Republic holds the lowest value of urbanization in all of Russia at 28%, along with one of the lowest graduation figures. State coercive capacity is even more clear-cut. All but two of the regions, Altai Krai and Omsk, score in the top quintile for reported crimes. State capacity improves somewhat along the cooptation dimension.

Grievance measures, unemployment scores, fall in the bottom quintile for six of the subjects. However, the state component of cooptation is less remarkable, with three regions exhibiting relatively high levels of socio-cultural spending. Greater variation emerges along the cooperation dimension of state capacity. Two of the Siberian regions supported United Russia relatively strongly. Three regions supported the party weakly. Political opportunity structures are more homogenous, middle-of -the-pack with, Krasnoyarsk and Tuva exceptions on the open end, and Irkutsk on the closed end.

Southern

Figure 10: Protest Events, Southern District



Source: Updated Lankina and Voznaya Protest Data (Appendix i)

The Southern Federal District lies between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, to the west and east, between the Volga district and the Northern Caucasus district to the north and south. The Southern district has served as a meeting place between cultures for hundreds of years. Since the 4th century, empires have fought to control trade routes along the numerous of rivers that snake through the six Southern member subjects. Scythians, ancient Greeks, Genoese, and Ottoman Turks each held outposts in what is today Rostov and Astrakhan. The

Volga river delta area was the site of the Golden Horde's Russian capital, witnessed a siege from Tamerlane's army, and hosted battles in the Russo-Turkish war of the 16th century. The Southern district's natural environment continues to drive cultural and economic life. The resort town of Sochi, located in Krasnodar Krai on the Black Sea, hosted athletes from around the world for the 2014 Winter Olympics. The Volgograd Hydroelectric Power Station is the largest hydroelectric dam in Europe. According to the updated Lankina and Voznaya database, federal subjects in the district exhibit high frequencies of protest between 2007 and 2013. Astrakhan, Krasnodar, Rostov and Volgograd each report 49 or more protest events. The sparsely populated enclaves of Adygea and Kalmykia each report fewer than ten. In total the district, account for 200 events, or roughly 12% of the total.

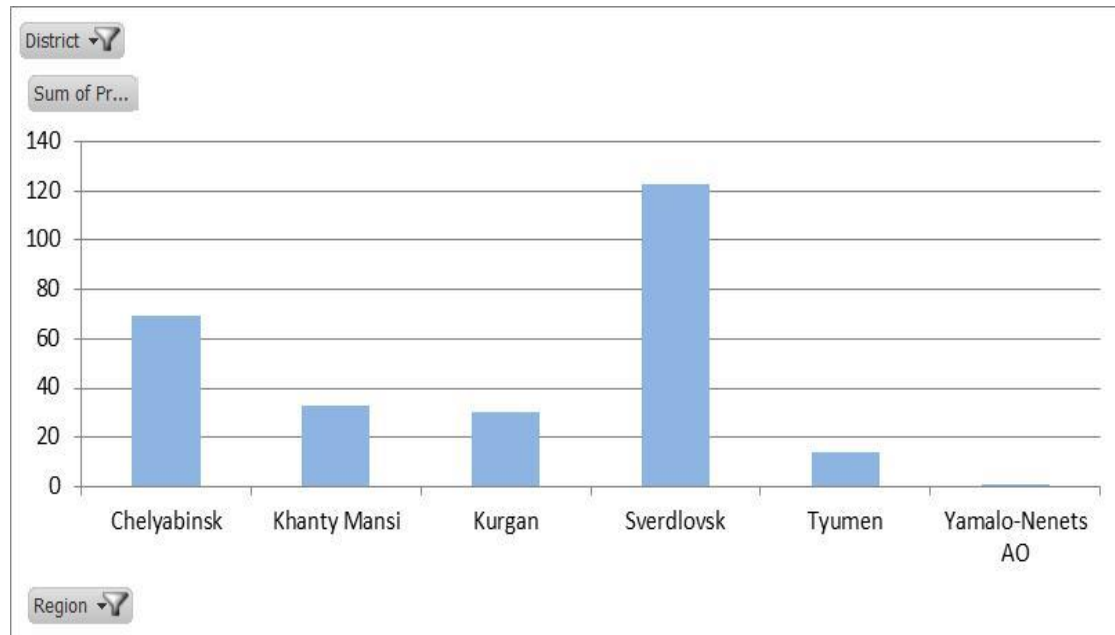
Table 7: Southern District

Federal Subject	Population	Urban Population	Secondary Education	Crimes Per Capita	Unemployment	Social Spending Per Capita	United Russia Vote	Carnegie Openness Index
Adygea	442	51%	2.3	1034	8.5	17850	70.9	25
Astrakhan	1011	67%	5.1	2554	8.4	20337	58.0	30
Kalmykia	288	44%	2.6	1529	14.5	20194	72.4	2
Krasnodar	5259	53%	24.1	1326	6.1	20642	62.0	40
Rostov	4275	67%	21.3	1575	7.0	18631	71.8	30
Volgograd	2602	76%	14.4	1746	7.5	18381	57.7	36

Table 7, once again, presents the state capacity profile for each of the Southern District member subjects. Across the coercion, cooptation, and cooperation dimensions two types of profile seem to emerge. Adygea and Kalmykia exhibit relatively strong coercive and cooperation capacity, coupled with relatively weak cooptation capacity. The regions produce few secondary school graduates and hold small populations that are not concentrated in urban areas. Both regions exhibit crime statistics at or below the median value. On unemployment and social spending per capita, however, both regions fail to provide jobs or amelioratory spending. Despite the weakness on cooptation, support for United Russian was strong in the 2008 election, and political opportunities are scant. The remaining four subjects are much more highly and densely populated, and produce more graduates. With the exception of Astrakhan, each exhibits average to low crime rates. Cooptation capacity varies among Astrakhan, Krasnodar, Rostov, and Volgograd. Along cooperation, Rostov joins the two small enclaves in support for United Russia, while Astrakhan, Krasnodar, and Volgograd voiced low support. Political opportunities are correspondingly more abundant among this second group. .

Ural

Figure 11: Protest Events, Ural District



Source: Updated Lankina and Voznaya Protest Data (Appendix i)

The Ural District spans the eponymous mountain range, stretching from the Arctic Sea to Kazakhstan, bound from west to east by the Volga and Siberian Federal Districts. Forming the border between Europe and Asia, the Urals hold dozens of ore and mineral species, from nickel, gold, and platinum, to coal, bauxite and talc. The six subjects that make up the mountainous district provide the center of industrial production for the Russian Federation. Across history the forges have hosted serfs, forced laborers, and free men and women. The Bolsheviks found support among the region's workers and established their first headquarters in Yekaterinburg and Perm during the October Revolution. As Hitler pushed the eastern front across Poland and onto Russian soil, Stalin relocated industrial plants to the Ural region to protect supply lines. Today, Magnetogorsk embodies the industrial history of the district. The factory-city is located in Chelyabinsk Province, on the Magnitnaya Mountain, a construct of almost pure iron, the only geological formulation of its type in the world. The factory at Magnetogorsk continues to produce output today, although at a much lower rate than during the war years. Modern day protests in the

Ural District are concentrated in the Chelyabinsk and Sverdlovsk regions, which report sixty three and 121 events over 2007-2013. Khanty Mansi and Kurgan report between twenty and forty events over the time horizon. And the small enclave of Yamalo-Nenets reported a single event. With a total of 230 events the Ural District accounts for roughly 13% of total protest events.

Table 8: Ural District

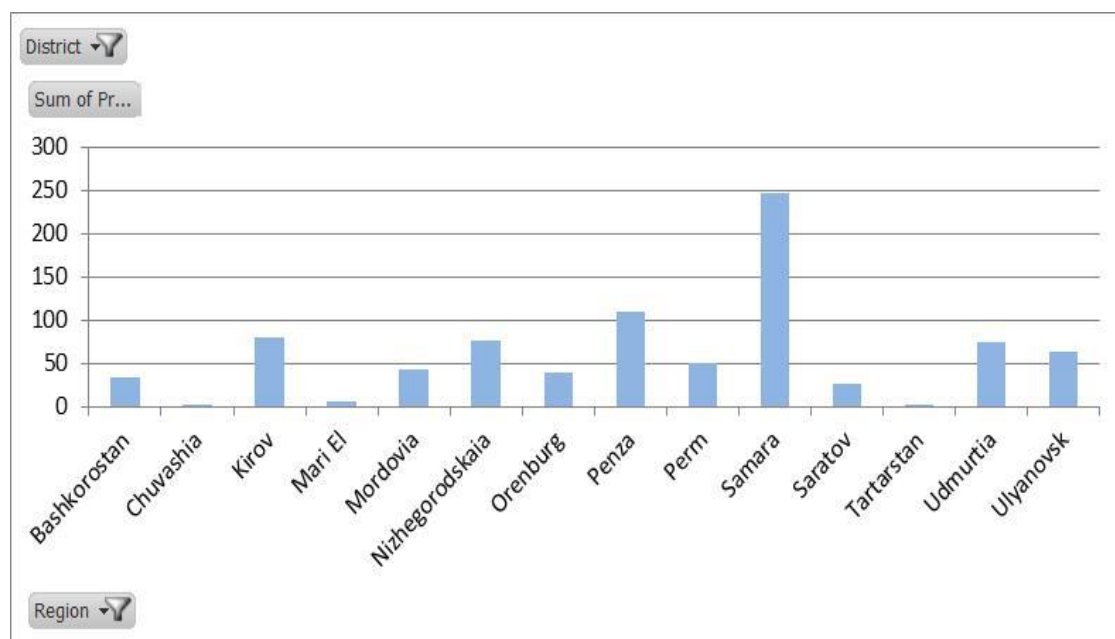
Federal Subject	Population	Urban Population	Secondary Education	Crimes Per Capita	Unemployment	Social Spending Per Capita	United Russia Vote	Carnegie Openness Index
Chelyabinsk	3487	82%	16.4	2348	5.9	20548	61.1	36
Khanty Mansi	1544	91%	10.1	2251	6.6	73981	65.9	31
Kurgan	908	60%	4.8	2639	9.9	21120	64.4	21
Sverdlovsk	4315	84%	21.0	2271	6.5	26508	62.0	28
Tyumen	3429	78%	22.8	2451	6.0	17155	73.5	30
Yamalo-Nenets AO	530	85%	4.2	1854	3.9	106461	78.3	28

Table 7 further continues the trend by presenting the Idea of the State profile for Ural federal subjects. The six regions score nearly uniformly poorly on coercive capacity and average or strongly on cooptation and cooperation. Kurgan and Yamalo-Nenets are the only two subjects that hold relatively small populations, with only 60% of Kurgan's population living in urban centers. They are also the only two subjects with low secondary education figures. Governments of Chelyabinsk, Khanty Mansi, Sverdlovsk, and Tyumen all face a difficult societal context vis-à-vis efforts to curtail protest activities. By the measure of yearly crime reporting, these governments do not display the ability to shape the behavior of their subjects. Of the Ural districts, only Yamalo-Nenets reported a score outside of the top 20th percentile of crime-ridden regions. Despite a recent decline in Russian industrial production, only Kurgan exhibits a particularly high unemployment value, however. Khanty Mansi and Yamalo-Nenets even exhibit very high levels of cooptation capacity as measured by socio-cultural spending per capita—generosity tied to fossil fuel production. Khanty Mansi accounts for over 50% of all Russian oil production (Rossstat).

And even more striking, Yamalo-Nenets accounts for over 90% of all Russian natural gas. Scores along the cooptation dimension cluster around the median value, with the exception of Yamalo-Nenets and Tyumen, the oil production center of Russia during the Soviet era. Other than the relatively open Chelyabinsk and relatively closed Kurgan, political opportunity structures also cluster around the mean.

Volga

Figure 12: Protest Events, Volga District



Source: Updated Lankina and Voznaya Protest Data (Appendix i)

The Volga District occupies the southeastern section of European Russia. The district borders, moving clockwise around the compass rose, the Southern, Central, Northwestern, and Ural Federal Districts, and Kazakhstan to the south. The fourteen federal Volga subjects span the ethnically diverse, fertile region along the largest river in Europe, referred to as Mother Volga (Волга-матушка). In addition to providing land and soil for crop-based agriculture, the region is heavily forested—over 70% of Perm Krai's land area is covered in coniferous forest, for example. Ports throughout the district, in Kirov, Nizhegorodskaja, Samara, connect food products, beer,

timber, printing, and biochemical industries to consumers abroad and throughout Russia. Economic production is not limited to primary and secondary products. Local facilities export tertiary products, including automobiles, computer processors, and space exploration hardware. The Bashkir, Chuvash, Mari, Mordavian, Tatar and Udmurt groups all enjoy federal republic status in this region. In each ethnic republic the titular group rivals Russians for majority demographic and linguistic prevalence. Local resources and infrastructure, land and water transportation routes, generate wealth for inhabitants of the Volga District. The verdant climate fostered by Mother Volga allows biologists to study a range of rare flora and fauna. Protest frequencies in the Volga district range from fewer than five, in three of the republics, to nearly 250, in Samara. The remaining ten federal subjects reported between forty and 110 events in the updated Lankina and Voznaya dataset. In total, the district's 750 events accounts for nearly 30% of all recorded protests from 2007 to 2013.

Table 9: Volga District

Federal Subject	Population	Urban Population	Secondary Education	Crimes Per Capita	Unemployment	Social Spending Per Capita	United Russia Vote	Carnegie Openness Index
Bashkorostan	60%	4068	26.5	1762	7.1	19562	83.1	24
Chuvashia	59%	1253	8.9	1581	8.2	18303	62.2	31
Kirov	74%	1344	6.5	1712	7.7	20632	55.3	34
Mari El	63%	696	4.5	2120	8.9	17845	67.5	18
Mordovia	60%	833	4.8	1147	4.5	22964	93.4	30
Nizhegorodskaia	79%	3318	17.1	2283	6.0	21864	60.6	22
Orenburg	60%	2036	11.3	1749	6.7	22189	60.3	27
Penza	67%	1384	8.3	1340	6.1	19576	70.3	43
Perm	75%	2648	12.0	2965	7.7	25214	62.0	32
Samara	80%	3216	15.9	2282	4.6	23148	56.0	30
Saratov	75%	2524	14.4	1483	6.8	18604	64.8	26
Tatarstan	53%	308	3.8	2082	19.2	35571	89.2	37
Udmurtia	69%	1523	8.4	2358	7.5	21671	60.5	31
Ulyanovsk	73%	1292	7.8	1508	6.8	18724	66.2	30

For one final time, Table 9 displays the multi-dimensional state capacity profile for members of the Volga Federal District. Along the three dimensions of coercion, cooptation, and cooperation the fourteen federal subjects exhibit variation. Few patterns emerge from the quintile visualization impression. Between Tatarstan at the low end, and Nizhegorodskaia and Samara at the high end, the subjects exhibit population sizes across the entire percentile distribution. Urbanization and education figures are similarly variable throughout the Volga District. Cooptation strength ranges between mid and low across the subjects, with several exceptions. The unemployment rate in Tatarstan is remarkably high.

Tatar-inform, a local news agency, opined that “the rate of unemployment in Tatarstan has grown in spite of receiving massive anti-crisis subsidies over the last decade” (2016). The effort, while not reducing unemployment, may have won a measure of cooperation capacity. Bashkortostan, Mari El, Nizhegorodskaya, and Orenburg join Saratov in reporting closed political opportunity structures. Indicators in Penza and Tatarstan point the opposite direction. Political opportunity structures are similarly closed, with the exception of the two outlier subjects.

Hypothesis Formulation

The preceding section rendered the Idea of the State visible for all eighty three Russian federal subjects. The lengthy presentation demonstrates the variation along the three state capacity dimensions. At the same time, the tables demonstrate levels of social mobilization capacity, grievance, and political opportunity structure. With variation in coercive capacity, cooptation capacity, and cooperative capacity, the regions exhibit a range of state-society relations. For example, across the North Caucasus District the state rules with an iron fist; in the polar climes of the Northwestern District and the Far East District, the state coopts loyalty with social spending tied to natural resource wealth. The state capacity profiles presented in tables 1-8 facilitate hypothesis testing. With the independent variables operationalized for federal regions statistical testing can finally answer the question: is there a relationship between state capacity and protest onset? The state capacity profiles would facilitate similar investigations, into similar research questions that explore the causes, or the effects, of state capacity along the three dimensions.

State Capacity

The Idea of the State produces numerous hypotheses. The theoretical framework posits that state capacity, through three dimensions, holds explanatory power vis-à-vis protest onset. This structuralist wager would provide analytical efficiency of the sort hoped for by Montesquieu's climate theory, or Durkheim's suicide theory. The Idea of the State posits that local governments

have the ability to check social unrest in their territory, by fostering coercive, cooptation, and cooperative capacity.

As a proxy for the state component of coercion, crime rates are expected to increase along with protest frequency. In general, the theory expects subjects characterized by weak coercive capacity to exhibit high frequencies of protest onset. As a proxy for cooptational power, socio-cultural spending should win loyalty among the population. In general, the theory expects higher likelihood of protest onset among subjects possessing weak cooptation capacity. As the population identifies with national leadership, and internalizes an affinity for the Russian state, an environment of cooperation will dampen protest onset stemming from all causes. This ideational effect reduces the likelihood of protest onset, regardless of other prevailing structural conditions. Support for the ruling United Russia party serves as the proxy for cooperational capacity. The Idea of the State framework expects a higher likelihood of protest onset among subjects possessing weak cooperative capacity.

H1: Coercive state capacity is negatively related to protest onset

H1a: Crime rates per capita are negatively related to protest onset

H2: Cooptational state capacity is negatively related to protest onset

H2a: Social spending per capita is negatively related to protest onset

H3: Cooperational state capacity is negatively related to protest onset

H3a: United Russia vote share is negatively related to protest onset

Social Movement Theory

Social Mobilization Capacity

H4: Social mobilization capacity is positively related to protest onset

H4a: Urban population % is positively correlated with protest onset

H4b: Total population size is positively correlated with protest onset

H4c: Secondary education graduation rates are positively correlated with protest onset

As the population increases, and as the population clusters around urban centers, social mobilization capacity grows. Large student populations are expected to serve as a particularly rich pool of potential activists. Regardless of the state's resources or abilities, high population, high density, student heavy federal subjects will prove more difficult to regulate.

Grievance

H5: Grievances are positively related to protest onset

H5a: Unemployment is positively correlated with protest onset

As the unemployment rate rises, as more and more people lose their jobs, grievance will drive them to the streets. The theory assumes that grievance arising from unemployment will engender a broad disdain for government performance. Regardless of the state's resources or abilities, aggrieved populations will threaten to gather more frequently.

Political Opportunity Structure

H6: Political opportunity structure openness is negative correlated with protest onset

H6a: The Carnegie Institute Openness Index is positively correlated with protest onset

As independent relationships thrive, in economic, political, and civil activities, opportunities for protest will proliferate. According to the theory, opening of political opportunity structure, broadly defined, spurs protest onset through the demonstration effect, and hope.

Alternative Explanations: Russian Studies

Security studies and area studies scholars focused on Russia provide several alternative hypothesis that do not neatly fall under the Idea of the State framework, nor under the big three theoretical traditions of Social Movement Studies.

The relationship between regime stability and natural resource wealth has long occupied security studies scholars. Lucrative extractive industries have been shown to strengthen regime

durability and reduce the likelihood of political protests (e.g., Smith 2004). In the Russian context natural resource production shapes federal subjects' financial relationships with the center; Putin's regime recycles tax revenue from oil, mineral, and natural gas to relatively poor regions. The cycle turns heavy production regions into net exporters of federal transfers. By this logic, low or even negative transfer flows should correlate with low levels of protest activity.

On the other hand, Russia scholars argue that federal funding itself represents a channel of political control. The federal government may be able to buy loyalty through fiscal transfers (Robertson 2011). Where transfers make up a significant portion of subject financial resources local leaders should be loyal to Putin's regime. As mentioned in the previous section, this is one explanation of Chechnya's relative quiescence in modern times.

H7: Natural resource wealth buffers federal subjects from social unrest

H7a: Federal transfers are positively correlated with protest onset

H8: Generous federal support creates loyal subjects

H8a: Federal transfers are negatively correlated with protest onset

Additionally, Lankina and Voznaya (2015) posited a theoretical relationship between regional economic profile and protest onset frequency. Share of privately-owned industry drives the hypothesized relationship. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union privatization has proceeded unevenly across Russian federal subjects. State control remains in spheres of agriculture and heavy industry. Where agricultural and industrial jobs make up the majority of labor markets, Lankina and Voznaya see populations dependent on the government, loyally abstaining from protest activities. These workers are "likely to have a generally low incidence of and turnout at protest, largely due to these regions' heavy dependence on state salaries or subsidies from the federal government" (331).

H9: Government-owned businesses engender loyal among local populations

H9a: Share of publically owned businesses is negatively correlated with protest onset

The comprehensive nature of the seven hypothesis presented above allows for a test of the general structuralist position, as well as sub-theories from Social Movement Studies. Testing the influence of, say, grievance or social mobilization capacity alone on protest onset generates a model with possible omitted variable bias. Theoretical tools generated over the past five decades posit that all elements of the Idea of the State must be tested in addition to the main strains of social movement theory. Any single source of social unrest can be deemed unimportant or less important than others only after a comprehensive test. Jeffery Dixon argues that incomplete theoretical models produce incomplete statistical models, or models suffering from omitted variable bias (2009). The following test avoids this pitfall. The nine hypotheses attempt to operationalize all major theorized structural drivers of protest onset. Thus, empirical tests will evaluate the more fundamental question: do any structural factors shape the likelihood of protest? As an alternative hypothesis then, H^* expects at least one of the nine drivers to be significantly correlated with protest onset.

H^ : Structural conditions systematically shape the frequency of protest onset*

*H^*a : Variables other than population size are significantly correlated with protest onset*

Modeling Unrest

An effective test of the Idea of the State hypotheses requires systematic exploration of variance in structural conditions and onset frequency. The only existing test of sub-national Russian protest onset is restricted to anecdotal analysis. Lankina and Voznaya claim that protests are most frequent in “sophisticated and more developed urban metropolises,” and where grievances arise from “socioeconomic issues, such as those related to large Soviet-era factory closures, labor market restructuring, or wage arrears” (2015: 445). The authors do not conduct a systematic test of their claims. Indeed, they do not even elaborate on terms like “sophisticated” or “deprivation.” For each of the four hypotheses an interested observer can find an example of the expected relationship among the eighty three state capacity profiles. But this is not the sort of evidence used to evaluate a structural theory. The Idea of the State is a probabilistic theory, and

as such must be evaluated using statistical methods— as Lass Fridstrom and Siv Ingebrigsten put it: “use of a statistically formulated conceptual framework seems virtually unavoidable” (1999:43) when evaluating probabilistic theories.

In the 1960s and 1970s several scholars articulated the ontological position underlying a probabilistic theory of causality. Scholars working in the philosophy of social science addressed the concern in Patrick Suppes’ *A Probabilistic Theory of Causality* (1970) and I. J. Good’s *Causal Calculus* (1961). The phrase “probabilistic causality” appears, at first glance, to be an oxymoron, or at least conceptually confusing. However, humans operate under the assumption of probabilistic causality in scientific research, and in more mundane contexts. Wesley Salmon, in his review of the concept, presents several examples. Salmon examines the idea of cause in cancer research. Laboratory studies determine that various substances cause cancer in test animals, even when every animal exposed to the substance does not develop malignancy. Similarly, drivers say that a skid on a patch of ice was the cause of an automobile accident, even when many cars pass over the slick spot, some of them skidding upon it without mishap. Cause is established when two conditions occur together frequently. The Idea of the State theory assumes that such patterns will be visible between state capacity and protest onset. This project evaluates the presence of the correlation in the Russian case.

Statistical methods capture and generalize the relationship between dependent and independent variables, offering a test of probabilistic causality. Regression analysis is a particularly common tool. The anachronistic title emerged from Sir Frances Galton’s pioneering social statistical work. Galton studied data on relative sizes of parents and their offspring in species of plants and animals. He observed that a larger-than-average parent tends to produce a larger-than-average child, but the child is likely to be less large than the parent in terms of its relative position within its own generation. Galton termed this phenomenon a regression towards mediocrity. The scientist captured the relationship between family members by describing his dependent variable, child size, in terms of his independent variable, parent size. The connecting

relationship took the form of a simple line. Today, regression models express the relationship between independent and dependent variables in terms of various functional forms, from straight lines, to exponential curves, to probability distributions.

Functional forms describe either a deterministic or statistical relationship between variables of interest. A deterministic relationship is an exact relationship between an independent variable, x , and the dependent variable, y . Consider, for instance, the conversion relationship between temperature in degrees Celsius (C) and temperature in degrees Fahrenheit (F). The linking relationship between the two takes the form of a steep line, expressed mathematically as $F = C(1.8) + 32$. The formula produces an exact relationship between two temperature measurement systems. Statistical relationships, on the other hand, are not exact. Instead, they capture a trend existing between independent and dependent variables. Galton's linear regression computed the line that best fit his observed weight data. This linear trend produced expected values of offspring weight for any given parent weight, or the expected change in y for a one unit change in x . Expected values are the best fit without fitting the data exactly, differing by an error or scatter term. Thus, without being deterministic, statistical relationships quantify the strength of relationships between quantities of interest. In order to quantify relationships tied to a complex theory like Idea of the State, multiple predictors are required. Multiple regression moves away from simple lines to planes and hyper planes to describe the relationship between multiple independent variables and the dependent variable. Predictors or independent variables are, in this case, structural measures of state capacity. The predicted value is the count of protest events per Russian federal subject, over the time horizon 2007-2013.

For event count data, probability functions define the statistical relationship between independent and dependent variables. Random events, by definition, are unpredictable in a deterministic sense. However, mathematicians have demonstrated that frequencies of random outcomes over a large number of events are often predictable. For example, when casting two dice, the outcome of any individual roll is unpredictable, but a sum of seven will occur twice

as often as four. The result of a single coin flip is unpredictable. Sports officials and indecisive individuals leverage the random process to facilitate decision making. Empirical studies have established the probability function of coin flipping. John Edmund Kerrich tossed a coin 10,000 times while serving a prison sentence during World War II. Kerrich employed the results of his tedious data gathering exercise to prove that, as the number of tosses approaches infinity, the proportion of heads or tails approaches .5. Social scientists are able to rely on probability distributions to establish statistical relationships between count data variables, such as protest onset counts, and independent variables. A probability curve replaces Galton's line as a quantification of relationship strength.

For protest event counts the Poisson probability distribution becomes the relevant tool. Simon-Denis Poisson discovered the distribution while studying the behavior of juries and artillery strikes in the 19th century. Ladislaus von Bortkiewicz independently published evidence of the distribution in his 1898 book *The Law of Small Numbers (Das Gesetz der kleinen Zahlen)*. Von Bortkiewicz built his probability distribution from more sensational events than Kerrich's prison study. He gathered data on the number of deaths from horse kicks in the Prussian army, as well as suicide frequencies among children. Returning to regression analysis, independent variables condition the shape of the estimated Poisson distribution; the set of predictors shapes the probability distribution through the parameter lambda (λ). A parameter is simply a constant or variable term that determines a function's specific but not general form—e.g., the slope parameter of a linear function determines the direction and tilt of the line. In general, regression parameters define the direction and strength of the relationship between dependent and independent variables.

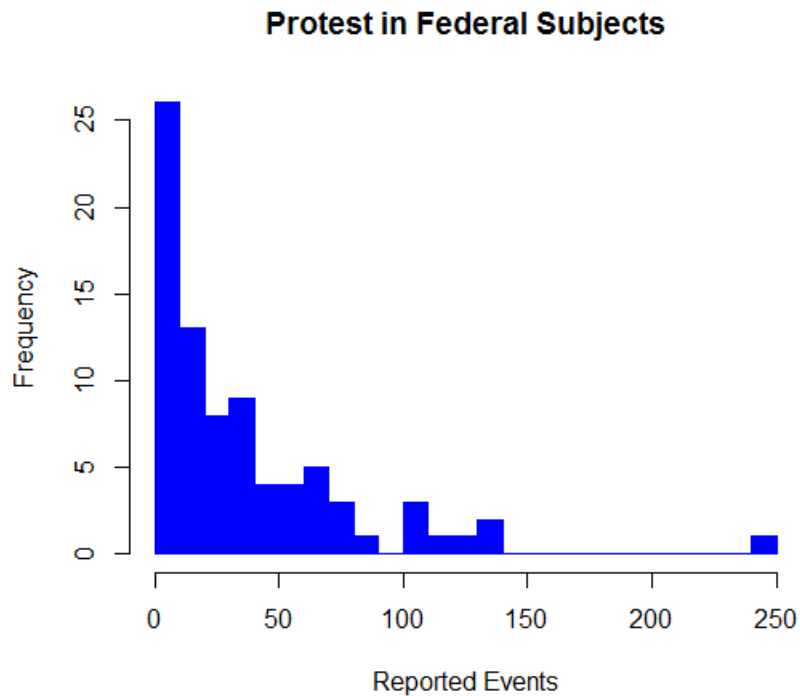
The Poisson distribution for a random variable Y has the following probability mass function for a given value of Y = y:

$$f(Y) = \frac{e^{-\lambda} \lambda^y}{y!}$$

Here Y denotes the number of discrete, Poisson distributed events occurring within an interval of time, and λ is a parameter that defines both the mean and the variance of Y . In Poisson regression the independent variables shape the distribution by shaping the parameter λ . The mathematical expression relating the set of independent variables and the Poisson parameter is: $\lambda = \exp\{X\beta\}$ where X is the set of independent variables, or predictors, and β is the set of coefficients. Values of β are calculated to maximize the likelihood that the computed Poisson distribution approximates the data. An estimation of the probability function demonstrates that as values of the predictor variables change, so too change the expected likelihood of higher or lower counts occurring.

Poisson regression rests on two assumptions. First, the response variable Y must follow a Poisson distribution. And secondly, the mean and variance of the response variable Y must be equal. A histogram plot offers a plausibility test of the first assumption. The plot does not include Moscow City or Saint Petersburg.

Figure 13: Onset Distribution



The histogram indicates that data are skewed right, and thus non-normally distributed. This visual test suggests that the Poisson regression method may be appropriate. However, the second assumption does not hold. The dependent variable variance is not equal to the dependent variable mean. The mean value of protest ($M=36.85$) is much smaller than the variance ($s^2 = 1750$). This outcome indicates the presence of over-dispersion, which renders the Poisson model inappropriate. A related probability function, the negative binomial distribution, allows the mean and variance of count data to diverge. A Poisson distribution is, in fact, a particular form of negative binomial distribution. Instead of λ , the negative binomial function includes two parameters, the mean and α . α measures the extent of over-dispersion. Numerous political science scholars have recently employed negative binomial models to model over-dispersed event count data (e.g., Bremer 1993; Schneider, Barbieri, and Gleditsch 2003; Hendrix and Young 2014).

Russian protest data includes multiple observations for each federal subjects, measured yearly over the time horizon. In other words, function parameters contain numerous values: in the expression $\lambda = \exp\{X\beta\}$ X and β would each be arrays of values. Such datasets, known as panel or cross sectional time series, necessitate additional testing and a set of specialized analysis techniques. Panel models estimate a set of standard errors that control for the fact that cases are not independent of each other—each federal subject includes five temporally separated observations, controlling for autocorrelation.

Before moving on to model specification and evaluation, two checks are in order. First, is non-stationarity an issue: is time itself causing a problematic trend? A non-stationary series can produce spurious regression coefficients, as well as spurious significance determinations. The data are a strongly balanced panel, according to Stata. According to a Harris-Tzavalis unit-root test, the protest dataset features stationary panels ($p = 0.000$). (The Levin-Li-Chu test, an alternative, is ill-suited for the dataset, as it includes many panels and relatively few time periods.) Autocorrelation is a second potential problem. It arises when values of the same variable are themselves correlated, reflected in non-normally distributed error terms, a condition known as heteroscedasticity. Correlation of this sort violates model assumptions of observation independence and randomness, leading to bias in test statistics and confidence intervals. A Breusch-Pagan test reports the presence of heteroscedasticity in the data. Time-series transformations, with random or fixed effects, are a common solution. I generate models with both specifications below.

Testing for multicollinearity among independent variables is a third important diagnostic. This problematic condition results from linear relationships between independent variables. At an intuitive level, when independent variables exhibit high levels of multicollinearity, the model cannot determine which predictor should be credited with explaining variation in the dependent variable. Multicollinearity can cause serious problems for inference, as the estimated regression coefficients and significance levels become sensitive to minor changes in model specification.

The only potentially problematic correlation occurs between population and total socio-cultural spending. To remedy the problem, I substitute spending on socio-cultural projects for a per capita expression of the variable, which is depicted in the state capacity profiles in the previous section. The correlation between population and the new per capita spending measure is low.

Results

This section presents the empirical findings. Model 1, displayed below, presents results of a negative binomial regression conducted in the Stata statistical package. The regression model captures all elements of the Idea of the State framework: three dimensions of state capacity, as well as the three major strains of Social Movement Studies. The time horizon is 2007-2013. The dependent variable is protest events per year for each Russian federal subject, in the updated Lankina and Voznaya dataset. The model includes random effects error transformations, to address heteroscedasticity. A Hausman Test identified random effects as most suitable choice. Nevertheless, as a robustness check, I run the model with fixed effects specifications—displayed below.

Following hypotheses 4a and 4b, social mobilization capacity shapes the likelihood of protest onset at the sub-national level. Both population-based operationalizations report a significant relationship with protest onset frequency. And both variable coefficients possess the hypothesized positive sign: an increase in population or urbanization is associated with an increase in protest frequency. Almost all of the population effect is absorbed by changes in urban concentration. Because log-likelihood coefficients can be difficult to understand, I compute incidence rate ratios (IRR) for each variable. With all other drivers held constant, a 1% increase in urban population leads to a 1% increase in expected onset rate. On the other hand, neither the education operationalization nor the coercive state capacity variables were significant. The correlation coefficient generated for crime is very small, and not close to significance.

Turning to the second set of hypothesized drivers, results provide stronger validation of the overall structural position, and for the Idea of the State position. Here, both state capacity to coopt and grievances are significant. Model 1 demonstrates a strong negative relationship between the social spending variable and the level of sub-national protest, suggesting that the more funds local governments dedicate to socio-cultural projects, the lower the levels of protest activity. Holding all other variables constant, a one unit increase in per capita spending, measured in millions of rubles, reduces the expected rate of protests by over 3%. Supporting hypothesis 5a, a one unit increase in federal subject unemployment rates increases expected protest onset rate by around 1%.

The final two variables do not produce significant results. The final dimension of state capacity, cooperation, fails to register an expected, significant relationship. The percent of the regional population voting for United Russia in the 2008 legislative elections does not exhibit the sign expected according to hypothesis 3a. The Carnegie Openness Index—the political opportunity structure operationalization—similarly fails to produce a significant coefficient.

Figure 14: Models 1-4

	(1) Protest	(2) Protest	(3) Protest	(4) Protest
Protest				
Pop	0.000296*** (4.36)	0.000293*** (4.09)	0.000294*** (3.94)	0.000268*** (2.99)
UrbanPop	0.0222* (2.45)	0.0218* (2.40)	0.0114 (1.33)	0.00216 (0.16)
StudentPop	-0.0146 (-1.66)		-0.0169 (-1.84)	-0.0106 (-0.97)
SocialSpending	-0.0264*** (-5.74)	-0.0216*** (-4.59)	-0.0271*** (-5.57)	-0.0256*** (-4.34)
Crime	0.0000331 (0.37)	0.0000524 (0.62)	0.0000739 (0.83)	0.00000740 (0.07)
Unemployment	0.0676*** (4.00)	0.0710*** (4.23)		0.100*** (5.41)
UnitedRussia	-0.00364 (-1.22)	-0.00407 (-1.35)	-0.00189 (-0.62)	-0.00284 (-0.92)
OpennessIn-x	0.0208 (0.18)	0.0432 (0.38)	0.00895 (0.08)	-0.0800 (-0.56)
RailPass		-0.00000242 (-1.35)		
Ill			0.000809 (1.38)	
_cons	-0.488 (-0.62)	-0.825 (-1.02)	0.00938 (0.01)	1.178 (1.08)
ln_r _cons	0.592** (3.20)	0.670*** (3.50)	0.640*** (3.48)	
ln_s _cons	0.514* (2.28)	0.686** (2.95)	0.646** (2.95)	
N	572	532	563	523

t statistics in parentheses

* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Significant relationships between population, urban population, social spending, and unemployment all support hypothesis *a. In order for model results to provide reliable evidence for the broader structural position, however, the theoretical model must offer more explanatory power than an empty model. A Likelihood Ratio Test offers an appropriate metric. For linear regressions employing least squares estimation, an F-test determines superiority of fit between models. The Likelihood Ratio Test accomplishes this task for generalized linear models like the Poisson and negative binomial (Meier 2011). Stata output includes a significance test for the model as a whole. The predictor model using independent variable data was indeed an improvement over a model in which all predictors were set to zero ($p = 0.0$).

The core findings hold under several robustness checks. Displayed above, Models 2 and 3 feature alternative operationalizations of social mobilization capacity and grievance. Model 2 replaces university student population with the number of local rail passengers. Any model omitting urban population would clearly suffer from omitted variable bias, so the new variable accompanies the original specification. Like the education variant, the rail passenger coefficient is not significantly related to expected protest onset. Model 3 replaces unemployment with a morbidity indicator, a measure of disease prevalence. Unlike unemployment, morbidity rates are not significantly related to expected onset. Model 4, also displayed above, is a replication of the original under fixed effects specifications. The results underscore the importance of socio-economic public spending and unemployment, as they remain significant even as population and urban population do not.

Appendix ii displays results for alternative explanations concerning natural resource wealth and economic ownership. Model 1 contains the full set of drivers from the Idea of the State framework. Models 2 and 3 add fiscal transfers from the federal center and percentage of jobs provided by private companies. Neither produced significant relationships with protests.

In summary, federal subjects with small, dispersed populations experienced relatively low levels of protest onset. Where unemployment is low and the populace benefits from social economic spending, low levels are similarly expected. Empirical testing provided supportive evidence for only four of the nine hypotheses presented above: 4a (population), 4b (urban population), 5a (unemployment), and 2a (social spending). Student population, crime rates, ruling party voting share, and the openness index all failed to reach significance levels. Alternative hypotheses concerning natural resource wealth, government transfers, and economic ownership similarly failed to produce significant results. These results produce supportive evidence for the general structuralist position, expressed in hypothesis *. The next section discusses political implications and directions for case study analysis.

Implications

These results begin to explain why subject regions located within the same authoritarian federation exhibit differing levels of social unrest. To date, the majority of studies on the onset of contentious political events have restricted analysis to the national level—as discussed in Chapter 3. This strain of literature fails to adequately test any of the theories developed across civil war studies, social movement studies and the foregoing study of revolutions. By considering sub-national variation in patterns of protest and structural conditions, the Idea of the State avoids this pitfall. Empirical results suggest that cooptational state capacity, measured at the sub-national level, does indeed condition the frequency of protest in Russia from 2007-2013. Population measures and unemployment also shaped protest frequency. Only cooptational capacity, however, is completely within leaders' control.

As local governments allocate more funds to socio-cultural projects—to public health and education, to unemployment assistance, or to public park maintenance—the frequency of protest declines. It appears, then, that targeted public spending serves as a tool with which the state can coopt public obedience; Russian local governments can employ revenues as a tool to maintain social order. These findings begin to outline the shape of the social contract across the Russian

Federation. Moreover, these findings bring to light implications of international politics, particularly implications of commodity prices fluctuation and the ongoing wars in Ukraine and Syria.

The empirical findings sketch an indirect connection between primary commodity prices and social unrest. Russia's national revenue is heavily dependent on natural resources. In 2015, the country derived nearly half of all government revenue from oil and natural gas. The year's budget was planned around oil averaging \$50 a barrel. A drop in prices has subsequently led to a sharp increase in deficit spending. In October of 2015, finance minister Anton Siluanov addressed the threat of continued low prices. Siluanov announced that, should prices remain under the 50\$ a barrel mark, the country's Reserve Fund, a sovereign wealth fund designed to shield government finance during commodity busts, could be entirely exhausted within two years (Andrianova and Khrennikova 2016). The current predicament reflects a failure to diversify the national economy. Vladimir Putin, speaking at a parliamentary address in 2001, described diversification as a matter of national security. At the time, oil and gas generated around 30% of federal budget revenues. In 2015, the figure reached 44%, according to the finance ministry (Ibid.).

Oil and gas shocks would affect state revenue at both the central and local levels. Natural resource wealth in the Russian Federation translates to revenue through two channels. First, export duties accrue to the central federal government. Tax revenue on extraction and refinement, on the other hand, accrues partially to the central government and partial to local government. Until 2002, the split was 60% local and 40% central. Boom conditions in oil and gas markets in the 1990s saw budgetary revenues of oil- and gas-producing regions greatly outpace non-producing regions. Since 2002, budget laws have steadily decreased tax share accruing to local governments, to 20% in 2003, 15% in 2004, and less than 5% since 2005. Galina Kurlyandskaya argues that the change in revenue split arose from increasing expenditure needs across federal subjects lacking oil or natural gas reserves (2007). The boost in central revenue cycled back to these "have-not" subjects in the form of central-subject budget transfers.

According to data from Rosstat, twenty six of the regions rely on central transfers for over 40% of state revenue, across 2007-2013. Indeed, only ten of the eighty three federal subjects receive less than 20% of their state revenue from central transfers over the time horizon. The more self-sufficient subjects include Bashkortostan, Kemerovo, Khanty-Mansi, Komi, Leningrad, Nenets Autonomous Okrug, Nizhegorodskaya, Perm, and Sverdlovsk, all of which are rich in oil or natural gas reserves, or both. International commodity markets thus feed forward to state budgets in all Russian regions, oil and gas producers and non-producers alike. As prices remain low the funds available for socio-cultural spending projects will shrink, forcing spending cuts in the short term, and potentially limiting local governments' ability to coopt the population into civil obedience.

International sanctions represent another potential threat to Russian central and local revenue streams. Sanctions threaten revenue by jeopardizing the country's general economic outlook. Financial analysts at Credit Suisse (2014) recently identified several sources of potential deterioration in the Russian economy. The two key risks were ballooning of the external debt-to-GDP ratio and the stability of Russia's banking sector. International sanctions hold the potential to trigger both risk areas. First, sanctions have already damaged Russia's external debt position. In 2014 and 2015 foreign direct investment has declined along with the industrial production index. Capital flight is a major concern. Measures of the national economy report annual growth of just over 1% since sanctions took effect. These trends are accompanied by a corresponding increase in subjects' cumulative debt. Sanctions provide a direct threat to the Russian banking system as well. Under current sanctions, borrowing is not an option. By traditional metrics Russia is credit-worthy—public debt is only 10% of GDP (*Ibid.*). However, as the Credit Suisse report put it, "if you don't have access to financial markets, then it doesn't matter how credit-worthy you are" (*Ibid.*). Since the onset of sanctions the federal government has injected money into the banking system. For example, the government purchased 307 billion rubles (\$5.15 billion) of VTB bank shares to prevent a mass sell-off (Zaslavskiy, 2015). If the sanctions continue to hurt the banking system, and the sovereign continues to intervene, a negative feedback loop between sovereign debt and

bank solvency could emerge, as seen in the European debt crisis. A prolonged recession, or an economic crisis, would threaten revenues throughout federal subjects. International actors would do well to bear in mind the relationship between Russian economy performance and social unrest.

Aside from sanctions, Putin's costly wars in Ukraine and Syria could limit local governments' capacity to coopt. After annexing the Crimean peninsula central federal revenue funds were used to establish the region's governmental structures, issue Russian passports, pay pensions, raise public sector employees' salaries to Russian standards, and solidify local transport networks (Fischer and Rogoza 2014). The official budget for 2015-2017 estimates that the cost associated with new federal subjects will exceed \$2.5 billion per year (Ibid.). These funds reduce the total available for redistribution through transfers to other regions. Putin's ongoing Syrian engagement puts a similar strain on federal and subject budgets. Russian air strikes in Syria are currently costing up to \$4 million per day, according to data collected by a defense think tank and reported in the *Moscow Times* (Hobson 2015). British military intelligence provider Jane's Information Group reported that bombing raids, supply runs, infrastructure and ground personnel — along with cruise missiles fired into the conflict zone — have cost Russia over \$100 million since strikes began (Ibid.). If economic conditions in Russia worsen, if commodities prices remain low and sanctions continue to restrict investor sentiment and credit availability, Putin may have to choose between pursuing adventurous foreign policy and limiting protest onset at home.

The results of this study elucidate the domestic implications of international politics. Local-level government spending patterns condition the frequency of protest events. But this spending does not occur in a vacuum. Local government revenues are inextricably tied to international politics and to the international economy. Russian scholars must recognize the connection between the international and the sub-national. International actors, as well, in the United States, Europe, and elsewhere, must recognize the potential knock-on effects of commodity prices, sanctions, and international conflict.

Further Research

Thus far, this project has simply identified correlations between independent variables and protest frequency. Statistical results provide supportive evidence for several hypotheses, along with the general structural position. The results do not validate casual mechanisms. In order to gain an understanding of how and why relationships hold, the following chapter will conduct a process tracing exercise. Such a qualitative exercise will further serve to evaluate whether or not findings are spurious; qualitative case study analysis evaluates evidence produced by the statistical testing presented here. Case studies will additionally serve to refine the Idea of the State theoretical framework. Several hypotheses derived from the Idea of the State did not hold under empirical testing. Coercive capacity, measured by crime rates, was not significantly related to protest onset; cooperative capacity, measured by United Russia vote share, was not significantly related; nor was political opportunity structure, measured by the Carnegie Institute's Openness Index. Are the relationships truly insignificant, or were the operationalizations faulty? The following chapter will begin to answer these questions.

VI - Protest in Siberia

Introduction

In Zakhar Prilepin's novel *Monastery* prisoners watch in amazement as guards escort two Chinese men into a labor camp. The new arrivals have been charged with espionage in Leningrad, where they were living. The would-be spies, an entry search reveals, do not speak more than a word of Russian. One prisoner turns to another and jokes, "how did these two plan to gather intelligence, by counting the number of people, cows and trolley cars?" (2015, 278) This fictional episode provides a caricature of quantitative social science work. Statisticians attempt to generate explanations from a similarly detached perspective. Restricted to a superficial level of information, relying on sophisticated forms of counting, is it possible to generate useful explanations of sociopolitical phenomena? The structuralist methodological wager posits an affirmative answer. Regression analysis sets up an equation or sets of equations that describe phenomena of interest. Results present solutions that best predict the dependent variable from one or many independent variables, based on observations. This is the Humean search for constant conjunction, the attempt to "make no longer any scruple of foretelling one the appearance of another" (Hume 1748, IV), that has become embedded in positivist epistemology, dominant in social science (Kurki 2008, 24).

This dissertation project evaluates constant conjunction surrounding a class of important sociopolitical events: protests in Vladimir Putin's Russia. It attempts to develop a structural understanding of when and where protests occur.

Since the Bolotnaya Square gatherings of 2011, Russian protests have become a pressing international political concern, and as such, a potential target for social inquiry. Alexei Navalny, in a recent interview with *Echo of Moscow*, described Putin's aggressive foreign policy as a ploy to ensure domestic tranquility. The anti-corruption crusader and political aspirant accused Putin of displaying military superiority to distract his citizens from gross inferiority in basic living condition provision (Navalny 2016). Successful anti-regime movements in Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine demonstrate the catalytic power of even small-scale protests, occasionally starting in or supported from provincial regions (Wolchik 2012). Tracing the contours of dissent and repression in Putin's Russia has thus become the duty of regime defenders and dissident politicians alike. Events of 2016 have propelled Russian politics to the very top of the international security agenda. A brief tour of headlines paints a grim picture. Alarming actions range from meddling in the American presidential election campaign and abrogating nuclear weapon containment treaties, to delivering missile defense systems to Aleppo and even to central Europe, to Kaliningrad. These recent events have focused the attention of Putin's regime and the international community, as well as academic audiences working in the contentious politics tradition. Attention is not likely to wane in the near future. Russian presidential elections in 2018 loom on the horizon. A repeat of the Bolotnaya Square movement, or a larger wave of protest, could hold serious implications for citizens of Russia, Syria, the United States, and all of Europe.

The previous chapter empirically tested the Idea of the State theoretical framework. The preceding four chapters laid groundwork by developing theory and building independent and dependent variable databases. The goal was to create a novel, valuable explanation. Returning to the words of Fearon and Laitin, as quoted in the opening chapter: "the goal of the structural approach is the identification of stable conditions that systematically determine where an event is likely to occur" (2003b). In executing the structural test, this project twice contributes to contentious politics research. First, it evaluates a set of theories, developed over the last half century, at the correct, sub-national level. Secondly, the test evaluates the general structural

position, the hope that analytical tools can indeed drive understanding of important political events.

A negative binomial regression model provided positive results. Statistical analysis suggests that structural factors can facilitate understanding protest onset in contemporary Russia. The quantitative test produced answers to several hypotheses derived from the Idea of the State. In particular, federal subjects characterized by small populations, generous social spending programs, and low unemployment feature relatively lower frequencies of protest over the years 2007-2013.

This chapter subjects findings to close scrutiny through a structured, focused comparison. A quantitative skeptic might consider such methods no better than misguided fumbling behind a language barrier. Like a deaf, mute spy, the statistician gathers and employs data without even an elementary understanding of context. Thorough social science researchers, then, must take a closer look at the data to make sure their conclusions are not the result of miscommunication or a basic failure of understanding. Researchers can move beyond correlation to avoid the real threat behind such playful rebukes. The task of this chapter is to guard against specious quantitative findings through case study analysis.

Case Study Analysis

This chapter will present case study analysis of contemporary Russian protest events. Regression analysis displays correlations between structural factors and protest outcomes. The Idea of the State theoretical framework provides an explanation for the patterns; the framework argues why the reader should believe that the patterns are neither mere coincidence nor the product of external factors. In their entry in the *Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*, Fearon and Laitin describe this set of steps amounting to “a sort of *story* the researcher tells about the associations observed in regression results” (2008). Under this interpretation the body of academic work becomes an agglomeration of compelling stories about sociopolitical events.

But these stories must be fact checked in so far as possible. The academic audience provides an initial test by sounding theoretical logic and examining statistical methods for flaws. Case study analysis, and other forms of qualitative research, subject hypotheses to further testing. Qualitative analysis allows researchers a closer look at the constant conjunction captured in quantitative models. In order to move beyond correlation, to provide a second test, case study analysis will evaluate the Idea of the State explanation.

Case study analysis will accomplish three tasks. First, a close examination of cases will evaluate causal links presented in the previous chapter. Statistical analysis functioned at the level of sub-national statistics, of population figures, oblast-level budget outlays, and transit infrastructure connections. The case study will look at life on the ground in the Russian regions. Secondly, case study analysis will eliminate the threat of spurious correlation and omitted variable bias. The Idea of the State and Social Movement Studies include numerous structural protest drivers. Still, it is important to eliminate the possibility that decades of contentious politics research failed to consider a critical element. And thirdly this phase of analysis will evaluate operational choices made in chapter 4. Each independent variable was operationalized as optimally as possible given data constraints. An in-depth look at state-society dynamics will reveal which operationalizations were satisfactory, and which were not. Conclusions will inform possible next generations of the regression model.

This dissertation project in particular benefits from the qualitative approach. The Idea of the State posits a complex causal logic that traditional statistical models can only partially capture (Braumoeller 2003). Bennet and George (2005) identify several types of causal complexity. Causal relationships in the social sphere may be characterized by equifinality and complex interaction effects. Russian protest events are characterized by both forms of complexity. The Idea of the State framework posits three paths to high onset potential. Low levels of coercive, cooptational, or cooperative state capacity may lead to high levels of onset. The framework does not, a priori, predict the superiority of any path in a given context.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, concerns surrounding dependent variable data further heighten the need for qualitative validation. I chose to work with activist data sources because mainstream alternatives are irreparably flawed. Mass-scale aggregators were either dramatically under-representative (SPEED) or characterized by staggering numbers of false positives (GDELT). Two available alternatives are not free from problems. A brief comparison exercise revealed a partial lack of overlap between namarsh.ru and the collective action institute (ikd.com). Taken alone, neither data source appears to completely reflect the reality of modern protest in the Russian federation. Experts in the field have argued that, despite incompleteness, namarsh.ru provides a representative protest dataset; while the total number of events may not reflect reality, the relative positions of sub-regional onset frequencies do (Lankina and Voznaya 2015). By tracing the causal processes in Russian sub-regions this chapter's case study analysis will address potentially spurious correlation generated by incomplete—though likely representative—data.

So, a qualitative exercise is needed to increase the credibility of the story provided in chapter five. With methodological motivation established, the task turns to selection. Many different types of case study analysis are available, designed for different purposes and for different research phases. Bennet and George describe two “very different” approaches to case study analysis (2005). Process induction appears in the early phases of research. Researchers thoroughly explore several cases in an attempt to identify causal mechanisms as a baseline for theory crafting and future hypothesis testing. Process verification, the second approach, is a means to evaluate correlational relationships. In the study of the resource curse and intra-state war, a researcher would evaluate established findings in, say, an oil-rich, conflict-ridden country. Process verification serves to eliminate spurious correlation, and facilitates investigation into variable operationalization.

To further test the causal story presented in the previous chapter, I will conduct a process verification exercise while employing the method of difference. John Stuart Mill's logical

framework, developed over 150 years ago, remains popular within the academic community (Sprinz and Wolinsky-Nahmias 2004). The method of difference, or most similar system design, identifies a structure of drivers in which all elements but one correspond and the outcome variable differs. Mill's method of correspondence, most different system design, reverses the configuration. Here, all elements but one differ, and the dependent variable outcome is consistent between cases. Both approaches logically "control" for comparable elements, offering a rough analogue of experimental logic. The refined lens of qualitative research first evaluates logical conditions: are the two cases, in fact, most similar or most different systems? The approach then moves on to evaluate the causal role of each independent variable. Such "structured, focused comparisons" facilitate hypothesis testing (George and Bennett 2005).

I consider the following combination of George and Bennett's and Mill's conceptions a type of theory guided process tracing (TGPT). Sociologist Ronald Aminzade (1993) provides a definition of TGPT. According to Aminzade, the researcher has to provide "theoretically explicit narratives that carefully trace and compare the sequences of events constituting the process" (1993, 108) of interest. By making the theoretical framework explicit, explanatory logic is not lost amid the chronicle of events. My case study analysis is focused and analytically driven. Purely historical accounts paint a rich picture while engaging audience attention. Case study analysis takes history and casts it into an explanation, couched in theoretical variables developed previously.

Analytical Narrative: Idea of the State

A most similar systems design process tracing exercise will test hypotheses derived from the Idea of the State framework for a second time. It will trace the occurrence of protest events in two Russian sub-regions. In each case, I will focus attention on three factors: the cause driving protest actions, government response, and the actors responsible for organization. I will further look for ways to improve the structural model. Before moving into case studies, this section will

briefly reiterate each of the hypotheses. Here I also reiterate quantitative findings and variable operationalization.

The first dimension of state capacity, coercive capacity, casts the government as enforcer. This is Thomas Hobbes' Leviathan. Coercive capacity is high when the state effectively shapes subjects' behavior through force or the threat of force. Coercion is represented by police officers standing on corners, prison facilities looming outside city limits, and video surveillance cameras hanging on eaves. As the state's ability to repress increases, frequency of protest should decrease. Regression analysis did not support the hypothesized positive relationship between crime rates and protest onset.

The second dimension of state capacity casts the government as provider, provider of the social safety net and predictable rules of the game. The Idea of the State describes cooptation capacity as the ability buy off citizens, to win loyalty, through the provision of public goods. Protest frequency should decline as government education, health and, employment programs grow. Regression analysis supported the hypothesized negative relationship between social spending and protest onset.

The third and final dimension of state capacity shifts to the realm of ideas. Again the state's aspect morphs, this time to government as embodiment of national sentiment. By appealing to emotions of trust and duty, the government creates an atmosphere of cooperation between rulers and the ruled. In the Russian case red-clad mother Rodina, brandishing war recruitment orders, vividly offers a symbol of cooperative capacity. This side of capacity is the most difficult to get an empirical handle on, here operationalized as percent of the vote won by the dominant United Russia party. Regression results did not support the hypothesized negative relationship between vote share and protest onset.

Moving to the triad of theories from Social Movement Studies, grievance theory captures socioeconomic contexts in which would-be activists live. As living conditions deteriorate, more

and more protest events should occur as anger and frustration find outlet. The primary operationalization, unemployment rates, was positively and significantly related to protest onset.

Social mobilization capacity theory ties protest onset to catalyzing networks and resources. Symbols become active civil society organizations and social entrepreneurs, individuals, like Alexei Navalny or Gary Kasparov, dedicated to organizing dissident opinion. And as society's ability to organize resistance increases, frequency of protest should increase. Negative binomial regression analysis revealed a positive correlation between population size and urbanization, and onset. A more focused operationalization, student population, was not significantly linked to onset frequency. Alternatives based on public transit infrastructure similarly failed to produce significant results.

Political opportunity structure places explanatory power with electoral system accessibility and responsiveness. As locals direct demands and hopes for change into traditional political channels, impetus for civil disobedience should dissipate. The operationalization, the Carnegie Institute's Openness Index, was not significantly related to protest onset frequency.

The statistical results dictate the form of the following narratives. Explanations of protest frequency, couched in the complex analytical framework, test the casual story provided in the previous chapter. The exercise will evaluate reliability of quantitative results, while also identifying possible improvements to the model.

I will utilize the analytical power of the paired comparison to thoroughly test the proposed relationship between public spending and protest frequency. As mentioned in Chapter 1, insights from state capacity theory, and particular state capacity to coopt, are absent from much Social Movement Studies work. Published attempts to explain protest frequency across Russian sub-regions, few and incomplete (Voznaya and Lankina 2015), all fail to consider cooptational capacity. Moreover, cooptational capacity, especially as operationalized as public spending is a short-term tool, directly under leadership control.

Paired Comparison: Novosibirsk and Krasnoyarsk

Any case study must begin with a definition. Depending on the research question at hand, a case can take the form of a military intervention, a government project, a country, an individual, a decade, a year, or a century. Here, the phenomenon of interest is protest frequency in the recent past. I thus define a case as the complete chronicle of protest of events occurring in a federal subject over the years 2007-2010. Due to length constraints I exclude three years included in statistical analysis, 2011, 2012, and 2013. To constitute a process verification exercise, suitable federal subjects must exhibit the hypothesized outcome, at least some level of protest. Furthermore, in order to set up Mill's logical test, the subjects must differ in outcome magnitude, and differ across all hypothesized drivers minus one. As mentioned above, I thoroughly test the hypothesis concerning state cooptational capacity: the more generously local government provides for citizens, the less likely citizens will protest. A pair of federal subjects should exhibit differing levels of social spending. Scanning the eighty four federal subjects Novosibirsk Oblast and Krasnoyarsk Krai are the most suitable pair. The subjects' profiles are similar with the exception of social spending and protest frequency. As an additional control for variation, Novosibirsk and Krasnoyarsk are located in Siberia and share a border.

Constructing the narratives, I supplement original activist reports with activist and mainstream sources. The additional support will address two threats to inference. Triangulation between sources reduces the threat of activist fabrication. And increasing the number of sources addresses the threat raised by incomplete data. Source materials include articles from the Collective Action Institute's *ikd.ru*, the Communist Party's *kprf.ru*, and local newspapers *Soviet Siberia*, *Evening Novosibirsk*, *Krasnoyarsk Newspaper*, and *Our Krasnoyarsk* among others. As a secondary reason, in addition to length concerns, data availability drives my choice to focus on years 2007-2010: the collective action institute curtailed reporting activities significantly beginning in 2011.

Each case contains numerous protest actions. Concretely, over thirty individual protest actions occurred in Krasnoyarsk, and nearly sixty in neighboring Novosibirsk. Each case thus contains numerous actors, numerous grievances and numerous government responses. An organizational technique is required to effectively, and clearly, trace protest developments over the four-year time period. Proceeding year by year, I will first introduce the types of events occurring. An initial overview of source material revealed two broad categories: quality of life protests, and ideologically-driven protests. Under each heading I will work through three questions: Who are the protestors? What are they protesting? Was there a response from the government? Using the Idea of the State as an analytical lens, I will discuss the drivers of each broad category, paying particular attention to catalysts and mitigating factors.

2007

Novosibirsk

2007 provides an initial look at Siberian protest dynamics. Perhaps the most striking takeaway from the first year is the sheer diversity of events. The analytical framework offered by the Idea of the State helps bring order to the description, but the range of drivers, actors, and responses remains vast. Any ability to draw conclusions without descending to the contextual level would be analytically powerful for precisely this reason. The section will describe events in Novosibirsk, before moving on to Krasnoyarsk.

In Novosibirsk, over the course of the year, particular events and a general deterioration in living conditions drove protestors to the streets. Price increases in information and communication technology, specifically telephone network services, triggered several marches. Activists wryly warned locals of an impending New Year's present: a new system of phone payment (*Novaya Gazyeta* 2007, *Kasparov.ru* 2007a). The local telecom giant, Sibertelecom, chose to raise per-minute costs for landline usage throughout the oblast. Those most affected were multi-child families, pensioners, and the handicapped, according to reports. As the year proceeded, breadth of protestor grievances expanded. The local Communist Party organized

against a rise in cost of living. Protestor slogans specifically focused attention on housing-related expenses and Sibertelecom's decision (*Kasparov.ru* 2007c). Concern over quality of life drove pensioners to take part in several protest actions over the course of the year. Participants demanded "a right to life and a right to suitable pension," suitable to keep up with high apartment maintenance costs (Kotenkov 2007). Aside from housing cost, housing investment schemes spread discontent across Russia in 2007. In many cities defrauded investors took to the streets in response to a widespread pyramid scheme (*Kasparov.ru* 2007d; Petrenko 2007). Those responsible were arrested, but protestors demanded government compensation. The national attention inspired local victims of real estate fraud to speak up. Novosibirsk residents, defrauded in the same way, by a different company, connected themselves to the movement with a hunger strike (*lkd.ru* 2007a). Three additional groups took a focused approach to improving their quality of life. Bread deliverers (*lkd.ru* 2007b) and grain producers (Vasiliva 2007) separately struck for pay increases. Automobile owners protests rising gas prices and poorly maintained roads (*Kasparov.ru* 2007k). And in Akademgorodok, a small university enclave outside of the capital city, students resisted a pay implementation for web access (*Kasparov.ru* 2007e).

Who organized these events? The main organizer of quality of life protests was the Communist Party. The Communists demonstrated the ability to serve as an umbrella for activist groups. Actions against the Siberian telecommunications company were organized by the party's so-called committee of solidarity action, which included two related movements. The Avant Guard of Red Youth (AKM) is a social offshoot of the party dedicated to politicizing fights for pay, adequate housing, access to health and educational services—or in short "battle against any form of exploitation" (AKM Novosibirsk 2017). Working Russia is a similar offshoot dedicated to publicizing social injustice. The group was formed after the fall of the USSR as a Moscow-based organization and spread throughout the oblasts. In addition to party affiliates a local women's collective, Kindness, and the union of retired army officers participated. Pensioners organized several events themselves, under the name "The Social Council for Pensioners in Novosibirsk,"

or just the Social Council (Hamraeva 2011). More narrowly defined groups also played an organizational role. Investors held their hunger strike indoors, connecting to the national movement through media attention. Bread drivers organized thanks to the group's unions. Grain producers self-organized and marched with support from locals near the factory. The automobile owners used the internet to found a social action group. And students rallied without additional support in the forest enclave.

What kind of response did the events evoke from local leadership? The initial push from protests won government attention. Officials voiced empathy and publicly discussed increasing payouts for benefits tied to phone lines. Hope quickly dissipated. The telecommunications contract was approved by the government, and is now in force in the area. State responses to Communist and pensioner gatherings took the form of soft repression. Protests were sanctioned, but limited to thirty participants. Across protests police presence observed the events, but no arrests were reported. Events were, furthermore, subject to a local law banning sound amplification of any sort at public demonstrations. Local leadership also demonstrated state capacity to coopt. The bread transporters were able win a positive outcome. The company agreed to negotiations with the drivers' union, and after a series of talks, offered a wage increase as well as inflation-indexed pay. Novosibirsk politicians arbitrated the negotiations.

A second set of protests arose from ideological concerns, rather than living conditions. Movement entrepreneurs made their voices heard in several incidents. Members of the coalition "The Other Russia" tried to spread awareness. Along with leading marches, activists distributed pamphlets informing readers of developments related to the national movement "March of the Dissidents" (*Kasparov.ru* 2007g). Participants quizzed passers-by on their knowledge of local oppositional politics and were subsequently granted an interview on the largest local radio station. The group further established a presence in the area with weekly discussions in a jazz café under the name "the pipe" (*Kasparov.ru* 2007h). In Akademgorodok a string of protests arose against planned construction and deforestation (Solovyova 2007). Group organizers rallied local support

for green space and ecological conservation through signature gathering. Participants specifically voiced their displeasure with the un-inclusive nature of construction plans, informed exclusively by local government officials and construction firms.

Social movement entrepreneurs were members of several activist organizations. The Other Russia is an umbrella term used to describe followers of founding members, Gary Kasparov, the politician Mikhail Kasyanov, and the writer Eduard Limonov. The organization, often represented in logos as a grenade, formed in 2006 as a vehicle to unite dissident political groups, particularly liberals, economic reformers, and nationalists, roughly represented by the three founding members. Limonov attempted to establish the group as an official political party in 2010, before impending elections. The attempt did not succeed, and The Other Russia has since been banned as an extremist group (*Lenta* 2012). The ecological protests were organized by the Novosibirsk Housing Initiative, a group dedicated to preserving green space across the region. After the initial protest two local groups added their support to the cause: Protest City-Forest Akademgorodok and the small group Academ-garden are two narrowly-focused groups centered in the university enclave.

Reported government response was minor. March of the Dissidents literature distribution continued without repressive response. The Novosibirsk state did however challenge The Other Russia's support structures with attacks on the media and the internet. The oblast attorney ordered local providers to block access to several sites deemed extremist in his opinion (*Kasparov.ru* 2007g). The move was reversed by local courts shortly after its introduction. In a more effective move, a television host was fired and his show cancelled after discussing protests and protestor demands in the oblast (*Kasparov.ru* 2007h). The forest protests ended disappointingly for protestors. Groups supporting the action were invited to a meeting but reportedly ignored entirely (Solovyova 2007).

Krasnoyarsk

Events in Krasnoyarsk in 2007 continue to demonstrate the interaction between state and society. Driving factors were roughly similar across the two regions, and several of the Novosibirsk protests saw a reflection in the neighboring region. Krasnoyarsk's leadership, however, appeared more willing to respond to protests, both with batons and with offers of appeasement.

Quality of life concerns drove a variety of groups to the streets over the course of 2007. The telephone pricing change evoked protest in the northern region. Again the local Communist Party organized resistance to the impending decision from Sibertelecom (*Kasparov.ru* 2007b). And again financial and employment concerns catalyzed several protests. Unlike in Novosibirsk though, reported events were all focused on narrowly-defined grievances. A group gathered to voice opposition to a planned increase in public transportation fees (*Kasparov.ru* 2007l). A nationwide ban on gambling halls evoked a similar reaction. Those picketing were not gamblers, but employees. Among placards outside of casinos appeared slogans, "give us the right to work," and "we need to pay for housing" (*Kasparov.ru* 2007j). Construction workers initiated a march and hunger strike to demand back pay after their employer's bankruptcy (*Kasparov.ru* 2007n), as did workers at a heavy machinery factory (*Kasparov.ru* 2007f). Housing concerns again spurred a string of protests. In a small village, inhabitants protested a forced relocation by the government. Korkino was a labor town outside of an aluminum refinement factory. When the factory closed and was demolished, the town was declared unfit for inhabitants. Those with deeds to homes were awarded housing elsewhere. Those without deeds received nothing other than an order to vacate (*lkd.ru* 2007d). In another case military families kicked off a hunger strike after a zoning law change reduced the number of apartments designated for veterans (*Kasparov.ru* 2007m). Echoing Novosibirsk, defrauded investors "sat in" at an unfinished construction site and invited journalists to witness their occupation (*lkd.ru* 2007c).

Reactions from Krasnoyarsk government, when reported, offer a clear look at cooptational capacity in action. The telecom gatherings did not elicit any response according to sources. During the price hike protest, participants were allowed to carry on in peace. Police stood by but did not intervene—despite the fact that events were unsanctioned (*Kasparov.ru* 2007b). Two of the professional groups won concessions. Workers at the Krasnoyarsk heavy machinery factory reportedly went without pay for eight months. Through their union the workers called attention to the fact that they had kept production lines open throughout this lengthy period. Under threat of impending strike, the group directly asked for government intervention. Mayor Lev Kuznetsov acquiesced, initiating payment transfers almost immediately (*Kasparov.ru* 2007f). Workers for the state-owned construction company also received concessions. Government officials offered a deal: rather than receiving money, the aggrieved workers would have their back pay deducted from personal debts and credited towards future housing bills. Some workers accepted the deal and others carried out a fruitless hunger strike. One of the three housing complaints won a conciliatory response from local government. The former aluminum factory workers were awarded housing ownership certificates and paid transfer to an inhabitable region (*KPRF News* 2007).

Ideological protests in Krasnoyarsk arose in response to perceived government illegitimacy, often connecting with nation-wide movements. In 2007 March of the Dissidents held a large anti-Putin rally in Moscow. In many oblasts around the country displays of solidarity arose, including in Krasnoyarsk (*Kasparov.ru* 2007i). Six months after the first action, and in the face of increasing opposition, organizers once again took their message to the streets (Skovorodnikov 2007). Protestors voiced outrage against the ruling regime, and particularly against restriction of freedom of expression and freedom of assembly in public places. Local supports of the March organized another show of solidarity against Duma election results. Protestors refused to acknowledge results carried out under conditions of “complete falsification and government terror” (*Kasparov.ru* 2007o). Towards the end of the year The Other Russia and the Krasnoyarsk

Communist youth movement organized a so-called “Wake for the Constitution.” Organizers picketed outside of the local parliament, where participants performed a dramatic reading of constitutional articles guaranteeing freedom of expression and movement in the Russian Federation (*Kasparov.ru* 2007i).

Unlike in Novosibirsk, the Krasnoyarsk local government reacted to protests with repressive force. Initially the Krasnoyarsk manifestation of March of the Dissidents was prohibited based on a fictional conflict of interest. Government representatives claimed that an ecological protest was already approved for the same date and time. No such event occurred. The discontents gathered in the free square, where they met an overwhelming police presence. Reports described around 100 protestors observed closely by around 1000 armed police officers. No arrests were reported (*Kasparov.ru* 2007i). Repressive response was not absent. Repression simply began before the event, or took place well afterwards. Two days before the march, two high-profile activists were arrested while handing out fliers. Two of the participants, The Other Russia Duma candidate Rim Shaigalimov, and organizer Catherine Fatyahova, were arrested in their homes. Police charged the pair with distributing extremist literature and thoroughly searched the premises. Several days later another activist was detained and questioned while handing out Other Russia stickers (Skovorodnikov 2007). Undeterred, the protestors provoked the latent threat looming over the first meeting. A coalition of police and special forces tactfully dispersed the second March of the Dissidents solidary action. Supporters walking towards the central square met road blocks and law enforcement encouraging them to avoid the center of town. Party leaders awoke to cordons preventing them from leaving their homes (Skovorodnikov 2007). One amusing example underscores the atmosphere in the oblast in 2007. The dramatic reading, a response to increasing regional tension, again brought threat without action. A bus full of police watched the entire performance (*Kasparov.ru* 2007i).

Again, who organized the events? The organizer profile resembles that of Novosibirsk. The Communist Party played primary role in telecommunications protest, with support from the

Krasnoyarsk chapters of The Other Russia and the Avant-Garde of Communist Youth. The principle organizers of the transportation picket were again the Communist Party, with assistance this time from the local pensioners. The worker-led events, on the other hand, were not supported by local political parties. The blackjack dealers and their colleagues, construction workers, and factory workers organized without assistance. Of the three groups, the factory workers alone organized with the help of a union. The various groups protesting housing travails similarly operated within a narrow circle of participants and organizers. The Other Russia clearly drove the ideological protests, with no reported support from the main branch of the Communist Party. Additional supporters of the cause were the Revolutionary-Patriotic Union of Krasnoyarsk (РПСК) a group consisting of Working Krasnoyarsk, a group of Communist activists not officially linked to the party, and a women's rights group.

Summary

Applying the Idea of the State analytical framework, several takeaways emerge through the swirl of events. Many protests went ignored by local government, at least according to material from activist and mainstream news media. Other protests received a promise for cooperation that proved empty, as in the cases of Sibertelecom's price plan change and Academ-Garden's deforestation movement in Novosibirsk. Reported responses reveal a potential pattern. Grievance-driven protests were addressed with cooptational responses, whereas repressive responses appeared in response to ideologically-driven, social-entrepreneur-organized events. Furthermore, efforts to discourage or limit gathering in both sub-regions demonstrate the softer side of repression. Caps on attendance and bans on amplification check protestor actions without offering direct resistance, as do claims of occupied public spaces, and public festival cancellations.

Furthermore, leadership in the northern-most Siberian subject appears more willing to employ cooptation and coercion. Krasnoyarsk responded to demands of construction workers, heavy machinery factory workers, displaced veterans, and displaced workers. Novosibirsk

responded similarly to demands of grain producers. In each instance, aggrieved segments of the population received monetary or in-kind compensation, in exchange for which they ceased protest activity. At this point, evidence does not clearly indicate that Krasnoyarsk is more prone to buying-off dissidents. Novosibirsk did not experience housing displacement of particularly the same type. The bread delivery workers did go unrewarded, however, unlike all such worker-initiated events in the northern region. Krasnoyarsk leadership also seems to have employed harsher tactics. Repressive state capacity was visible in response to Other Russia's planned gathering a march. In Novosibirsk, the group limited behavior to educational pamphlet distribution, and went unmolested, with the exception of censorship.

2008

Novosibirsk

In 2008, the majority of protest events centered on inflation, satisfactory employment, and calls to replace the ruling United Russia party. Housing disputes, ecological concerns, animal cruelty, and freedom of expression likewise drove people to the streets. Despite exhibiting fewer events, Krasnoyarsk again reported more examples of effective cooptational state capacity. The second year also produces a crosscutting comparison of the two regions, thanks to a common grievance and differing responses.

Quality of life protests continued in Novosibirsk. A series of protest marches erupted throughout the oblast in response to price increases. Over the course of 2007 the oblast's statistical service reported increases to consumer goods, public transportation, housing costs, and child care services (*HGS Novosti* 2008). Participants marched with posters, crying out against "Communal Robbery," and "Medvedev's key project—price increases" (*Kasparov.ru* 2008b). Various groups voiced a need to cope with the changing, challenging socioeconomic environment. The Communist party and unions demanded increases in wages and increases in housing assistance (*KPRF News* 2008b). Inhabitants working in the auto-transport industry organized a set of disruptive actions. Heavy freight drivers parked trucks around a main square,

adorned with slogans protesting gas price increases (*Kasparov.ru* 2008g). The difficult economic climate cut across organizational boundaries. After Communist Party groups organized a follow-up meeting, pensioners and auto driver unions gathered nearby to echo displeasure with inflation (*Kasparov.ru* 2008i). Aside from the joint event groups waged their own campaigns. Auto-workers faced sources of grievance not directly related to price changes. A group of municipal bus drivers refused to work until wage arrears were paid (*lkd.ru* 2008a). Another protest targeted a monopoly on service driving jobs, leading to a hunger strike. A local competition for government transportation contracts was opened only to groups owning a large number of vehicles, blocking participation of small-scale groups (*KPRF News* 2008d). Pensioners too held their own set of protests, demanding a dignified life and a right to affordable housing. In a particularly alarming example, at one of the protests, an elderly pensioner immolated himself to call attention to injustice (*PolitSibr* 2008, *Kasparov.ru* 2008j). After the immolation gatherings continued, at which calls for better living conditions intertwined with memorials for the dead man (*lkd.ru* 2008g, *lkd.ru* 2008h).

The majority of protests passed without response from the government, positive or negative, according to media sources. None of the price increase protests sparked a response. Neither concerns over the driving job monopoly nor concerns over fuel availability were addressed. Interestingly, the auto-transport protests explicitly called to emulate Krasnoyarsk's approach. Protestors called governor Victor Tolokonski to create a working group dedicated to mitigating fuel market fluctuations (*KPRF News* 2008c). No response was forthcoming. State reactions in 2008 included one example of repression and one example of cooptation. Pensioner protests brought a harsh government response. After the self-immolation incident, Novosibirsk leadership began to employ repressive tactics. Participants in follow-up protests were themselves arrested, when turning the dead man's portrait into a rallying symbol. The official cause for arrest was leading an "unsanctioned gathering" (*lkd.ru* 2008g). Municipal bus drivers, on the other hand,

won a positive response from the government. After a weeklong hunger strike workers received unpaid wages (*lkd.ru* 2008a).

Ideological protests in 2008 centered on local issues, while also connecting to nationwide events. In many cities across Russia activists gathered to take part in the Communist Party's "All Russian" protest event. In Novosibirsk the event took the form of several anti-Putin, pro-Gennady Zyuganov demonstrations. Rallying cries included "Putin Raises Prices, Zyuganov lowers them!" and "no lousy teddy bear, we choose Zyuganov" (*KPRF News* 2008a). Organizers looked to garner support for a future presidential campaign, while drawing on a well of dissatisfaction. Calls for social justice united a broad swath of concerns, focused against the ruling United Russian party. Ecological activists and labor organizers voiced their rejection of the dominant political milieu (*lkd.ru* 2008b). The ecologist sub-contingent spread their message at several events throughout the year (*Kasparov.ru* 2008d). The new round of actions took place in the city center as well as in Akademgorodok, as activists pushed to declare the micro-region a center of culture heritage, a place free of new construction (*Kasparov.ru* 2008h). At protests dedicated to preventing deforestation ecological activists attempted to rely on in anti-corruption sentiment present in the area. Activists attempted to join forces with children's rights activists protesting against corrupt orphanage management (*Kasparov.ru* 2008d).

Responses to ideological protests continue to demonstrate hard and soft forms of coercive state capacity. As in the case of material protests, no responses were reported to the Communist-led events, nor were arrests. The green space protests brought a crackdown, of particularly disingenuous design. One of the organizers was sent to solitary confinement for overdue book fees. Others were arrested, under charges of assaulting a public representative during what was deemed an unsanctioned gathering. Activists reported that this cynical charge was the result of police assaulting a protestor, perhaps receiving scratches in the process (*lkd.ru* 2008f). The activists' trial lasted over a year, with the court eventually assigning eighteen months of provisional arrest and six months of community service (*NGS Novosti* 2009).

Again the local Communist Party took the lead, organizing many quality of life as well as ideological protests. A number of leftist youth groups loosely tied to the party took part in actions. The smaller groups, in contrast to the official party, took part in ecological protests as well. The offshoots include, Working Russia, AKM, and PKCM, an Other Russian youth movement (*KPRF News* 2008a). The green space protests were primarily organized by a movement known as “Protectors of City-Forest Akademgorodok,” formed after construction reduced the square footage of forest by 600 hectares from 2006 to 2009. The group is informal with a stable core, comprised of two chemists, a local politician, and an artist. Activists rely on public demonstrations and petition signature gathering (*lkd.ru* 2008f). The corruption protests were organized by those working in a condemned orphanage, as well as the local chapter of women’s group Russia’s Hope (*Kasparov.ru* 2008d).

Krasnoyarsk

In Krasnoyarsk, in 2008, strands of grievance continue from the previous year, and new grievances arose. Quality of life protests echoed those reported previously, while ideological protests seem to have been connected to a single event: Duma elections held in December of 2007.

Like in the preceding year, the northern Siberian province saw narrowly-focused quality of life protests and housing conflicts. Workers at an aluminum refinement plant marched and threatened to strike, demanding unpaid wages(*lkd.ru* 2008c). A hunger strike at a mine erupted as a machinist group, Octoberists, refused to vacate the professional committee building (*lkd.ru* 2008e). Airline workers were fired and demanded pay from the government. They marched in response and threatened to organize their own hunger strike (*lkd.ru* 2008i). Automobile owners’ actions in the two federal subjects offer a clear parallel. While protests in Novosibirsk opposed fuel price hikes, activists in Krasnoyarsk convened a show of support for ongoing discussions between politicians and activists, hoping to find a cooperative solution(*Kasparov.ru* 2008e).

Ideologically-driven protests centered on legitimacy complaints targeting the ruling party. Disputed elections played the catalyzing role. The Other Russia broadly declared the 5th duma gathering illegitimate. The political coalition penned an open letter to Krai leadership, in which they outlined violations of the Russian constitution as well as norms of international human rights. To spread their message, leaders organized a so-called Bread Revolt in the central town square. Participants revolted against price increases, living services and gasoline, in addition to bread. However, the demands were couched in a broader attack on an illegitimate political system. Organizers distributed political literature, arguing that a political system in which the people do not choose their leaders breeds social ills (*Kasparov.ru* 2008c). Later in the year The Other Russia tried to unite the local opposition. At an anti-United Russia event organizers announced the formation of the Revolutionary Patriotic Union of Krasnoyarsk, a group including Communist youth groups and members of the Communist Party, in addition to the core members of Other Russia (*lkd.ru* 2008d). The remaining reported ideological protests were not related to politics, local or national. Members of Krasnoyarsk's gothic sub-culture marched in response to school rules prohibiting visible tattoos and piercing during school hours (*Kasparov.ru* 2008f).

Organizers of protest activities in Krasnoyarsk include primarily groups identified in the previous year. Industry-specific payment grievances spurred workers to organize, with the help of professional unions. The housing protest saw occupants themselves joined by a subset of the Other Russia coalition, Working Krasnoyarsk and the Communist youth group AKM. As reported in 2007, Other Russia was responsible for organizing the bulk of ideological protests. The clearest difference from the previous year is the absence of reported Communist Party organizational pressure in either quality of life or ideological protests. While the official branch was absent, unofficial offshoots took part.

Government responses towards material and ideological protests expose a sharp dissimilarity. On the quality of life side, Krasnoyarsk leadership produced two powerful examples of non-repressive state capacity. The society of auto-owners refused to take part in a larger wave

of protests because they agreed to cooperate with leadership. Representatives of the local department of economic planning and industry participated in a roundtable discussion with activist leader Ivan Smolin. The discussants announced that Krai officials would pressure representatives of RosNeft, the oil company, to increase delivery to the local market. As a second prong of the strategy, the transport activists worked with local government to send a bill to the federal level that would allow more local control over fuel taxes (*Kasparov.ru* 2008a). The local government showed cooptation power in the case of airline workers, as well as at the aluminum plant. Local transport minister called a meeting with airline company KrasAir and the union leader. The three parties came to an elegant solution. Fired workers changed their status to voluntary retirement, in exchange for guaranteed severance packages. Faced with the mere threat of protest activity, the power plant owners agreed to bargain. An agreement produced a schedule of back pay fulfillment. In an interesting turn, the concern's representative refused to name the source of new funds, claiming he was able to attract "strategic investors." Source indicate that Krai government was the mysterious savior (*lkd.ru* 2008i). Negotiations between the union and factory leadership, produced a raise in average pay and a promise to renovate worker quarters (*SoyuzSevodnya* 2008).

The participants in ideological protests experienced the iron fist aspect of state capacity. As reported in 2007, several leaders of Other Russia were arrested during or after attending events. One of the leaders even received a yearlong sentence. Charges under which activists were tried include "public calls to social extremism" (*Kasparov.ru* 2008k). Krasnoyarsk authorities continued to challenge freedom of speech. One member of Other Russia was arrested and detained for two weeks for publishing obscene language to an internet message board (*Kasparov.ru* 2008l).

Summary

The pattern of responses evident in 2007 once again appears. Many events received no response. Quality of life protests received cooptational responses. And ideological protests

received repressive responses. Both regions demonstrated the willingness to coopt disaffected professional groups. Novosibirsk leadership gave in to municipal drivers demands for higher wages. Krasnoyarsk leadership orchestrated negotiations and an eventual conclusion between an airline company and employees. In Krasnoyarsk aluminum workers also won concessions from factory owners. In the south ecological activists experienced arrests and physical abuse from law enforcement. In the north Other Russia remained a target of such actions, as well as censorship. As an exception, pensioners began to face arrest after merging their push for decent living conditions with memorials for the immolated man. Again it is difficult to judge the inclinations of the two local governments. In Novosibirsk, in Krasnoyarsk, government responded to some events, not to others, and catalysts vary in the two regions.

This year, however, in 2008, a cross-cutting grievance offers a telling comparison. Over the course of the year, in Novosibirsk, Communists, auto-owners, and pensioners held events in protest of price increases, together and in smaller groups. Sources did not report a state response. In Krasnoyarsk, the state successfully preempted auto-owner protests by engaging in cooperative negotiations. Auto-owners' explicit call to emulate the cooperative process strengthens the contrast. Other than the auto-enthusiasts Krasnoyarsk did not witness inflation protests. Of course it is possible that price levels were not comparable across the regions. According to the RossStat, though, official levels of commercial goods and services inflation deviating by less than one percentage point in every month of the year (GKS, 2016).

2009

Novosibirsk

With a third year of analysis, clearer patterns in protest dynamics begin to appear. Novosibirsk continued to see unrest driven by high cost of living and worker demands for higher pay or liquidation of back pay. Quality of life protests continued to be occasionally coopted. Ideological protests continue to be occasionally repressed.

Problems of the previous years continued to emerge in Novosibirsk in 2009. Several protests explicitly targeted housing prices. A group of dissatisfied tenants demanded rezoning of their apartment building to win city subsidies (*Kasparov.ru* 2009e), and a pensioner-led protest called attention to unsustainable rent and maintenance costs (*lkd.ru* 2009a). Automobile owners played a role in the battle against untenable living conditions. Activists organized a march against housing and housing services prices, gas prices and gas taxes (Lebentsev 2009). The auto-owners then organized a set of separate protests narrowly focused on gas prices (Aksenova 2009). For the third straight year a number of professional groups also convened protest actions. Teachers struck and threatened a hunger strike, demanding greater compensation (*Kasparov.ru* 2009d). Those working for an American-themed restaurant chain, New York Pizza, hit the streets together in order to demand back pay from their employer (*Kasparov.ru* 2009a). The service industry workers threatened mass walk-outs and threatened to sue the owners. In separate incidents security guards (*lkd.ru* 2009b) and local national guard members threatened hunger strikes in the face of impending layoffs (*Kasparov.ru* 2009c). In two final examples of workplace unrest, workers at the Altai Tractor Factory (Krapotkina 2009), and the Linevski Construction company (*lkd.ru* 2009d), picketed outside their company headquarters, demanding compensation for unpaid wages. Novosibirsk mothers focused a new source of grievances into a set of actions. The local March on Wheels saw a group of mothers strolling out their strollers to demand child care. Protestors' primary demand was an increase in available spots in child care centers. More generally, however, the group protested budgetary relations towards women and families. According to the women's slogans financial conditions effected the decision to have a second child. Despite the fact that the Russian constitution guarantees free public child care, before school age, thousands of children went without a spot in oblast classrooms (Vasiliva 2009c).

Novosibirsk leadership did not respond to the majority of quality of life protests in 2008. And, ignored in previous years, auto-owners dissident actions were now met with repressive force. Despite the fact that auto-owners' protest against price levels were approved by the

government, two of the group's leaders, Alexei Umerenko and Sergei Kononov were arrested, for "failure to pay fines on time" (Aksenova 2009). After his release Kononov was again jailed. On the eve of a planned march he was placed in solitary confinement for "violating the peace" at a previous event. No conciliatory measures were forthcoming, and the Novosibirsk transportation department even decided to reduce spending on infrastructure maintenance (Vasiliva 2009a). Not all was bleak, however. The striking teachers canceled their action after winning a promise to sit down with lawmakers. The striking tractor assemblers saw their demands met in full. In their demands, the protestors cleverly leveraged the impending visit of then Prime Minister Putin. Failure to pay wages would incite a railroad blockade on the scheduled arrival day. Immediately before Putin's arrival funds were dispersed to workers' accounts. This instance lays the logic of cooptation bare. The signed agreement even includes legal language tying the repayment to cessation of further protest actions (*KPRF News* 2009). Striking workers at the construction company were not as fortunate, and the company filed for bankruptcy a year later. The pizza restaurant staff also failed to sway leadership.

Ideologically-driven dissent continued in Novosibirsk across 2009. A nation-wide day of protest against United Russia included a local march in Novosibirsk (Druzhinin 2009). A march in remembrance of a murdered journalist, shot in Moscow, turned into a brawl when a group of nationalists engaged protestors (lkd.ru 2009a). This year, however, the main flash point became tension between law enforcement and local residents. Activists gathered several times to call for wide-ranging reforms to police behavior in the region. Participants hoped to spread their message to politicians, residents, and members of law enforcement organizations. The local outrage appeared only after several cases of alleged brutality by members of the military and the police (Vasiliva 2009b). Later in the year a high-profile case brought Novosibirsk citizen-security organization relations to the fore. A youth organizer, Artyem Loskutov, was arrested preparing to take part in the city's annual "Monstration," an apolitical demonstration of youth and creativity. He was only freed after protests in his defense in Saint Petersburg and Moscow. Support also came

from high-profile anti-Putin deputy Ilya Ponamarev. Oblast courts refused to admit to wrongdoing, and upon his release Loskutov immediately organized a rally for police reform (*lkd.ru* 2009f).

Official responses were yet again largely absent. The anti-police brutality events saw a police presence accompany the marchers without intervention. Inaction turned to a form of repression in the nationalist attack. Sources report that police did nothing to discourage the violent attack against activists mourning the slain journalist (*lkd.ru* 2009a). When a response did appear, in the Monstration case, repression appears to have been misguided. Artyem Loskutov was jailed under charges of possession of narcotic substances in large quantities. Official charges appeared several days after the arrest, and the young man claimed a bag of marijuana was planted on him. Loskutov himself interpreted his arrest as a preemptive attempt to discourage participation in social mobilization. He was not discouraged (*lkd.ru* 2009f).

Dissident acts in the southern Siberian oblast were organized by a rich array of groups, from well-established movements, to rising activist entrepreneurs, to single issue area groups. The auto-owners branded their organization TIGR and rallied members to protest gas prices. This year, however, they began offering support to causes well outside of their foundational area of concern. Solidarity sponsored the law enforcement reform protest, with support from “For Human Rights” and the Communist Youth Group AKM, as well as Communist party and Just Russia party members. Solidarity is a citizens’ rights movement founded by the slain politician Boris Nemtsov. The auto-owners’ movement pledged their support as well. TIGR even took part in rallies for accessible child health care. The March on Wheels was organized by a local movement under the name “Give Russian Children Access to Education.” As the name indicates, the group was formed in response to the issue at hand. Finally, the new, rising star in the activist community grabbed headlines even thousands of miles from Novosibirsk. The name Artyem Loskutov rang out in Moscow and Saint Petersburg over the course of the year as the activist attained the level of symbolic hero. As usual, professional pickets and hunger strikes were organized by workers themselves.

Krasnoyarsk

Events in Krasnoyarsk in 2009 clearly demonstrate the power of protester demands. A promise to fulfill wage arrears brought an end to airline and factory dissent in 2008. Both workers were effectively coopted. As soon as the promises began to waver, protesters once again mobilized their threats. Cooptational state capacity, as would be expected, appears effective only when carried through to its conclusion. On the ideological side, protestors interpreted the mysterious death of a colleague as reason to fight, not succumb to repressive force.

Two workplace conflicts led to protests in the region. In both cases local government initiated cooptational response in the previous year, in 2008. Once the promised aid began to disappear aggrieved citizens restarted their campaigns. The ongoing airline bankruptcy became the major source of contention in the region, and even across the country. Unemployed stewardesses, baggage handlers, and ticket sellers returned to the streets after delays arose in the payment schedule negotiated the previous year. The group decided to gather symbolically on a local holiday, the birthday of Krasnoyarsk's aviation industry. Workers targeted local government to intervene with signs claiming "without a kopeck in our pockets," and "we will fight to the end." Without assistance, future actions were promised (Hadyezhdin 2009). A month after the initial action, gatherings moved to the nation's capital. Workers repeated their claims in a central square in Moscow, paying particular attention to the fact that, "the government is the primary stock holder in KrasAir" (*Kasparov.ru* 2009b). The battle continued in the oblast with a concurrent picket to support the capital campaign, and a hunger strike. Shortly thereafter electronic transfers began and actions ceased (*Kasparov.ru* 2009g). In a parallel case, workers at the Krasnoyarsk heavy machinery factory threatened to return to the streets after concessions ceased (*lkd.ru* 2009c).

The fluidity of government responses to the airline bankruptcy outlines a process of interaction between state and society. Several initial protests failed to elicit a response. The government only responded after a group of aggrieved workers enacted a hunger strike.

According to reports, at least several individuals reached critical condition, requiring hospitalization, before negotiations resumed (*Kasparov.ru* 2009g). Minister of Industry and Energy for the Krai met with representatives and agreed to initiate a transfer of funds. When the promised funds failed to appear immediately, the hunger strike continued. When the threat of death materialized, when more stewardesses were hospitalized, the funds materialized as well. Two months after the agreement the company filed for bankruptcy (*Lenta Novosti* 2009). As before, Krasnoyarsk leadership intervened in the factory protest. The mayor ordered the company to declare bankruptcy, and organized partial compensation of worker debts (*lkd.ru* 2009c).

Ideologically-driven protests emerged in response to a specific incident occurring in Krasnoyarsk. On June 30 Rim Shaigalimov was pronounced dead in a Krasnoyarsk correctional facility (*Kasparov.ru* 2009f). Shaigalimov was an Other Russia activist, who died jumping out of a window, according to official reports. Members of his family reacted in shock. They rejected any insinuation of frail health or suicidal tendencies. Shaigalimov was transferred to solitary confinement after an unlikely suicide attempt. Police report that the 55 year old activists slipped free of handcuffs during transfer between facilities and used “sharp edges” of a nearby car to gash his wrists. After the incident his associates organized a series of protests in the area. Within a month of the incident Shaigalimov’s death threatened to become a national rallying cry for the opposition. A show of solidarity took place in Moscow (*Komsomolskaya Pravda* 2009). Unrelated to the headline-grabbing story, members of Other Russia organized a march in protest of United Russia and in favor of a “worthy life.” Participants echoed the nationwide chant of “Russia without Putin” (*lkd.ru* 2009e).

The Krasnoyarsk state responded with denial and seemingly clumsy attempts at obfuscation. As protests against the mysterious death began the government failed to provide explanations for two perplexing factors. The solitary confinement cell featured a window, but one fortified by metal bars. And secondly, the prison claimed that footage from a round-the-clock surveillance camera had disappeared. The prison administrators further refused to acknowledge

the protestors' primary demand: an independent investigation into cause of death. As protests continued, spreading to the capital in the west, official response turned darker. According to official reports Shaigalimov's passport was lost during his incarceration, along with Xeroxed copies of his relatives passports. Without proof of identity the coroner threatened to bury the activist as an unknown foreign national. More than in insult, the procedure would prevent anyone from examining the body before the burial (*Radio Svoboda* 2009). Additional responses were not reported. A similarly threatening response met the organizers of the "worthy life" protest. While handing out pamphlets the local leader of the Left Front was jailed. The individual was detained for less than 24 hours, according to reports, but in the mist of the Shaigalimov affair, even a short stay was cause for alarm (*lkd.ru* 2009e).

The aggrieved airline and factory workers each organized with the help of their unions. Shaigalimov's colleagues at Other Russia organized protests in his defense. Leader of the National Bolshevik strand, Andrei Skovorodnikov, played the initial role in spreading the story. Once protests in the deceased's honor began, the Revolutionary-Patriotic Union of Krasnoyarsk joined in. Additional groups joined once the movement spread to Moscow. The Communist youth groups and Solidarity both took part. The "worthy life" was organized by Other Russia alone.

Summary

State responses in 2009 offer the clearest indication yet that Krasnoyarsk may, in fact, be more inclined towards cooptational solutions. According to source data, Novosibirsk ignored demands of restaurant workers, builders, security guards, pensioners, mothers with young children, and automobile-owners. Krasnoyarsk leadership only faced two groups of aggrieved citizens, and reinvigorated faltering cooptation deals in both cases. The persistent nature of unresolved demands is another takeaway from this year's events. In Novosibirsk inflation protests, especially those organized by TIGR, stretched into 2009. Both sources of quality of life protest in Krasnoyarsk were direct continuations of previous state-society negotiations. As witnessed in 2007 and 2008, some ideologically-driven protests were ignored, others were met

with repression. Interestingly, in both Siberian regions attempts to repress seem to have encouraged social mobilization. Activists argue that Loskutov was arrested as a method of deterrence. Activists argue that Shaigalimov was killed as a warning to Other Russia leadership. In both cases the repressive actions became rallying cries for local organizers. Even more disconcerting from the perspective of government officials, in both cases cries for retribution spread to Moscow and Saint Petersburg.

2010

Novosibirsk

In Novosibirsk, in 2010, two unaddressed quality of life concerns generated protest waves. Demands for accessible childhood education and subsidized transportation spurred numerous actions throughout the year. The waves demonstrate the contagion potential of such movements, as each attracted followers critical of local leadership. Ideologically-driven protests continued, although with a wider range of driving factors.

Quality of life protests raged over the entire year. In particular two concerns dominated the headlines and the local political landscape. In the oblast available spaces in pre-school classrooms dwindled. A group of parents gathered to protest what they considered a violation of their constitutional rights. The parents announced clearly-organized, specific demands. They petitioned the government for monetary compensation, exactly equal to the amount of budgetary funds required to support a preschool student for a year (Mikitik 2010a). Follow-up marches further expressed a well of outrage from citizens raising young children (Mikitik 2010b). After failing to receive attention, organizers ratcheted up their efforts, with a hunger strike and an initiative to boycott voting for United Russia (Krapotkina 2010b). Nearly six months after the initial wave of protests, the movement continued. Protest leaders began articulating their action as a defense of government education guarantees (*Kasparov.ru* 2010b). A combination of hunger strikes, gatherings, and marches spread across the region. On the traditional first day of school, Day of Knowledge as it is known, students present their teachers with flowers. The displaced

children's' parents marked the day with a theatrical event. Local leaders repurposed a kindergarten into a tax inspection facility. The parents blocked the entrance and handed out flowers to all passers-by, under placards warning that "knowledge is not for everyone" (Ivanovna 2010).

A proposed increase in transport fees for pensioners and government assistance recipients spurred the second wave of public dissent. Pensioners, handicapped, and the poorest citizens would have the number of subsidized rides per month capped at 30, according to a proposed bill. Outraged activists occupied the mayor's office building until escorted away by police. Thereafter protests became a common occurrence (Mikitik 2010f). Once the bill began law demands shifted from prevention to annulling the transportation policy. Actions continued and received political backing from the Communist Party. Protestors began taking on additional causes, including housing prices, eventually exhibiting familiar slogans of "pensioners for a worthy life," and "protection of veterans." Disconcerting for leadership, the final wave morphed into a condemnation of United Russia in general. The meetings continued for over a year, into 2012 (*KPRF News* 2011b).

Novosibirsk leadership responded with stubborn refusal to employ cooptational capacity. Dissatisfied parents managed to get their concern to the first threshold of political action. By protesting directly outside a Novosibirsk legislative meeting, their demand for compensation received a vote of consideration. Deputies voted down the measure. In a disingenuous move politicians declared the demands against the law. However, in Permsk Krai parents in the same position receive state funds (Mikitik 2010b). Several arrests for "distribution of extremist literature" are the only other reported responses. The initial response to transportation activists was analogous dismissal. Despite continued protests and solid political support from the Communist Party, officials did not budge. At a televised open forum the governor explained to those gathered that complaining about thirty trips is misguided, because the original plan called for twelve (*KPRF News* 2011a). After United Russia itself became the target, responses turned dark. Non-political

organizers were assaulted near their homes, or detained on unrelated charges. Several incidents of police brutality were reported (*lkd.ru* 2010a). Finally, after around six months of protest a sign of cooptation appeared: leadership introduced the “social discount” card. Pensioners were allowed sixty rides at half price (*KPRF News* 2011c). From this point on protesters faced arrest and fines. It was only at this moment that local state forces chose to employ the “illegal gathering” law infringement that had been in effect since the initial event. The stubborn protesters were fully coopted by state power after fourteen months of constant agitation. In January of 2012, the mayor, announcing that the budget was now able to handle the strain, awarded unlimited transport to all subsidy categories (*lkd.ru* 2012).

In Novosibirsk activists cast themselves as defenders of the constitution. A group organized a meeting of solidarity for Strategy 31, a national movement dedicated to protecting the 31st article of the Russian constitution, freedom of assembly. Participants were arrested (*Kasparov.ru* 2010a). A second event took the form of public educational exercise. Organizers gave a set of public talks, discussing the erosion of participation in the modern Russian political system. Comparing the current system to the 1990’s, passers-by were offered to vote on their preferred choice (Mikitik 2010a). Politically motivated protests then continued, drawing support from the city’s tradition of public assembly. The yearly expression of paradoxical slogans and colorful costumes took place; the Monstration proceeded through the city center and treated onlookers to “Earth: For Earthlings,” and other strange claims (*Kasparov.ru* 2010c). Organizers consistently insisted that the event was non-political in nature. The line between political and non-political blurred on Halloween however. Organizers of the Monstration held a similar Demonstration. The date, the 31st, saw some Strategy 31 supporters attend with political slogans (*Kasparov.ru* 2010f). Citizens’ fight against police brutality continued through 2010. Two separate events saw people gathered outside of local courthouses in support of prisoners jailed for endangering police, while they themselves were receiving beatings (Mikitik 2010c; *Kasparov.ru* 2010e). Violent behavior of off-duty officers also became reason for protest, and even a hunger

strike intended to trigger a lawsuit (Mikitik 2010e). As the events continued organizers began uniting under the banner “little people and the system” (Mikitik 2010e). And finally, the area’s ecological activists failed to dissipate. Students and professors in Akademgorodok organized several marches and attempted to disrupt ongoing deforestation efforts (*lkd.ru* 2012, *lkd.ru* 2010b).

State responses to ideological protests in 2011 were narrowly-focused and minor. Police arrested several participants in the Strategy 31 protest. Other participants were allowed to march without hassle. Others never made it to the site. On the way to the protests Solidarity activists were reportedly detained by police (*Kasparov.ru* 2010a). Response to the Monstration event changed over time. This year, organizers lodged an official sanction request, which included the proposed march route. In the previous year Artyem Loskutov was arrested and fined for taking part in an unsanctioned event. At first mayoral deputies refused the request. After an exchange with activist leadership, after organizers threatened to take the administration to court, the decision was reversed. Repressive actions against Loskutov himself appear to have continued. After the march the artist was attacked by unknown assailants while sitting on a park bench in the middle of the city (*Kasparov.ru* 2010f). After the Halloween march was deemed political, Loskutov was once again escorted to a police station. Police detain him for a day, and levy a fine for, ostensibly, unrelated unpaid parking violations—a charge later changed to insulting police. The green defenders in the university enclave were not hassled until they approached machinery. Then several were arrested (*lkd.ru* 2010c).

Demands for early education compensation were organized by Novosibirsk’s Russian Children- for Accessible Preschool Education (also known by the unwieldy acronym (РДДДО)). As time passed the group expanded their areas of concern beyond education, even taking part in the transport subsidy protests. Additional participants included a small citizens group, Citizens Tired of Waiting, and the local TIGR. As the cause gained momentum, the Communist Party got involved and played a role in publicizing grievances. Several members of the Novosibirsk

assembly gave speeches and directly addressed leadership, in an appeal to citizens not eligible for subsidized rides. Budget cuts at the expense of the elderly were simply not fair, according to the speakers. Attendance continued to grow, along with the breadth of participants. As the movement continued into 2011 organizers were able to gather 15,000 signatures on a petition to the governor. Anti-police brutality protests likewise demonstrate a ratcheting up of organizational support. Friends and acquaintances of the victims called together early events, before attracting support from TIGR and eventually Solidarity. The year's ideologically motivated protests likewise demonstrate a merging of actors and goals. Solidarity played the primary organizational role in Strategy 31. Artyem Loskutov used his Monstration network to contribute to event organization.

Krasnoyarsk

Compared to its southern neighbor, Krasnoyarsk appeared tranquil in 2010. Very few quality of life protests were reported, and the state responded quickly and effectively in each case. Protestors did organize several ideologically-driven events, however. Like in Novosibirsk, the national Strategy 31 found local support.

Two cases of living conditions grievance arose over the course of 2010 in Krasnoyarsk, one of which did not lead to any protests. Workers at a local combine factory organized a strike in response to accumulating back pay. The men and women constructing agricultural and industrial machinery reportedly worked without pay for several months. As the debt accumulated, work continued uninterrupted thanks to leadership's promises of imminent compensation (*lkd.ru* 2012). When patience expired, the workers, en masse, stopped reporting to their stations. A second set of laborers suffered from a lack of housing.

State responses demonstrate the effectiveness of both cooptation and coercion. Merely a week after combine workers began their strike, Krasnoyarsk news outlets reported a complete fulfillment of back pay. The region's anti-crisis working group convened with representatives from the governor's office to discuss a solution. After the meeting, which occurred behind closed

doors, workers reportedly received electronic transfers. Reports very clearly reveal the direct financial involvement of local government. The payment was pushed through only after employers received a government-guaranteed line of credit (*NewsLab.ru* 2010). The injection of funds turned out to be a temporary reprieve. Three years later, in 2013, the factory declared bankruptcy and shuttered for good (*SibNovosti* 2013). Coercive measures also seem to have deterred protesters. Workers at an aluminum plant saw their attempt to picket outside of company headquarters thwarted. The mayor informed the group that their plans violated Krai law. Any attempt to convene would result in mass arrests. As an extra layer of assurance the scheduled site was occupied by fire trucks and heavy machinery. No subsequent action was ever reported (*lkd.ru* 2012).

The majority of protests reported in Krasnoyarsk were driven by ideology. Over the course of the year, several gatherings convened as part of the national movement in favor of freedom of assembly, in support of Strategy 31 (Krapotkina 2010a). The group maintained their commitment to the cause and continued to convene, even after the government enacted a soft repressive response (Mikitik 2010d). Strategy 31 protests continued throughout the year as protestors formed an organizational committee dedicated to continuing the tradition (*Kasparov.ru* 2010d). Another national movement directed feelings of discontent in a slightly different direction. The national Day of Anger focused on environmental and repressive concerns. Participants in Moscow and numerous cities, including Krasnoyarsk, exclaimed “Destruction of Parks—It’s a Crime,” and “enough killing journalists and activists” (*Kasparov.ru* 2010g).

In response, local leadership flexed their judicial strength. The first gathering in support of Article 31 of the Russian constitution was sanctioned by the local Krasnoyarsk government. The second and third meetings were allowed to proceed as well. Things changed after the July 31 gathering. Leadership refused to allow a Strategy 31 protest planned for the last day in August, citing a scheduling conflict. In the fall the official response turned disingenuous. With the 31st of October on the horizon, a series of fences appeared around Krasnoyarsk’s central square.

Because of this announced “renovation,” protestors were forced to gather on a narrow curbside nearby (*Kasparov.ru* 2010d). Despite the crowding out of judicial and physical space, no arrests were reported at any of the actions. Local leadership continued their pattern of censorship. A television program on Krasnoyarsk’s channel “TV Center” allowed individuals to discuss their interpretations of national politics. After one of the habitual participants officially joined Other Russia, he was immediately banned from the air (*Kasparov.ru* 2010d).

Organizers once again make up a list of well-known movements, with a few new additions. Strategy 31 is a major, national campaign that united various groups. The main thrust, in Moscow each month, was the product of national and international efforts. Russian leadership came from Nemtsov’s Solidarity. Amnesty international contributed petitions to allow the meetings to proceed. The Siberian version of the event drew support from Other Russia as well as an even more radical League Against Illegal Immigration, a group subsequently declared a domestic terrorist organization. As time passed, as more and more protests occurred, the group attracted a broader group of supporters. The Communist Party reported participation beginning with the third event. The Day of Anger gathered the same group, with participants from the Communists, Solidarity, and Other Russia. Again this is a national movement that even received international support.

Summary

2010 again strengthens patterns emerging over the previous three years of analysis. A difference in willingness to react to quality of life protests is perhaps most clearly on display in this year. Novosibirsk’s refusal to engage protestor demands emboldened two waves of protests. Both child health care and transportation subsidy protests turned into movements, even transforming into broad attacks on the governing party. The only quality of life protests in Krasnoyarsk centered on professional group demands. In both cases local government acted swiftly to intervene, once with financial assistance, once with repressive force. As in the preceding years ideologically-driven protests were met with varying levels of repression in both

federal regions. Local social mobilization structures do seem to have influenced the manifestation of events in cases. In Novosibirsk the peculiarity of the Monstration tradition merged with more political protests. And the presence of Other Russia appears to have been stronger in Krasnoyarsk, as reflected by Strategy 31 protests.

Conclusion

Case study evidence echoes, and thus supports, major quantitative findings. It appears that the Krasnoyarsk state was more inclined to employ cooptational capacity than its counterpart in Novosibirsk. It appears that grievances, particularly those associated with wages and bills, created a consistent catalyst for protest. Even in such a tense environment, cooptational actions did, in fact, dissuade protestors from organizing. This is not to say that Novosibirsk's government completely refused to employ cooptation. Rather, in all four years under analysis the northernmost region reported more incidents of "buying-off" protestors, despite reporting fewer protests, fewer opportunities for such a response. In 2007, out of eight quality of life movements, Krasnoyarsk demonstrated cooptational tactics in response to four of them. Novosibirsk, faced with eight movements, responded with cooptation only in response to striking grain workers. In 2008, Krasnoyarsk used a mix of cooptational and cooperational state capacity to "buy off" auto-owners, alumni factory workers, and displaced airline workers, or three of five protest movements. In the same year, Novosibirsk reached an agreement with just one group, striking municipal bus drivers, when faced with eight quality of life movements. In 2009 and 2010, Krasnoyarsk's protest environment was tranquil. Only four groups organized quality of life demands. The local state responded each time, three times with cooptation, and once with effective repression. Over the two years, twelve separate movements demanded assistance in Novosibirsk. Government responded twice, once to pay tractor factory workers threatening an official visit from Putin, and once to reverse a cut to subsidized transportation. The difference in cooptational capacity does appear to drive differing protest outcomes in the two regions.

The fate of the automobile-owner movement offers a clear comparison of regional tendencies. In 2008, with inflation levels engendering grievances, Krasnoyarsk government met with protestors to plan a response. From this moment onwards gas prices did not catalyze any reported events in the Krai. In 2008, Novosibirsk's chapter of TIGR explicitly requested to emulate the northern neighbor's strategy. The request was denied. Protests continued for years.

To further explore this incident, and cooptational capacity more generally, it would be interesting to investigate the real effects of the 2008 agreement. Did objective conditions facing drivers markedly improve, or was the state's gesture enough to diffuse dissent? Immediate responses are only part of the story, of course. It appears that Krasnoyarsk's government effectively "bought off" groups on the receiving-end of wage transfers and housing improvements. Satisfied would-be protestors ceased to organize, reducing the carryover in protests from one year to the next. But what explains the fact that more new quality of life grievances appeared in Novosibirsk in each year? The answer to this question lies in the interplay between general living conditions and state assistance programs. A logical line of inquiry would trace the laws and policies passed by sub-regional government in scheduled legislative sessions, not in response to social pressure.

Moving to model improvement, I am now convinced that repressive state capacity vis-à-vis protest cannot be easily operationalized in a quantitative model. Case analysis reveals that coercion occasionally took the form of arrests and violence. Repression often failed to discourage organization, producing the opposite effect in some cases, even when prominent figures like Shaigalimov were killed. In contemporary Russia, however, coercion also takes a softer form: law enforcement detained activists temporarily for seemingly benign reasons—overdue library book fees, unpaid parking fines, and other trivialities just serious enough to hinder a planned speech. City officials prevented activists from gathering thanks to suspicious scheduling conflicts and city construction. Organizers in Novosibirsk and Krasnoyarsk also faced censorship, on the internet and on local television stations. It is difficult to envision a quantitative indicator that would capture

this creative set of coercive state tactics. But even an operationalization that included the softer side of coercive is unlikely to produce a significant relationship with onset frequency. Attempts to thwart organization through censorship and lengthy legal processes were often unsuccessful, as in the Loskutov case.

The case study exercise offers insight into social mobilization capacity operationalization as well. My initial choices were total population, urban population percentage, and local graduate population. Such a large number of protests were driven by unskilled laborers that education appears an insufficient driver of relative onset frequency—as indicated by statistical results. Would an alternative operationalization perform better? The presence of activist movements represents one potential alternative, some measure of the size of groups like Other Russia and TIGR. Still, protests driven by regional idiosyncrasies, from deforestation, to police negligence, to the Monstration tradition all organized without the help of dedicated organizations. And particular workplace grievances were numerous, often occurring even without the help of unions. Ad hoc groups spring up in response to both ideological and quality of life motivation.

The case study offered little improvement for cooperational capacity and political opportunity structure operationalizations. The exercise supports negative findings regarding these final two independent variables. Support for the government, particularly for the ruling party, do not seem to have influenced protest trends in Krasnoyarsk and Novosibirsk. Anti-regime protests often emerged as offshoots of less political demonstrations, as quality of life concerns grew and evolved over time. Protestors do not appear to direct demands into the traditional political system. Many events arose in response to proximate grievances, to which activists gathered and struck as a first response. Moreover, the catalytic effect of political pluralism may be subsumed by civil society groups. Process tracing identified Communist youth organizations as occasional organizers. These groups continue to organize whether or not the Communist party holds local legislative seats. Case study analysis suggests that neither United Russia support nor political openness is sufficient to ensure a relatively quiescent protest environment in Russia.

Finally, I am convinced that disaggregated statistical analysis represents the way forward. I am convinced that the quality-of-life/ideology dichotomy presented here would improve the search for structural drivers of protest. The next step in the dialectic that is social scientific research—from hypothesis, to testing, and back again—would evaluate the notion that quality of life protests are structurally predictable, while ideologically-driven protests are not. Case study analysis presented in this chapter suggests that attempts to statistically model all protest events in the contemporary Russian environment may be misguided. Including unpredictable ideological protests may have diluted regression model utility. Even a more disaggregated approach would face difficulties, however. This chapter's in-depth look at protest in two Siberian provinces revealed connections between quality of life protests and ideological protests. Categorical boundaries collapsed as striking workers joined political activists, and the mundane became political.

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Appendix i

2013 protest onset figures coded from namarsh.ru. I add to Lankina and Voznaya's existing dataset, which includes years 2007-2012 (Lankina 2015 and Lankina and Voznaya 2015).

Subject	2013
Adygea	1
Altai Krai	3
Altai Republic	0
Amur	0
Arkhangelsk	2
Astrakhan	4
Bashkortostan	1
Belgorod	0
Bryansk	1
Buryatia	0
Chechnya	0
Chelyabinsk	16
Chukotka	0
Chuvashia	0
Dagestan	5
Ingushetia	1
Irkutsk	8
Ivanovo	1
Jewish AO	0
Kabardino-Balkaria	0
Kaliningrad	4
Kalmykia	1
Kaluga	0
Kamchatka	0
Karachai-Cherkessia	0

Karelia	2
Kemerovo	0
Khabarovsk	0
Khakassia	2
Khanty Mansi	0
Kirov	3
Komi	1
Kostroma	0
Krasnodar	6
Krasnoyarsk	4
Kurgan	5
Kursk	0
Leningrad	2
Lipetsk	2
Magadan	0
Mari El	0
Mordovia	4
Moscow City	139
Moscow Oblast	12
Murmansk	4
Nenets AO	0
Nizhegorodskaja	14
North Ossetia	3
Novgorod	0
Novosibirsk	15
Omsk	5
Orel	0
Orenburg	0
Penza	15
Perm	0
Primorsky	3
Pskov	0
Rostov	3
Ryazan	8
Sakha	0
Sakhalin	1
Samara	38
Saratov	2
Smolensk	1
St. Petersburg	48
Stavropol	2
Sverdlovsk	10

Tambov	10
Tatarstan	5
Tomsk	3
Tula	1
Tver	3
Tyumen	1
Tyva	0
Udmurtia	2
Ulyanovsk	2
Vladimir	1
Volgograd	15
Vologda	1
Voronezh	17
Yamalo-Nenets AO	0
Yaroslavl	2
Zabaikalsky	0

Appendix ii

	(1) Protest	(2) Protest	(3) Protest
Protest			
Pop	0.000296*** (4.36)	0.000403*** (4.16)	0.000315*** (4.58)
UrbanPop	0.0222* (2.45)	0.0365*** (3.76)	0.0231* (2.56)
StudentPop	-0.0146 (-1.66)	-0.00867 (-0.75)	-0.0138 (-1.63)
SocialSpending	-0.0264*** (-5.74)	-0.0354*** (-6.55)	-0.0285*** (-5.76)
Crime	0.0000331 (0.37)	-0.0000900 (-0.95)	0.0000298 (0.34)
Unemployment	0.0676*** (4.00)	0.0598*** (3.96)	0.0649*** (3.82)
UnitedRussia	-0.00364 (-1.22)	-0.00447 (-1.59)	-0.00379 (-1.27)
OpennessIn-x	0.0208 (0.18)	0.0803 (0.72)	0.0227 (0.20)
EconStatus		-0.0175 (-0.98)	
Transfers			0.00512 (1.12)
_cons	-0.488 (-0.62)	-0.216 (-0.15)	-0.582 (-0.74)

ln_r _cons	0.592** (3.20)	0.899*** (4.60)	0.600** (3.23)
ln_s _cons	0.514* (2.28)	0.694** (3.19)	0.512* (2.26)
N	572	558	572

t statistics in parentheses

* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001