Appendix 1: Additional figures
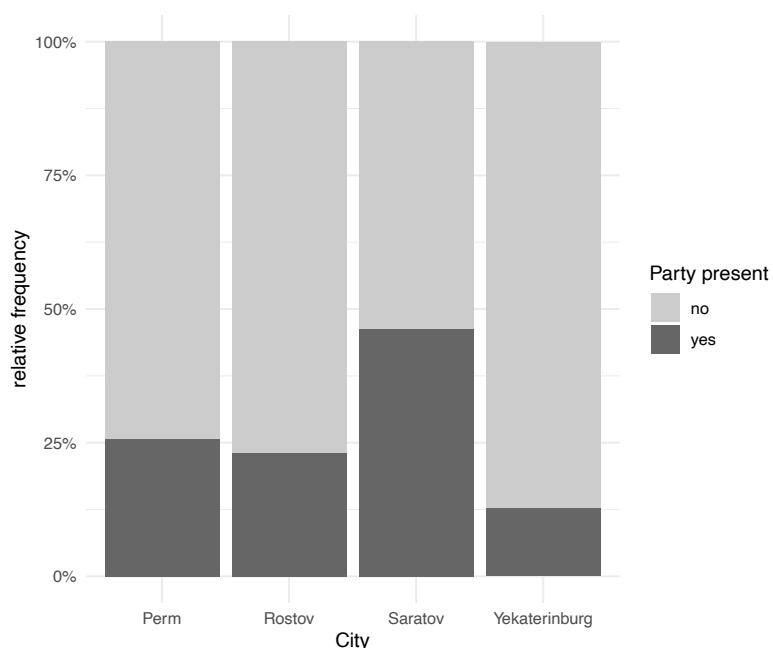

Figure A1. Involvement of political parties in recorded protest events (N = 176) between January and November 2011 by city, in %. Source: Regional news report data base (corpus A).
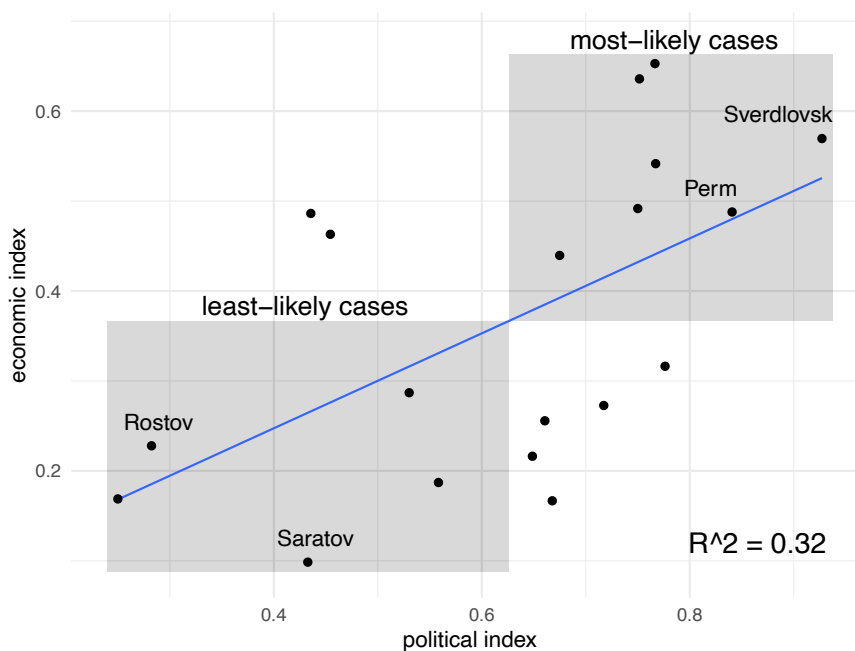

Figure A2. Plot of political and economic indices in universe of cases, including linear regression line. The Tyumen region was excluded as an outlier. Components of political index: functioning of regional elections, openness of political process, share of UR deputies in the regional parliament, media freedom. Components of economic index: GRP per capita, number of small non-state enterprises per 10,000 inhabitants. All variables are normalized. Fields of most/least-likely cases are delineated by mean split. Source: own calculations based on data from Petrov and Titkov (2013), Kynev (2009; 2014), and Rosstat.
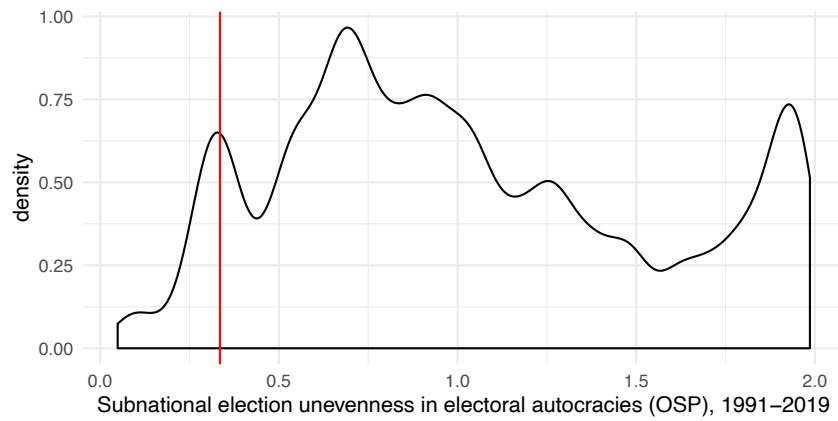
Figure A3. Kernel density distribution of subnational election unevenness (country-year) of all electoral authoritarian regimes between 1991 and 2019. For ease of interpretation, the Linearized Original Scale Posterior Prediction (OSP) is used (see appendix 2). Lower values indicate greater unevenness. The red vertical line shows Russia's value (0.335) for the period between 2006 and 2010. The area under the curve to the right of the line equals 0.916, indicating that over 91% of country-years display greater evenness of subnational conditions. Source: V-Dem v10.

Appendix 2: Extrapolation of results beyond the Russian case

Within-country variance of structural conditions

Several recent studies find that within-country differences in political conditions found in the Russian regions are large enough to distinguish between competitive and hegemonic forms of subnational electoral authoritarianism (Saikkonen 2016; Libman 2017; Panov and Ross 2019). Placing the selected cases on Ross and Panov's (2019) typology, three of four selected cases can clearly be associated with the "clearly-competitive authoritarian" or "hegemonic authoritarian" type that mark the extreme points of the spectrum. For the full observed time scale (2008-2017), both Rostov and Saratov are placed in the "hegemonic authoritarian" camp, Sverdlovsk (with its capital Yekaterinburg) is labelled "clearly-competitive authoritarian", while Perm is situated between these two. Concerning the latter case, it needs to be kept in mind that the classification is based solely on electoral indicators. Perm's intermediate position on this dimension is mirrored in its rating in the Petrov/Titkov index, where it receives a 3 on the quality of elections.

In the argument put forward, however, the electoral dimension is but one of several. In order to assess whether the case selection strategy maximizes the variation on all structural conditions that are theoretically relevant (which is a precondition for the claim to relevance of results for other countries in the set of electoral autocracies), I created additive indices of political and economic conditions in the regions prior to the onset of the FFE protests. The indices are based on the six structural factors described in the case selection procedure. The political index contains the functioning of regional elections, the openness of political processes, media freedom (all Petrov and Titkov 2013), and the share of United Russia (UR) deputies in the regional parliament (Kynev 2009; 2014). The economic index combines GRP per capita and the number of small non-state enterprises per 10,000 inhabitants (both Rosstat). The share of UR deputies has been inversely coded before the construction of the index, so that higher values consistently indicate more open opportunities and greater resources. All variables have been normalized, so that indices theoretically vary between 0 and 1. Within the universe of cases described in step 1 of the case selection, the political index varies empirically between 0.93 (Sverdlovsk) and 0.25 (Bashkortostan), while the economic index varies between 0.65 (Krasnoyarsk) and 0.1 (Saratov). The two indices correlate moderately at $r = 0.57$. In a linear regression, the R^2 is 0.32.[1] Figure A2 plots the two indices, demonstrating that the case selection spans a wide variety of context conditions within the universe of cases.

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[1] From these calculations, the region of Tyumen is excluded as an outlier. It has a low score on the political index, but, due to a large oil and gas sector, displays strong economic characteristics. The exclusion is not relevant for the case selection, as Tyumen is neither a most-likely nor a least-likely case.

Evidence for cross-national scale of the within-country differences

Data from the V-Dem project[2] provide an estimate of how large these within-country differences are in cross-national comparison. For this, I use the variable on subnational election unevenness (v2elsnlsff). This expert-coded variable measures the questions "Does the freeness and fairness of subnational elections vary across different areas of the country?" on a three-point ordinal scale (0: "yes", 1: "somewhat", 2: "no") that is converted to an interval scale by the built-in measurement model (V-Dem codebook, pp. 87-88).[3] Figure A3 above shows Russia's value between 2006 and 2010 to be among the 10% of country-years with the highest subnational election unevenness, with over 91% of country-years of all electoral authoritarian regimes[4] between 1991 and 2019 showing higher values on the original scale, meaning lower election unevenness. To facilitate interpretation, the figure uses V-Dem's Linearized Original Scale Posterior Prediction that transfers the point estimates of the interval scale back to the original ordinal scale (see V-Dem codebook, p. 30). On this scale that varies from 0 to 2, Russia's value is 0.335, remaining unchanged through the period of 2006-2010. This provides evidence that the within-country differences identified above are indeed large in cross-national comparison.

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[2] Coppedge, Michael, John Gerring, Carl Henrik Knutsen, Staffan I. Lindberg, Jan Teorell, David Altman, Michael Bernhard, M. Steven Fish, Adam Glynn, Allen Hicken, Anna Lührmann, Kyle L. Marquardt, Kelly McMann, Pamela Paxton, Daniel Pemstein, Brigitte Seim, Rachel Sigman, Svend-Erik Skaaning, Jeffrey Staton, Steven Wilson, Agnes Cornell, Nazifa Alizada, Lisa Gastaldi, Haakon Gjerløw, Garry Hindle, Nina Ilchenko, Laura Maxwell, Valeriya Mechkova, Juraj Medzihorsky, Johannes von Römer, Aksel Sundstr̈om, Eitan Tzelgov, Yi-ting Wang, Tore Wig, and Daniel Ziblatt. 2020. "V-Dem [Country–Year/Country–Date] Dataset v10" Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project.

[3] Coppedge, Michael, John Gerring, Carl Henrik Knutsen, Staffan I. Lindberg, Jan Teorell, David Altman, Michael Bernhard, M. Steven Fish, Adam Glynn, Allen Hicken, Anna Lührmann, Kyle L. Marquardt, Kelly McMann, Pamela Paxton, Daniel Pemstein, Brigitte Seim, Rachel Sigman, Svend-Erik Skaaning, Jeffrey Staton, Agnes Cornell, Lisa Gastaldi, Haakon Gjerløw, Valeriya Mechkova, Johannes von Römer, Aksel Sundtr̈om, Eitan Tzelgov, Luca Uberti, Yi-ting Wang, Tore Wig, and Daniel Ziblatt. 2020. "V-Dem Codebook v10" Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project.

[4] To identify electoral autocracies, the "Regimes of the World" index is used that is part of the extended V-Dem data and is compiled from the original V-Dem measures for polyarchy and liberal democracy, see codebook, p. 266.

Appendix 3: Interview sampling frame

The table below follows the suggestions of Bleich and Pekkanen (2015)[5] that serve to increase transparency in qualitative research. It lists, in anonymized form, all individuals who were interviewed, the sampling method (purposive vs. snowballing), the date, the interview situation, and the type of record.

Interview reference [a]	sampling method [b]	date of interview	interview situation	type of record
Perm				
A01P	P	15 June 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A02P	S	15 June 2017	face-to-face	notes
A03P	S	13 Sep 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A04P	P	14 Sep 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A05P	P	15 Sep 2017	face-to-face	notes
A06P	S	16 Sep 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A07P	S	19 Sep 2017	face-to-face	notes
A08P	P	20 Sep 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A09P	S	20 Sep 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A10P	S	21 Sep 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A11P	P	21 Sep 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A12P	P	22 Sep 2017	face-to-face	notes
A13P	P	23 Sep 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A14P	S	25 Sep 2017	face-to-face	notes
A15P	P	26 Sep 2017	face-to-face	transcript
P01P	P	11 Sep 2017	face-to-face	transcript
P02P	P	18 Sep 2017	face-to-face	transcript
S01P	S	10 Sep 2017	face-to-face	notes
S02P	P	13 Sep 2017	face-to-face	transcript
S03P	P	18 Sep 2017	face-to-face	transcript
S04P	S	19 Sep 2017	face-to-face	transcript
S05P	P	20 Sep 2017	face-to-face	transcript
Yekaterinburg				
A01Y	P	02 Oct 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A02Y	S	04 Oct 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A03Y	S	06 Oct 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A04Y	S	10 Oct 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A05Y	S	10 Oct 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A06Y	S	10 Oct 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A07Y	P	12 Oct 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A08Y	S	16 Oct 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A09Y	S	17 Oct 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A10Y	P	11 June 2018	skype	notes
J01Y	P	02 Oct 2017	face-to-face	transcript
J02Y	P	17 Oct 2017	face-to-face	transcript
P01Y	P	04 Oct 2017	face-to-face	transcript

[5] Bleich, Erik, and Robert Pekkanen. 2015. "Data Access, Research Transparency, and Interviews; the Interview Methods Appendix." *Qualitative & Multi-Method Research* 13 (1): 8–13.

Interview reference [a]	sampling method [b]	date of interview	interview situation	type of record
P02Y	S	05 Oct 2017	face-to-face	transcript
P03Y	S	11 Oct 2017	face-to-face	transcript
Saratov				
A01S	P	23 Oct 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A02S	S	24 Oct 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A03S	S	25 Oct 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A04S	P	26 Oct 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A05S	P	26 Oct 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A06S	S	27 Oct 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A07S	S	27 Oct 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A08S	S	30 Oct 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A09S	P	01 Nov 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A10S	S	01 Nov 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A11S	S	01 Nov 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A12S	S	02 Nov 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A13S	S	03 Nov 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A14S	P	04 Nov 2017	face-to-face	transcript
Rostov-na-Donu				
A01R	P	09 Nov 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A02R	P	12 Nov 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A03R	P	14 Nov 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A04R	S	16 Nov 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A05R	P	16 Nov 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A06R	S	16 Nov 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A07R	S	18 Nov 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A08R	S	21 Nov 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A09R	S	21 Nov 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A10R	S	22 Nov 2017	face-to-face	transcript
A11R	P	25 June 2018	skype	notes
A12R	P	19 June 2019	skype	notes
P01R	S	17 Nov 2017	face-to-face	transcript
S01R	P	18 Nov 2017	face-to-face	notes

Notes: [a] Interview references: A = Activist, P = Politician, J = Journalist, S = Scholar. [b] P = purposive sampling, S = snowballing.

Appendix 4: Gathering and coding of newspaper data

There are two types of selection bias associated with press data. The first concerns the selection of sources by the researcher, which can be overcome by casting the net as widely as feasible – see Beissinger's (2002) "blanketing strategy".[6] In an second type of selection bias, journalists tend to cover some events more than others (violence, for instance, increases the likelihood of coverage of a protest event).[7] To circumvent both types of selection bias, the data were collected using Integrum, a commercial service that archives full versions of texts produced by newspapers (print and online), news agencies, as well as radio and TV stations in the post-Soviet space on both the federal and the regional level. Given the wealth of sources – for Russia alone there are over 40,000[8] – using Integrum approximates the "blanketing strategy" and should thus decrease the risk of selection bias of media source. Moreover, including media with different political outlooks may reduce selection of events inherent in each single source. Variety in political outlook was approximated by including well-known liberal outlets where available (e.g. RBC, Ekho Moskvy, Kommersant) and adding other regional news outlets including official sources and left-wing newspapers.

These precautionary measures can mitigate potential selection bias, but they cannot fully prevent picking up occasionally false information or bias that is due to systemic sources like self-censorship that affects all media outlets in a region equally. For this reason, the information was triangulated with other sources (interviews, internal documents) whenever possible.

Corpus A – Data gathering

The search term in *Integrum* for gathering the data for corpus A was "[city] AND (митинг OR пикет OR (акци* протест*))"[9], the searched time was January to November 2011. Overall, there are 304 media reports from 23 different local outlets (5-7 per city) in the data base, covering 176 protest events.

Corpus A – Coding

After data gathering, the data were complemented with Tomila Lankina's (2018) data set, which added 11 protest events that the method described above had not identified. To code the protest events thematically, each report was read, unique protest events were identified and, on the basis of the reported content, were first labelled with a specific topic (like

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[6] Beissinger, Mark R. 2002. *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State*. Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics. Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press.

[7] On both types of selection bias – sources that tend to cover Earl, Jennifer, Andrew Martin, John D. McCarthy, and Sarah A. Soule. 2004. "The Use of Newspaper Data in the Study of Collective Action." *Annual Review of Sociology* 30 (1): 65–80.

[8] Semenov, Andrey. 2017. "From Economic to Political Crisis? Dynamics of Contention in Russian Regions (2008-2012)." *Österreichische Zeitschrift Für Politikwissenschaft* 45 (4).

[9] The search term translates to "Perm AND (meeting OR picket OR (protest* action*)". "Meeting" and "picket" are frequent protest forms that are also defined in the Russian law of assembly.

"corruption", "housing", or "elections"). These topics were then assigned to one of six thematic categories based on the coding rules suggested by Lankina and Voznaya (2015):

Category	Description
Political	Politically motivated anti-government and anti-regime protests at municipal, regional, and national levels
Economic	Protests against government economic policies, such as those affecting exchange rates, wages; strikes related to wage and worker-rights issues
Social	Protests by, and specifically furthering the aims of, socially vulnerable groups of people such as pensioners, victims of Chernobyl, students, disabled people, people on state benefits
Legal	Protests targeting unpopular legislation, its implementation (labor, criminal, and administrative codes); protest against illegal acts by state bodies or private companies (forced eviction, construction in inappropriate areas)
Ecological	Environmental issues, hazardous work conditions, waste dumping, destruction of forest reserves, parks, and protected woodlands
Cultural	Protests against the destruction of monuments and of historically valuable buildings and sites; against change in city (area) names

Source: Lankina and Voznaya (2015, 332)[10].

Involved actors were coded in a similar procedure. First, each mentioned collective actor was coded in specific terms. This included names of organizations, but also ad-hoc categories like "workers" or "creditors" (but not general terms like "citizens"). If no specific actor was mentioned, the code [unspecified / no organization] was applied. Then, where applicable, these labels were aggregated into the abstract categories of [NGOs] and [parties], while the terms "workers" and "creditors" were left in place.

Corpus B – Data gathering

Searches on the local FFE protests were conducted with the search term "за честные выборы" ("for fair elections"), excluding all reports that did not relate to the local protest cycle. Searches on the new organizations founded during the FFE protests in Perm and Saratov were carried out with the following search terms: (Перм* AND "Совет 24 декабря") and (Саратов* AND ("СОИ" OR "Саратовское объединение избирателей)). The software automatically includes grammatical inflections, so that these did not have to be specified separately. In total, 772 reports from 29 sources were included (6-9 per city). All documents were manually checked whether they were correctly included in the data base.

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[10] Lankina, Tomila, and Alisa Voznaya. 2015. "New Data on Protest Trends in Russia's Regions." *Europe-Asia Studies* 67 (2): 327–42.

Corpus B – Coding

Mentions of groups and organizations were automatically coded with MAXQDA, but each document was checked individually for correctness. Activities were coded by hand. Codes for activities were: [protest], [election monitoring], [technical] (i.e. organizational matters), [statement by authorities], [publication / analysis / statement][11], [festivities], [addressing officials], [roundtable / seminar / discussion][12], [press conference], [cooperation with authorities / parliamentary activity], [meeting / assembly], [mention of member of organization in other context], and [other]. The codes [mention of member of organization in other context], [statement by authorities], [festivities], and [press conference] were subsequently aggregated into the code [other].

The code [publication / analysis / statement] was given when the activity of an organization in the particular instance *consisted* of a statement about a fact or opinion. If an organization's statement *about an activity* was reported, the code [publication / analysis / statement] was not applied, and instead that specific activity was coded.

A report could be coded with more than one activity.

Each report was also coded with the month and year of its publication.

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[11] In figure 1, this code was shortened to [statement].
[12] In figure 1, this code was shortened to [debate etc.].