

# **Distributive Consequences of Electoral Mobilization and Reward in Russian Elections**

Rena Salayeva

Claremont Graduate University

## **Abstract**

This paper examines the theoretical considerations of the strategic calculus of Russian politicians pursuing electoral mobilization, and investigates the relationship between voter behavior and politically motivated federal allocations to regions. Largely untapped research has much to contribute to the burgeoning literature on competitive authoritarianism, of which the Russian Federation is a notable case (Robertson 2011). I argue that strategic behavior of incumbent Presidents is directed toward increasing voter turnout, and thus bolsters their political legitimacy as resilient and responsive leaders. Autocrats seek to counteract the political passivity of regional electorates and channel resources toward regions with historically low voter turnout before elections (mobilization), and toward regions with high voter turnout after elections (reward). Mobilization effects are expected to be stronger than reward effects in presidential and legislative elections. I test my theoretical propositions by using yearly and monthly data for two electoral cycles, 2007-2008 and 2011-2012.

*Keywords:* Distributive politics, electoral authoritarianism, political behavior