

What do surveys tell us about Duma elections in Russia

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Electoral polling in Russia

- 3 major sources of long term surveys: VTsIOM, FOM, Levada-Center
 - Levada and FOM: F2F trends (interrupted in 2020 by COVID-19)
 - VCIOM: mixed-mode?
 - Question of comparability of these trends?
- Various smaller companies, centers, and teams doing ad-hoc electoral surveys and focus-groups of various quality and sometimes publishing the results

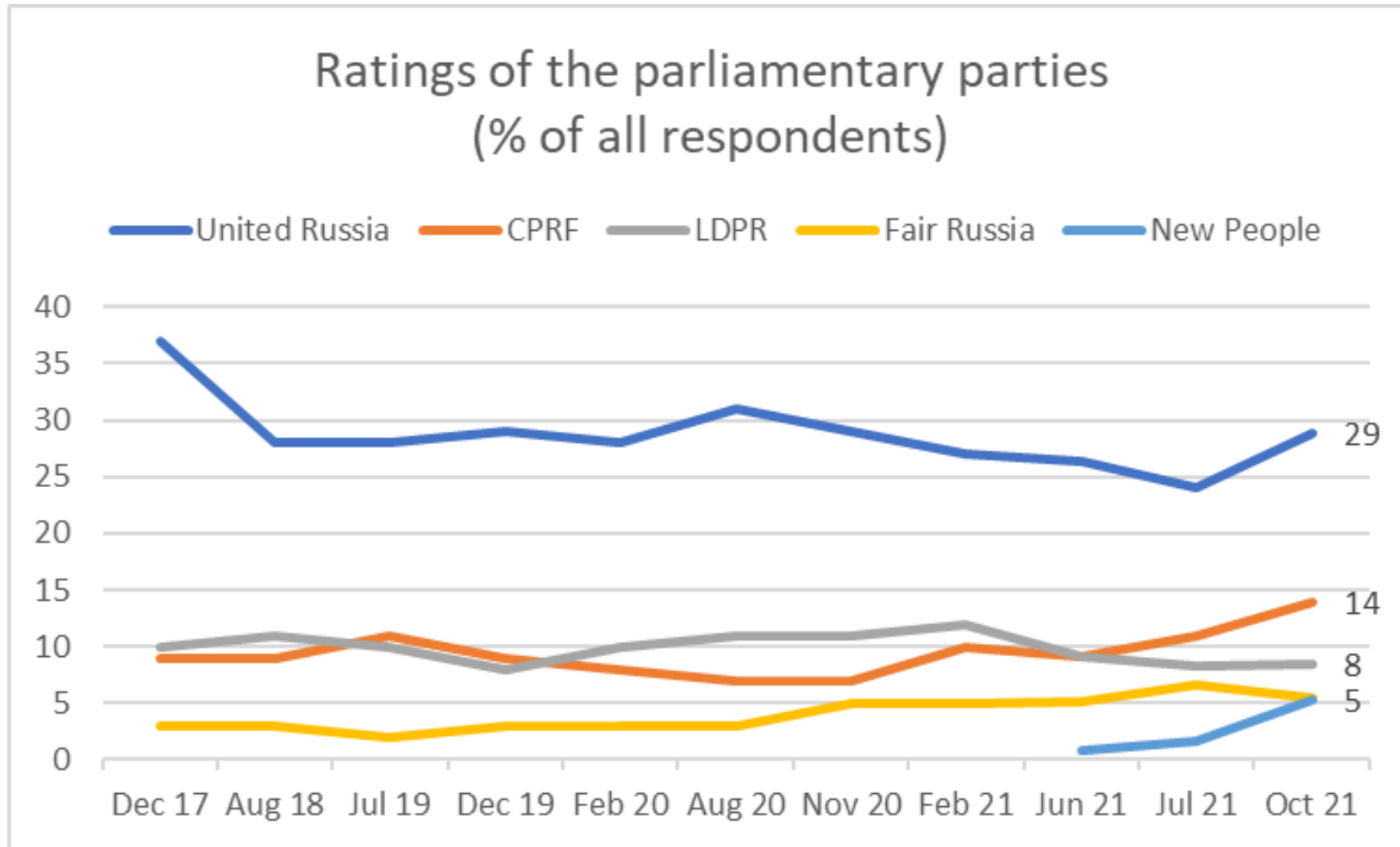
COVID-19 Effect?

- Major effect – 1st half of 2020: suspension of F2F surveys in many regions. Effect on representative: wider use of telephone surveys, use of online focus-groups
- Yet, “Back to normal” already in 2020, surely in 2021:
 - Keeping trends (telephone and F2F surveys show certain discrepancies in results; higher percentage for the authorities, +3%)
 - Supporting the field: not in every region partners could diversify
 - People have to work or go out of business
 - Wide-spread “COVID skepticism” in Russia

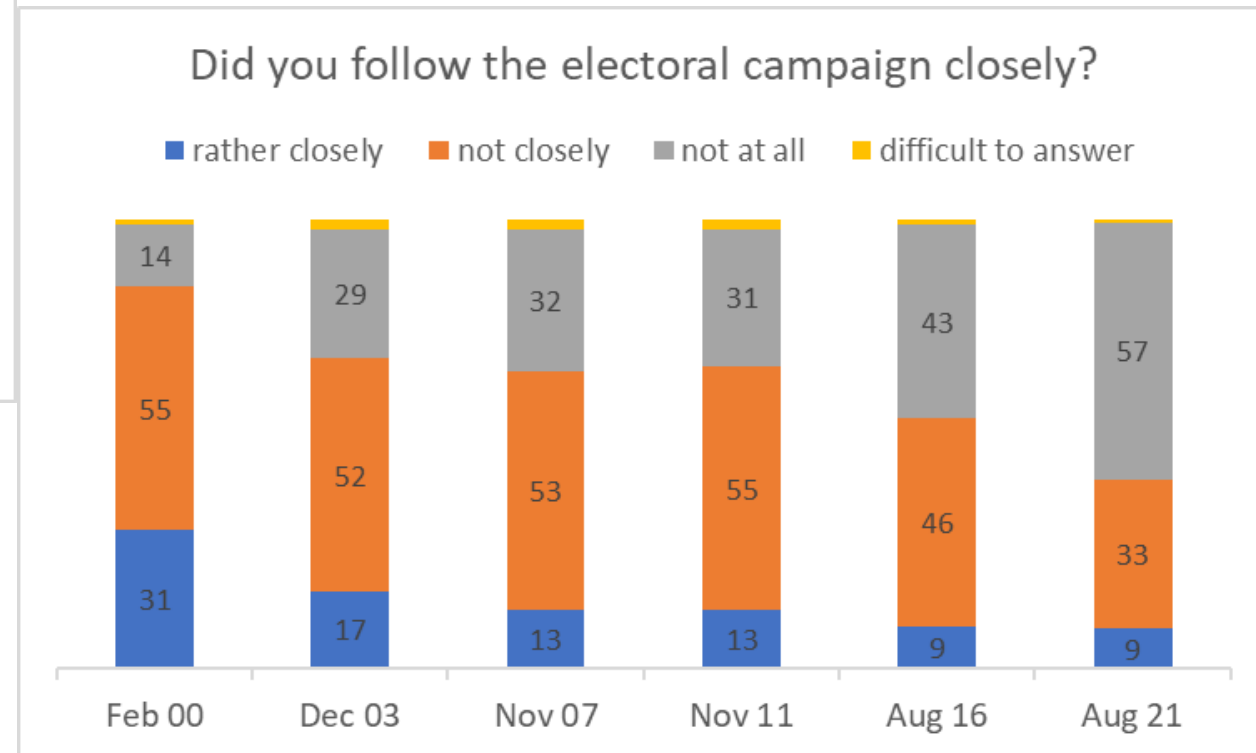
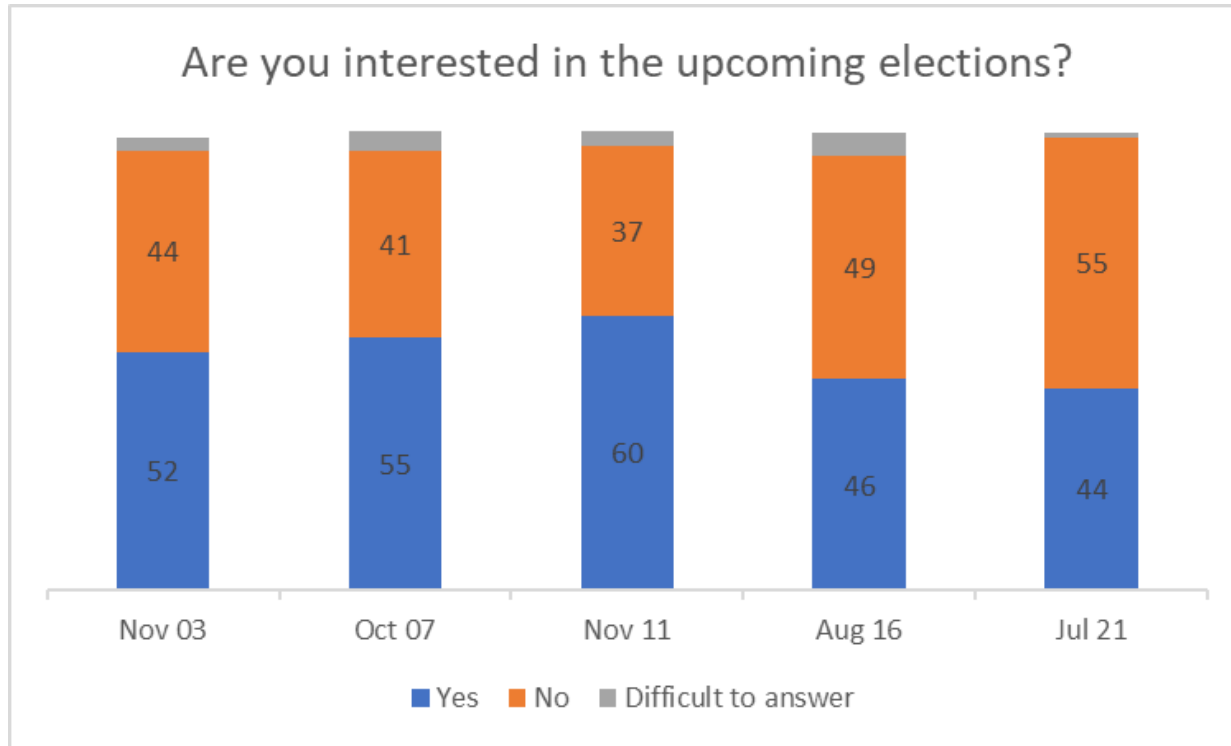
Political challenges to the electoral polling

- Restrictions to the pollsters (Foreign Agent law: polling and publishing the results = “politics”, “political activity”), ban on publishing results during 2 month period before the election day
- Lack of polling results (as part of the trend of limiting information about the elections)
- Polling for private purposes and closed surveys for the authorities => lack of public and expert scrutiny; rise of fakes and speculations
- Recently – respondents feel discomfort speaking about protests and oppositional politicians (less so about the elections)

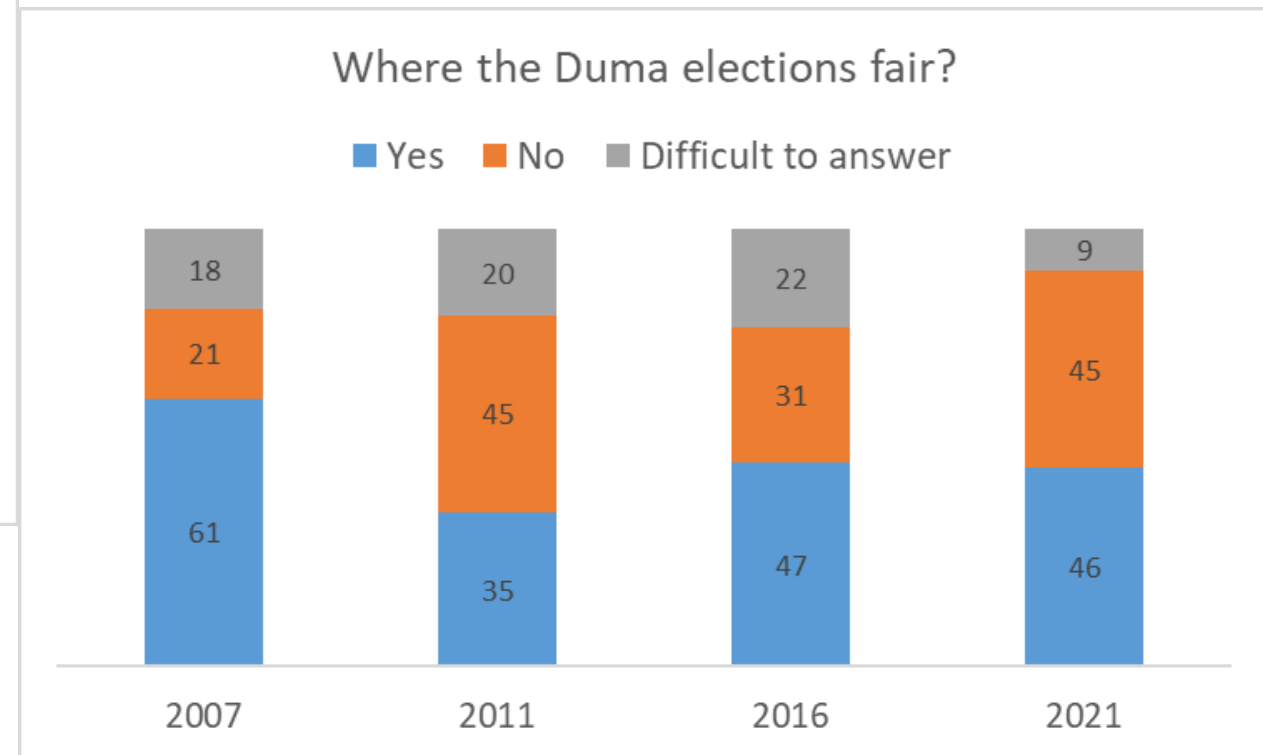
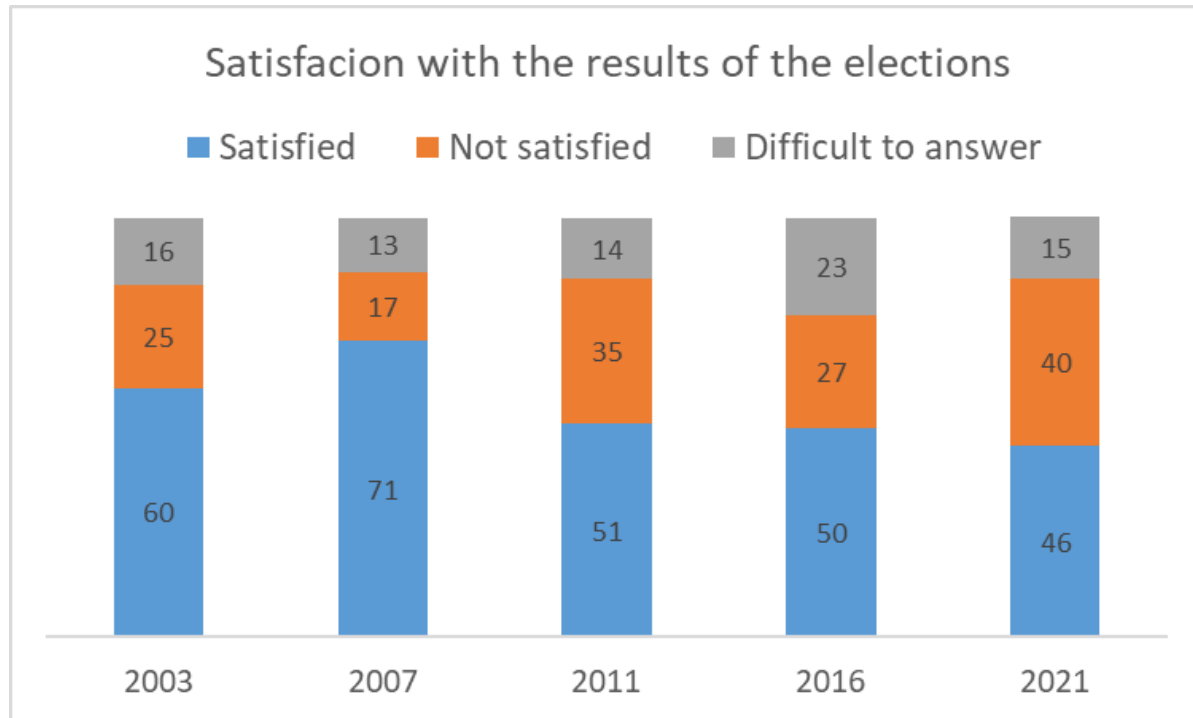
Waning support for the authorities and “ruling party”



Loss of interest in the elections over time



Growing dissatisfaction with the results and polarization of public opinion

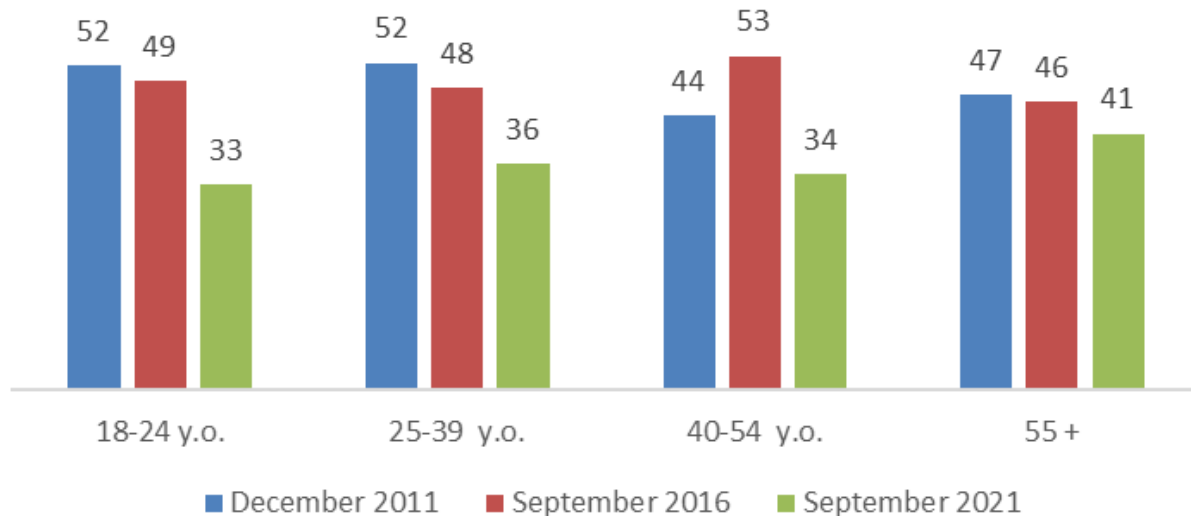


Reasons for supporting different parties *(open-ended questions / focus groups)*

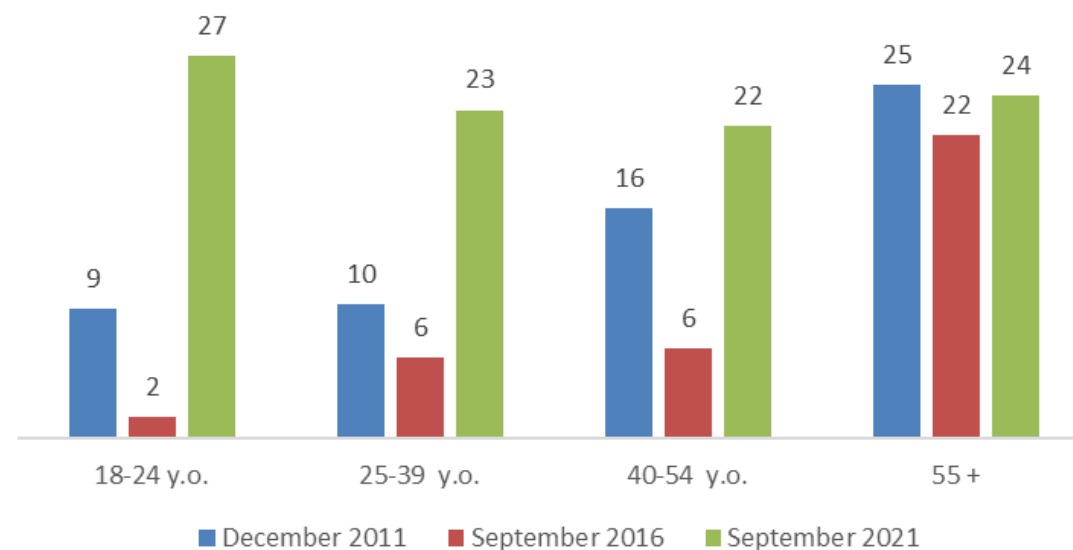
- **United Russia party:** "They are for stability", "this is the only party that can maintain stability in the country", "they increased pensions", "they are doing something good", "Putin's party", "I want to support Putin".
- **Communist party:** "I always vote for this party", "I lived in the Soviet Union" and "then life was better than now", "for social justice", "they are for the people", "they are closer to the people", "they are against Putin", «I'm tired of United Russia party".
- **New People party:** "New people", "new party", "decided to support the new party", "I want changes", "I want the development of the country", "an attempt to change something".

Change in electorates of main parties

Share of United Russia supporters depending on the age



Share of Communist Party supporters depending on the age



Thank you!