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## **Regional Elections in Russia: Instruments of Authoritarian Legitimacy or Instability?**

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This survey of regional elections for governors and assemblies in 2015, 2016 and 2017 finds that the regime has switched from a strategy primarily reliant on manipulating election results (liable to cause criticism and protest) to focus on manipulating the registration of candidates, so preventing serious opposition candidates from standing. Whilst this approach has strengthened Putin's United Russia party in regional elections up to 2017, it has also resulted in widespread apathy and low turn- out, which could undermine the regime.

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