**Russian Elections: An Oxymoron of Democracy**

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**Abstract**

Considerable controversy swirls around the extent to which Russia's elections have been falsified. We argue here on the basis of an assessment of aberrant distributions of turnout in official election returns for each of Russia's national elections beginning in 1995, that falsifications in the form of stuffed ballot boxes and artificially augmented election counts, whose significance was first apparent in its ethnic republics, has now spread to and metastasized within both rural and urban oblast districts. That spread, moreover, unashamedly accelerated during the Putin administration – notably the 2004 election – and has sustained itself thru the 2007 Duma parliamentary vote.