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The Failure of Democracy in Russia

ABSTRACT

The early aspirations for democracy in post-Soviet Russia have not been realised. The principal reason for this is that the elites which dominated the initial post-Soviet period constructed a political system which effectively closed off entry to the mass of the populace and to civil society organisations. But the system Yeltsin created, with a powerful presidency resting on charismatic legitimation, a weakened legislature, and ineffective parties, was not stable. Vladimir Putin has tried to remedy this by building a more integrated and coherent power structure with himself at the apex. But this is no more democratic than that of Yeltsin. Political elites thereby remain the principal barrier to Russia's democratic development.

Introduction

The early aspirations for democracy in post-Soviet Russia have not been realised. The principal reason for this is that the elites which dominated the initial post-Soviet period constructed a political system which effectively closed off entry to the mass of the populace and to civil society organisations. But the system Yeltsin created, with a powerful presidency resting on charismatic legitimation, a weakened legislature, and ineffective parties, was not stable.

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The collapse of communism in the Soviet Union ushered in regimes which professed a commitment to the building of a democratic political structure. The defeat of the August 1991 coup and the final deconstruction of the USSR through the Belovezh Accords were both justified in terms of the desire to construct democracy.[1] The rhetoric from the West continually emphasised the way in which Russia was building democracy, even when violence flared on the streets of Moscow in autumn 1993. But a decade down the track from the emergence of an independent Russia, it is clear that the democratic promise has not been fulfilled. The Russian political system has failed to realise these democratic aspirations.[2]

It is not that the political system lacks all semblance of democracy. In a formal or procedural sense, many of the elements of the system appear to have a democratic visage. Elections are held with tolerable regularity and observers generally agree that the outcome broadly reflects popular preferences. A wide diversity of political parties competes in elections. The government has been regularly subject to scathing criticism of its performance in the State Duma and in the media. Politics has, at least since 1993 and especially since the last election to the State Duma in December 1999, been conducted peacefully, with little disruption and conflict, and according to the rules prevailing. But the way in which this system has functioned over the decade since independence has been characterised by factors which severely compromise its democratic credentials. The elections have been free but not fair, in the sense that while there may have been no overt coercion or pressure upon either opposition or voters, the capacity to mobilise resources, including state resources and the media, was vastly different to the extent that opposition actors were severely disadvantaged compared with those of a more official persuasion. The 1996 presidential election was clearly "bought" by the Yeltsin camp (see below), while this and other elections witnessed sometimes significant fraudulent manipulation of the votes. State pressure on the media has increased, leading some to recall the days of self-censorship on the part of editors.[3] While there has been formal adherence to human rights, the course of the

conflict in Chechnya severely compromises the Russian record in this regard. And the extent of criminality and corruption evident in public life is a significant qualification to the system's democratic claims.

A popular argument for the weakness of democratic development in Russia refers to the nature of the cultural values embedded in Russian society. This asserts that there is a predominance of anti-democratic, authoritarian values and attitudes in Russian society and that this is antithetical to the development of democracy.[4] The weakness of a democratic culture is said to be reflected in the weak development of civil society and the consequent relative absence of organisational structures to enable the populace in general both to advance their interests in the political sphere and to exercise a continuing check upon government actions. This sort of argument has a long pedigree in more general studies of democratisation.[5] But institutions cannot simply be derived from values, even if the nature and content of those values could be unambiguously determined. Values are linked to the contours politics takes, but this is principally in terms of helping to shape the actions of political actors. This is where the question of political elites discussed below comes in. Furthermore, while it is true that Russian civil society is weak, there is no shortage of organised groups in society willing to press their particular cases on the public stage. Estimates of the number of such groups differ widely,[6] but most have had little impact on political life. So the answer to Russia's "democratic deficit" is not to be found in the absence of organisational capacity among the citizens. Far more important has been the question of political elites and their actions.

There is a substantial literature on democratic transitions that emphasises the role in this process played by elites.[7] Such groups are seen as central to the process because it is the elites who bargain among themselves and in so doing shape the institutional contours of the new system. Elite bargains or pacts are often important for this,[8] but even when no formal pact is instituted, the decisions made by the political elites are seen as crucial to the political outcome. This focus upon elites is well-placed. They are crucial to the outcome. But as the Russian experience shows, elite preferences and the results of their actions do not inevitably lead to a democratic system. What is crucial for such an outcome is that those elites are responsible and responsive to civil society more broadly.[9] If elites are able to act autonomously, in the absence

of firmly embedded democratic controls and values, there is little incentive for them to introduce a system in which control over power may be wrested from their hands. If the essence of democracy is the way in which decisions about who will exercise power are vested in the mass of the populace, this essence involves considerable uncertainty for political elites. Their access to power is rendered beyond their control. Instinctively there appears to be little reason why such elites should agree to forego their power positions and throw their fate to the electoral winds. The personal security that flows from a more ordered process of management of access to political power may be one reason which would encourage them to seek to change the existing system, but this does not mandate a preference for democracy. Elite responsiveness to civil society does not ensure democracy either, but to the extent that it provides an entrance into the political process to a diverse array of interests in that society, it makes a democratic outcome more likely. In the Russian case, the overwhelming influence upon the shaping of the system was elites, with the mass of the population and civil society playing little role.

The Shaping of the Yeltsin System of Rule

The elites which played a dominant part in shaping the emergent Russian polity were not new elites from outside the system but existing state elites.[10] The way in which the Soviet Union collapsed, with the simple removal of the central Soviet authorities, left the dominant place in the republics to the existing state elites. In Russia, this comprised the president, Boris Yeltsin, and those around him including the government headed by Yegor Gaidar,[11] and the legislature elected in March 1990. During the first period of the Russian republic, until the shelling and closure of the legislature and the subsequent election in December 1993, the principal dynamic of politics was the relationship between these elite actors - presidency, government and legislature - with little thought being given by any of these actors to the need to develop effective institutional mechanisms for popular participation in the political process. The institutional competition and rivalry which developed at this time was a function not simply of the propensity of institutions and individuals to seek to expand their competence and responsibilities in a context of institutional ambiguity and fluidity, but real differences over policy. The implementation of the Gaidar economic reforms from the end of 1991 was a major factor here.

The important thing about this conflict is the strategies that the different actors pursued, because these had the effect of locking the populace out of a major direct role in political life. The government's chief priority, driven by Gaidar and those around him, was economic reform, and it was under them that the economic shock policies were introduced. Two factors were crucial to implementation of this economic strategy. First, that the mass of the populace remained passive. Gaidar and his associates were aware that the policies they were implementing would adversely affect living standards, at least in the short term. They were worried that this could lead to a popular backlash, the effect of which might be not only to unseat them, but also to derail the reforms. Therefore the success of the reforms was seen to depend in part upon the demobilisation of the populace and the insulation of government and decision-making from popular pressure. Second, the reformers in the government looked to the West, to Western governments and international agencies like the IMF, and to the myriad of thinktanks and self-proclaimed experts who were offering them assistance and advice, for support in the maintenance of their course of economic change. They were dependent upon continuing promises of support from the West both for the maintenance internally of confidence and the conviction that they were right in what they were doing, and for being able to sell to the populace the message that Western aid would help them over the initial hump of economic reforms, after which those reforms would take effect and lead to rapid improvement in economic conditions. So the promise of Western help was seen to be crucial to buy the government time. In this sense, the basis upon which the government sought to rest was neither democratic legitimacy nor popular support, but the support of powerful elements from outside the country.[12] The government thus had no interest in fostering the growth of public activism or the development of political parties; its interest lay in quite the reverse: the demobilisation of the populace and the insulation of the government from its influence.

The aim of popular demobilisation seems clear in the refusal on the part of Yeltsin to countenance new elections to the legislature in the second half of 1991. Many called for new elections in the belief that, in the wake of the boost given to Yeltsin by the failure of the August coup, such an election would sweep his supporters into the legislature and give him a powerful political base there. However such an election would also have brought into the upper levels of the political system a large number of new actors with popular

mandates more recent than that of the president. It may also have stimulated party development on the basis of those proto-parties that had emerged in the preceding years.[13] By refusing to call an election, Yeltsin thereby locked the populace out of politics from the outset. This decision was not widely contested in the legislature, perhaps because many of the members of the Supreme Soviet and Congress of People's Deputies realised that an election would see them thrown out of office. The short-term interests of the presidential and legislative wings of the elite thereby converged.

The president was also intent on consolidating control in his hands and not leaving himself vulnerable to pressure from any direction, including potential opponents in the legislature. From the outset Yeltsin was seen as having a central role to play in the implementation of the reforms, with his legitimacy (see below) being vital for the passage of those reforms against possible popular opposition.[14] Utilising this perception, Yeltsin set about strengthening the position of the presidency. On 1 November 1991 he gained assent from the Supreme Soviet for extraordinary powers for a year to appoint ministers and issue decrees designed to speed the transition to a market economy. He was also able to appoint provincial heads of administration, in theory responsible to the president, which promised to sideline the provincial soviets and thereby create a vertical power structure under presidential control.[15] But most important was the way in which he sought to build up the presidential office and to concentrate under its control the principal arms of the security apparatus.

From the beginning Yeltsin recognised the importance of having a political apparatus under his own direct control as a means both of exercising and projecting his power and authority. Following the collapse of the coup attempt in August 1991, Yeltsin gradually distanced himself from those populist politicians in Demokraticheskaia Rossiia who had been his main support base in 1990-91, turning instead principally to people whose links with him went back to the Sverdlovsk days.[16] Yeltsin installed a number of these people in leading positions in the political apparatus that was developing around the office of the presidency. This apparatus[17] was strengthened and consolidated in 1992-93, becoming the principal organisational support for the president. It was to this body that he looked for advice and to which he turned when he wanted anything done. It was through this political machinery that he

sought to manage political affairs; indeed, in early 1992 there were public concerns that the Presidential Administration may actually become so powerful as to displace the government.[18] Yeltsin also sought to bring the means of coercion under direct presidential control. Initially, in December 1991, Yeltsin sought to create by presidential decree a single Ministry of Security and Internal Affairs which would encompass all of the existing police and security agencies, including the Ministry of Internal Affairs. However this measure was invalidated by the Constitutional Court.[19] Yeltsin then moved to re-establish the Security Council,[20] and widened its authority considerably; it gained almost unlimited right to decide on which questions it could coordinate executive agencies, and its decisions were mandatory. Its broad control over all questions related to security and, in turn, its supervision by the Presidential Administration, seemed effectively to deliver into the president's hands, control over the means of coercion, and therefore the means for the suppression of opposition.

The construction of this sort of political apparatus to sustain the president was also part of the president's drive to insulate himself from the legislative bodies. Part of this was also the sort of image which he sought to project. From his arrival in Moscow in 1985, Yeltsin had sought to play the role of a populist politician. Following his removal from the Politburo at the end of 1987, this appeal to popular support was the only political basis he could use. It was this support which propelled him into the Russian Congress of People's Deputies in 1989, and it was upon this basis that Yeltsin rested his subsequent political career. He projected himself as the saviour of Russia, the person who would deliver the country from communist rule. This image, substantially enhanced by his role in the collapse of the 1991 coup[21] and which he sustained all through this initial post-Soviet period, was one which was incompatible with the construction of regularised institutions to mobilise the populace into politics. Yeltsin sought to establish charismatic authority, a direct tie between himself and the populace unmediated by political institutions. He rejected joining any party and declared that he would remain above party politics. His calls for the people to trust him and to give him their support because this was the only way that communism could be buried and a new future opened up, was the classic appeal of the charismatic leader.[22] The implication was that faith could not be put in institutions but should reside purely in the hands of the leader. Thus the image that Yeltsin sought to

project was inherently anti-institutional; it was a personalist appeal that eschewed all notion of regularity and all concept of institutions linking populace and political process. The only connection needed was the person of Yeltsin. It was also anti-democratic because it undercut the need for regularised popular participation in the political process. Instead it envisaged the populace as playing an essentially subordinate role, to be mobilised when and where the leader believed it necessary. This also implied that the populace surrendered its capacity for independent judgement to the leader; by placing their faith in him, they were committed to accepting his judgement. Thus in the sort of political process which was intrinsic to the role Yeltsin sought to play, there was no place for democratic institutions and no incentive on the part of the leader and those around him to foster the development of such institutions. This became even clearer in the clash between president and legislature that culminated in the sacking of the latter, its forceful dissolution and the subsequent election in the autumn-winter of 1993.

This clash was important both for its own dynamics and for the set of rules, procedures and institutions for structuring political life that emanated from it. From the outset, Yeltsin had eschewed all opportunities to build up a coalition of support within the legislature, despite the fact that in the initial six months of his presidency, he could probably have commanded the support of about half the membership of this body.[23] Consequently when the dispute escalated, it took the form of a clash between the two institutions. Given that, despite temporary concessions, neither side was willing to back down and given the absence of a clear constitutional means of resolving their differences, there were only two ways the dispute could be ended: the victory of one side over the other, or the entry of a new force to broker a deal or enforce a settlement. This situation may have seemed ripe for the entry of popularly-based democratic forces which could seek to bring about a compromise or enforce a resolution. However such forces were far too weak to be able to insert themselves into the process in a meaningful way, and anyway, Yeltsin gave them no opportunity. Certainly the strategy of both sides involved appealing to the populace for support and the attempt to generate a sense of popular momentum through the establishment of citizen-based groups like the pro-Yeltsin Citizens' Assembly of the Russian Federation.[24] However such groups were ephemeral and while the struggle for the hearts and minds of the citizenry may have filled the airwaves, there was little attempt by either

side systematically to mobilise the populace into the struggle. In mid-1992 Yeltsin did contemplate a popular referendum on future institutional forms and the dissolution of the legislature,[25] but given that such a move required Supreme Soviet assent, its practical implementation was unlikely. It may have been simply a tactical move by Yeltsin to present the legislature as taking up an anti-popular stance. Similarly when both sides at different times gave public support to the idea of an election or a referendum to clear the air (e.g. late 1992-early 1993), this was motivated more by tactical concerns than by any belief that this could resolve the issue. This is clear in the April 1993 referendum which could not resolve the basic issues of power distribution between the political institutions because it did not ask this question.[26] Neither side in the conflict saw resolution of the dispute as being within the competence of democratic popular forces, and each foresaw appeal to the public only in instrumental terms.

Instead of seeking to resolve their differences through resort to democratic principles and actors, both sides sought allies in other parts of the political system. Both president and legislature courted regional political elites, economic elites (especially the industrialists), and even foreign elites; while Yeltsin sought to cast himself for Western governments as the defender of democracy against communism, Supreme Soviet Chairman Khasbulatov appealed to his counterparts in the Commonwealth of Independent States on the basis of the primacy of parliamentarism over presidentialism. But the crucial elite was to be the military elite. Both sides had sought to gain the support of the military and security forces, but ultimately it was Yeltsin who was able to garner the support of central elements in the military. Such support, albeit reluctant, was crucial to the working out of the crisis. It was only through military action that Yeltsin's decree of 21 September suspending the existing political arrangements could be enforced. The shelling of the legislature and subsequent arrest of leading figures opposing Yeltsin ended the dispute unambiguously on Yeltsin's terms. But this was hardly a democratic act.[27]

While the dissolution of a properly constituted legislative body seemed to bode ill for democratic development, the provision for new elections and a constitutional referendum announced by Yeltsin at the time of the dissolution of the legislature seemed to hold the door open for the further development of democratic institutions. However these prospects were undercut by

the way in which the election and the referendum were conducted. At the outset, Yeltsin banned a number of parties and movements from participating in the election,[28] suspended the publication of some newspapers including the oppositionist *Pravda, Sovetskaia Rossiia* and *Den'*, and threatened action against party leaders who criticised the president or his actions during the election campaign. Furthermore there was substantial evidence of electoral fraud when the votes were counted, with votes being shifted around between the various parties.[29] The constitutional draft upon which citizens were called to vote was not released until 10 November, giving the populace very little time to come to grips with the proposals and to discuss them effectively before going to the polls on 12 December. The course of public debate was one-sided, with the media dominated by those supporting the presidential draft, while opponents were given little opportunity to express their views. The constraints placed upon those opposed to the president seemed designed to ensure validation of the results of the intra-elite conflict and Yeltsin's victory. The hollowness of this was reflected in the voting figures: officially 54.8 percent of voters participated in the election, while 58.4 percent approved of the constitutional draft. According to official figures, therefore, only just over half of the Russian electorate had bothered to vote after a major constitutional crisis which had brought tanks onto the streets of Moscow. This situation was made even worse by the revelation five months later that in fact less than half of the population had participated in the referendum,[30] thereby rendering it formally invalid. These deficiencies in the process cast doubt over the legitimacy of the electoral and referendum outcomes and placed a major barrier in the way of democratic development.

Also important in hindering the development of democratic institutions was the formal outcome of the institutional conflict. Two documents are important: the Constitution, and the electoral regulations.[31] The former decisively shifted power away from the legislature toward the presidency. The government was to be formed by and responsible to the president (although the appointment of the prime minister required Duma confirmation), the president determined basic guidelines of policy, he had the right of legislative initiative and could issue decrees having the force of law, and he could dissolve the legislature under certain circumstances. Although the president's power to issue decrees was wide-ranging (and was used on matters as small as the privatisation of single firms), this did not create a kind of

"super-presidentialism". The legislature could impeach the president, although this was a difficult process, and all laws including the budget had to be passed by the legislature (although these also needed presidential assent). The Constitution embedded within the Russian system the sort of dominating presidential role to which Yeltsin had aspired,[32] even if in practice there were often significant qualifications to the exercise of presidential powers.[33] It gave him a constitutional basis from which to play the role of hegemonic president, a role which left little room for the growth and development of autonomous democratic forces. This is consistent with the conclusion reached by many Western scholars that presidential systems are less conducive to democratic rule than parliamentary ones.[34]

The new electoral rules also hindered the development of strong, autonomous democratic forces. The electoral system was a mixed majoritarian and proportional system, with half the seats in the State Duma filled from first past the post single member constituencies and the other half from national lists drawn up by each party, with a 5 percent threshold. Generally proportional representation with a threshold facilitates the growth of more powerful parties,[35] and soon after the election Yeltsin's staff, who had been divided on the issue of electoral arrangements, came to the conclusion that the number of candidates elected by proportional representation should be reduced in order to weaken this effect. However their attempt to bring this about before the 1995 election failed.[36] The introduction of this sort of system had a number of implications. First, the 5 percent threshold meant that large numbers of small parties did not gain a seat, with the result that significant numbers of voters failed to gain any representation in the legislature through the national list. In the three legislative elections, the numbers of votes for parties that did not cross the 5 percent threshold was as follows: in 1993 12.9 percent, in 1995 49.5 percent, and in 1999 18.4 percent.[37] Although some of these parties gained seats in the single member constituencies, the symbolism of their exclusion from the national lists was telling. Second, the sense of local interests being protected by local representatives was weakened by the way in which the national lists were the chief mechanism for structuring activity in the house. The national lists turned the attention of would-be candidates to the needs and perspectives of the central party machines rather than to local voters, and because all of the major parties (i.e. those getting above 5 percent of the vote) received many more seats through the national list method

than from local constituencies, they were more attuned to national than to local issues. This meant that the sense of democratic accountability and responsibility became attenuated. The more the parties' futures were seen to rely upon performance in the national list part of the election at the expense of local electors, the more removed they became from local concerns. Third, as a result of this, there was less incentive to construct party machines extending into society at all of its levels and in all of its parts. Instead, what was seen as essential was the development of leader-centred parties which could make the argument at the national level, leaving local issues up to individual candidates. These implications were realised in the way parties developed.

Initially the party system was highly fragmented with a multitude of small party groups proffering a diverse range of views; some 1800 organisations were formally registered by May 1993.[38] With the 1993 legislative elections, there was a sorting out of these party groups, with some emerging as clearly more important than the rest.[39] But building upon the legacy of the Soviet period, most of these more important political parties were built around strong or leading personalities.[40] For example, of the eight parties which surpassed the 5 percent threshold in 1993, five were publicly directly associated with leading political figures: Russia's Choice with Gaidar, Liberal Democrats with Zhirinovskii, Yabloko with Yavlinskii, Party of Russian Unity and Concord with Shakhrai, and the Democratic Party of Russia with Travkin. Of the other three parties, the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF) was the continuation of the former CPSU and enjoyed control over much of the assets and infrastructure of the former ruling party, while the other two parties sought to represent particular interests: Women of Russia directed their appeal to the female population while the Agrarian Party (which had close links with the communists) was based on the former collective and state farms and sought to represent rural interests. This pattern of the primacy (in numerical terms, not in terms of popular support - see below) of parties organised around prominent personalities was generally maintained in the parties exceeding the 5 percent threshold in the following two legislative elections:

1995	1999
Communist Party	Communist Party
Liberal Democrats	Unity
Zhirinovskii	Putin
Our Home is Russia	Fatherland-All Russia
Chernomyrdin	Luzhkov/Primakov
Yabloko	Union of Right Forces
Yavlinskii	Kirienko/Nemtsov
	Yabloko
	Yavlinskii
	Zhirinovskii bloc
	Zhirinovskii

By 1999 even the communists may be seen at least partly in this way, given the political prominence achieved by Ziuganov by coming second in successive presidential elections.

The importance of this association of parties with prominent personalities may be seen in discussion of the parties' relationship with policy platforms and the stimulus for building up party organisation. The personality-centred parties in Russia are not bodies that have no policy content but simply seek to project the image of the leader. The parties are associated with policies, but they are the policies that are espoused by the prominent people at their head. There is little evidence that the policy positions thereby enunciated have percolated up from the bottom or that the parties have emerged as representatives of clearly defined interests in the society. Despite some evidence of a correlation between parties' policies and supporters' attitudes,[41] there is little evidence that the parties have been able to develop stable relationships with particular constituencies.[42] Levels of party identification among voters have been low, with 78 percent professing no such identification in 1994 (cf. figures of 13 percent and 8 percent in the US and UK respectively),[43] while the proportion of voters supporting the same party in 1995 as in 1993 was low.[44] Levels of split ticket voting (supporting one party in the national list

ballot and another in the single member constituency) were high.[45] Even the most popular parties could generate only a very low level of support; the proportion of the total potential electorate voting for the largest party was 11.6 percent in 1993, 14.1 percent in 1995 and 14.9 percent in 1999. Not only do these figures show how low the actual levels of support are for the parties, but they also suggest that arguments about the way in which party support is rooted in broad, stable constituencies[46] should be treated with caution. The parties do not appear to be seen by the populace as stable representatives of their interests in the political process. This is also reflected in the experience of Unity in the 1999 election. This party was formed only a few weeks before polling, lacked a clear policy position but was directly associated in the public mind with then prime minister Putin, and won almost a quarter of the votes. Even among party members who gain election to the Duma, party affiliation appears to be worn lightly. Party discipline is weak,[47] with many deputies voting against their own party and many changing their party affiliations: between 1993 and 1995, 103 of the 450 Duma deputies changed their affiliation, between the December 1995 election and the convocation of the Duma in early 1996, 100 deputies changed their affiliation, and between the December 1999 election and the meeting of the Duma in January 2000, 147 changed.[48] This suggests that not only are the parties generally not seen by their supporters as effective vehicles for the representation of particular interests,[49] but this view is shared by substantial numbers of party activists as well. This apparent weakness of any link between stable popular support and policy content is linked to the personality-based nature of the parties.

This is also reflected in the parties' organisational structure. Given the primacy of the list system in the electoral process, the importance of projecting the image of a central leader and of providing support within the chamber,[50] the effort in party construction has been concentrated at the centre. The development of a central party apparatus which can both support the leader and other party representatives in the Duma as well as project the party leader's message across the country has been considered a higher priority than the construction of party branches in all areas. As a result, party organisation and recruitment at the local and regional level has been much more haphazard and disjointed than might have been expected given the national nature of elections.[51] The weakness of the parties in the regions is shown in

two factors; first, for many of the smaller parties, the vast bulk of the votes they receive in elections are cast for the national leader in the territorial constituency in which that person stands,[52] and second, only the communists have consistently run candidates in more than half the territorial seats. Indeed, in all three elections independents won more single member constituency seats than any single party, and in 1993 and 1999 they won more than 50 percent of all such seats, with the parties doing very badly.[53] The high attrition rate of parties is also testament to the weakness of their organisational structures and their support bases: of the 13 parties that contested the 1993 election, five did not compete in 1995 and a further three were missing in 1999; of the 43 which competed in 1995, 35 did not compete in 1999; and of the eight which cleared the 5 percent threshold in 1993, only three cleared that threshold in 1995 and 1999.[54] The weak organisational roots that most of the parties have limits their capacity to mobilise the populace effectively into political life.

The partial exception to much of the discussion above is the Communist Party of the Russian Federation. Although its leader has become prominent because of his successive attempts to gain election as the president, this party does appear to have been associated with particular policy orientations in the popular mind, and it has had a more regularised organisational structure throughout the country. In both 1995 and 1999 it gained the highest level of electoral support of any party, but given that its electoral message, especially in the latter election, was quite mixed and that this constituted less than 15 percent of the total electorate, it is clear that this does not reflect wide popular support for clearly articulated positions. Rather it may be that at least a portion of its support was an expression of opposition to prevailing government policy. But herein lies the major limitation on the capacity of the KPRF to act as an effective channel of popular views and influence into the political process. At least until Putin, those who have dominated that process since 1991 have seen the party as a holdover from the Soviet period and as representing a position that was superseded with the fall of the Soviet Union. However unfairly, the party has been seen as largely irrelevant to the future, and therefore it has been unable effectively to represent the views of its supporters. It has been a marginal political player in the course of politics except at election times, and therefore has been able to have little continuing impact on the course of political life.

The parameters of politics that were laid out in the initial period of post-Soviet independence were followed in the remaining years of Yeltsin's presidency. Yeltsin continued to project a role for himself as being above politics, the president for all of Russia with no partisan entanglements. This image not only denied the possibility of the building of a "president's party",[55] but it also undercut any idea that there might have been necessary the construction of meaningful avenues of accountability between president and populace. Yeltsin continued to rely upon a charismatic appeal, even when he was absent from the scene through illness. His lack of concern for the creation of a real sense of public accountability was most clearly reflected in his electoral victory in the presidential poll of June 1996. In this election, Yeltsin relied overwhelmingly upon a concerted media campaign that distorted the message of his chief rival Gennadi Ziuganov and upon the massive investment of funds in his campaign by a coterie of wealthy businessmen, subsequently called "the oligarchs".[56] With a biased media coverage, virtually unlimited funds, and some vote manipulation,[57] Yeltsin was able to turn around a massive deficit in public approval compared with his challenger, despite being ill and absent from the hustings in the period between the first and second ballots. This was a travesty of democratic procedure, with Yeltsin effectively able to buy his way back into power. It clearly showed the capacity for manipulation that existed in the system and the willingness of leading elites to make use of it. Manipulation was also evident with the election of Vladimir Putin in March 2000. Yeltsin appointed Putin prime minister in August 1999 and then, by himself resigning from the presidency at the end of December, installed Putin as acting president and brought forward the presidential election from June to March. Given Putin's massive popularity, in part a reaction to the public image of a debilitated Yeltsin, the in-built advantages of incumbency which enabled Putin to project a presidential image, and the truncated timetable for the election, the opposition had little chance and Putin was elected easily as the new president. He may also have been aided by electoral fraud.[58] This result showed a willingness to manipulate the constitutional provisions and the presidential position in order to ensure a satisfactory outcome in the election, regardless of the effect this would have on the embedding of democratic norms in the society.

The president also sought to maintain the levers of power in his own hands. The presidential apparatus continued to exercise substantial power in the

running of the system as a whole. Comprised at its upper levels principally of confidantes of the president, symbolised under Yeltsin by Korzhakov until his sacking in June 1996 and then by Yeltsin's own daughter Tatiana Diachenko, the apparatus in both its formal and informal aspects constituted a crucially influential institution which helped to direct the president and his actions. In the period when Yeltsin was ill, these people were even more influential. Presidential exercise of power remained largely divorced from democratic controls.[59] Even the legislature could exercise little control over this. During 1993-95, the legislature remained more quiescent, rarely challenging the president.[60] This may have been due partly to the lesson learned from opposing the president in 1993 (a lesson Yeltsin had also learned and put into practice; he was less confrontationist), recognition that a new election was only two years in the future (it was scheduled for the end of 1995), and the belief that given Yeltsin's health problems, he would not seek (or perhaps gain) re-election in 1996. After the legislative election of 1995 and the presidential election of 1996, the legislature did become more expansive in its aspirations and oppositionist in its stance.[61] In part this was due to the much improved showing of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, which gained 22.3 percent of party list votes, but it was also due to the increasing evidence of Yeltsin's health problems. However Yeltsin largely continued to try to ignore the legislature or, when he could not, to deal with it in a way which denied it any form of autonomous democratic legitimacy. While there was significant negotiation and compromise over a range of issues, and this clearly blunted conflict,[62] much of this occurred behind closed doors and therefore was designed to prevent the legislature from appearing as an equal partner with the president. He continued to search for the populist ground, claiming for himself the right to speak for Russia and her people, and thereby denying to the legislature popular legitimation. The symbolism of politics remained highly presidential, and the actuality of this was a dominant presidency with a more restricted legislature. The room for the development of autonomous democratic forces to enter the upper levels of the political process was therefore limited.

The system Yeltsin created survived his presidency, but was potentially unstable because its central component was a president resting upon his apparatus and seeking charismatic legitimation who sought to stand against those who opposed him. Yeltsin did not seek to bring potential enemies like the

Duma onto his side. He did not seek to incorporate them into a more coherent or integrated system. Rather he left them largely to their own devices, within the constraints he had imposed through the 1993 constitutional settlement. This has not been the strategy of his successor.

A Re-worked Putin System of Rule?

The strategy adopted by the Putin presidency has been different to that of Yeltsin, but nonetheless antithetical to democratic development. Putin has not as actively pursued charismatic legitimation, despite the publication of a book about his earlier years, which could have been the beginning of a personality cult of the leader.[63] This is not surprising. The conditions did not make such a strategy easy for him to follow. He had no equivalent of the 1991 coup as the basis for a legend about his heroic role in building Russia, and the issue of communism seemed to be much less threatening and therefore unsuitable as an enemy against which to project his virtues. He has not sought to demonise the communists. But while eschewing charisma, Putin has sought to project a presidential image. On all public occasions, he seeks to project himself as a firm leader in charge, buttressed by the symbolism of the state (his swearing in as president was a much more lavish and ritual-laden ceremony than that of his predecessor), listening carefully to those around him but making up his own mind on issues. This image of a forthright and hard leader continued to rest upon heavy reliance on a personal apparatus in the president's office, an organisation that remained insulated from popular and legislative control.[64] Instead of seeking to marginalise the legislature, Putin has sought to work with it and co-opt it. Crucial in this strategy has been Unity and its success at the 1999 legislative election. Unity was the second largest party in the legislature and has sought to wean members from other rightist parties to its side. The Union of Rightist Forces was a particular target. In effect, Putin has sought to use Unity to co-opt the legislature to his side. He even sought the cooperation of the communists, most spectacularly in the division of Duma committee chairmanships principally between Unity and the KPRF at the opening session of the chamber. Although this strategy of working with the communists has not meant a coming together and unity of outlook and action - in mid-2001 the communists led the failed vote of no confidence in the Kasyanov government, they were critical of Putin's draft law on political parties, and they opposed the Law on Land and

became obstructionist following its adoption - but Putin and his administration have been able to build on the support for the president in the Duma to get through major decisions with limited fuss. Putin's recognition of the value of working with the Duma is also reflected in his May 2001 suggestion of a new procedure for introducing laws. Rather than introducing laws directly into the Duma, the president would discuss these with Duma faction leaders who would be able to suggest amendments and changes. Following such discussion, the proposed laws would be presented to the Duma.[65] If implemented, this procedure would strengthen the position of faction leaders and weaken that of the chamber as a whole. The upper house, or Federation Council, was also to be weakened by the change in its composition Putin engineered. The heads of the regional executives and legislatures are to be replaced by representatives from both of these branches, thereby removing the most powerful local politicians from the national upper house.[66] In these ways, Putin has sought to co-opt and weaken the profile of the legislature.

Putin has also sought to integrate broader national governance more tightly into his central machine. He has called for the harmonisation of regional laws with those of the centre, he has directly associated himself with the resolution of some pressing regional issues (such as the supply of fuel to the Far East), and he has generally tightened administrative controls over the conduct of administrative and economic life. The July 2001 bringing of the appointment of regional internal affairs heads under the president was an important element of this.[67] He has also weakened the position of the governors by the restructuring of the Federation Council noted above, offering them instead a seat in the new State Council. This will work under the supervision of the president, will meet quarterly and will be only advisory.[68] Their tenure of office has been limited,[69] and their immediate powers restricted by the division of the country into seven administrative regions and the placing of a "plenipotentiary representative of the president" with extensive powers at the head of each.[70] Putin has clearly sought to reduce the independence of regional administrators and bring them within his developing political machine.

The Putin administration has also sought to co-opt the society more broadly, seeking to attract the followings of other prominent politicians, and even those politicians themselves. The wooing of Yurii Luzhkov, mayor of Moscow, is perhaps the best instance of this.[71] Putin has also sought to reach out to

the populace more generally, including particular segments of it. His visits to the troops fighting in Chechnya and his, belated, visit to the relatives of those who perished in the Kursk tragedy were two prominent instances of this. In addition, he has sought to co-opt what he sees as civil society. In June 2001 Putin and some members of his administration met a large meeting of representatives of not-for-profit non-political NGOs. According to the report of this meeting, he encouraged them to play an active role in public life, and he endorsed the establishment of a "Chamber of Citizen's Groups", although the nature and functions of this putative body remain unclear.[72] He has also called for a "civil forum" encapsulating a broad range of social organisations to meet for discussions with the administration in late 2001. This is clearly an attempt to incorporate voluntary and non-governmental organisations into an overall framework supervised by the state. This attempt to incorporate the organised expression of interests, including organised labour,[73] if successful, is likely to undercut their capacity to act vigorously and autonomously in defence of those interests.

Putin has also moved to bring the press under closer control. With the fall of communism, Russia gained a vigorous and highly critical media, willing to explore the boundaries of its new-found independence. However while the media remained a forum for discussion and critical evaluation of governmental and presidential performance, its capacity to continue to play this role and to generate the sort of public trust that is essential for it to function as a voice for civil society against the state was compromised by two factors. First, the significant portion of the media that remained within state hands. Even before the takeover of the Independent Television Channel (see below), the state owned two of the three national television channels, one of the two national radio stations, and a national newspaper. Second, much of the media that remained outside state control was in the hands of big businessmen who used that media openly to advance their own particular interests. As a result, the media came to be seen as less independent and reliable than it should have been. Important in generating this perception was the way in which the media fell in behind the Yeltsin 1996 presidential campaign, giving almost no exposure to his communist opponent and switching almost completely from a stance of sharp criticism of Yeltsin to one of slavish support. This shift highlighted the way in which much of the media ceased to be seen as a representative of civil society and much more as an instrument of either the state

or rich oligarchs. Following the election of Putin and the firm pressure applied to the Media-MOST empire of Vladimir Gusinskii, which ended with Gusinskii losing control of it including his Independent Television Channel to Gazprom in which the state has the major holding, the claim that there was an independent media able to give voice to popular criticism of the government seemed even more hollow.[74] Certainly some small outlets have continued vigorously to assert their independence, but the media as a whole has failed to maintain its position of publicly perceived independence from the government. The capacity for such independence seemed to be further eroded by Putin's decree of 13 August 2001 placing all broadcasting and relay stations under the control of a single government corporation.

Putin's drive to stabilise the system has thus involved measures that have decreased the room for independent political forces to operate. One important measure that may run counter to this is the Law on Political Parties supported by Putin and adopted by the Duma on 21 June 2001.[75] This Law mandated that a party must have at least 10,000 members, have branches in more than 50 percent of members of the federation, and must participate regularly in elections. Parties gaining at least 3 percent of the vote in Duma elections will receive an annual subsidy from the state in line with their share of the vote. Only parties may participate in elections, but if a party fails to take part in at least one election each five years, it will be deregistered. Parties will also come under a wide range of monitoring by state authorities. These provisions create the basis for promoting the development of parties with national constituencies rooted in local regions. However this will also mean a reduction in the number of parties and the demise of purely regional parties. But if enforced, such measures should strengthen the party system. Ultimately the effect of this law will depend upon how extensive the monitoring is and whether the payment of a state subsidy has any strings attached. On both of these grounds, party independence could be undercut.

Putin is clearly trying to restructure the system of rule he inherited from Yeltsin and to give it a much greater sense of stability and predictability. He seeks to achieve this through the incorporation of its major elements into a power structure focused upon the president and his administration. If he can bring the Duma, the political parties, regional politicians and civil society organisations into such a structure, and if he can keep them there, rule may

become stabilised in a type of corporative arrangement. This sort of structure may be more efficient than that which prevailed in the early 1990s when the Yeltsin elite constructed a system designed to exclude democratic, popular forces, but the inclusion of those forces in the form envisaged by Putin will be no more conducive to democratic development. In this sense, Putin may be simply the logical consequence of Yeltsin's anti-democratism, and elite action will remain the main barrier to the development of Russian democracy.

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Notes

[1] For example, for the coup see Yeltsin's appeal 'To the Citizens of Russia', *Megapolis-Ekspress*, 19 August 1991 and Gorbachev's decree, 'On Revoking the Unconstitutional Acts of the Coup d'Etat's Organisers', *Pravda*, 23 August 1991; for the Accords see 'Agreement on the Creation of a Commonwealth of Independent States', *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 10 December 1991.

[2] For one analysis consistent with this view, see Archie Brown, 'Evaluating Russia's Democratisation, Archie Brown (ed.), *Contemporary Russian Politics. A Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 546-568.

[3] See the comment about editors being 'cautious and cooperative when it comes to sensitive matters', 'A Free Press in Russia', *The New York Times Review of Books*, 5 July 2001.

[4] For example, see Tim McDaniel, *The Agony of the Russian Idea* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Jonathan Steele, *Eternal Russia. Yeltsin, Gorbachev, and the Mirage of Democracy* (London, Faber & Faber, 1994); Victor Sergeyev & Nikolai Biryukov, *Russia's Road to Democracy: Parliament, Communism and Traditional Culture* (London: Edward Elgar, 1993). For an earlier treatment, see Stephen White, *Political Culture and Soviet Politics* (London: Macmillan, 1979). For a collected work focusing upon congruence theory, see Harry Eckstein, Frederic J. Fleron Jr, Erik P. Hoffman & William M. Reisinger, *Can Democracy Take Root in Post-Soviet Russia? Explorations in State-Society Relations* (Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield, 1998). For an argument which emphasises the collective nature of traditional Russian culture, see Nikolai Petro, *The Rebirth of Russian Democracy: An Interpretation of Political Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995).

[5] The most celebrated instance of this is Gabriel A. Almond & Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1965). Also see the discussion in Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave. Democratisation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1991).

[6] One study said that at the end of 1996 there were more than 50,000 NGOs in Russia, another that there was 300,000 registered with the Ministry of Justice by the middle of 2001. Respectively Adrian Karatnycky, Alexander Motyl & Boris Sher (eds.), *Nations in Transit 1997. Civil Society, Democracy and Markets in East Central Europe and the Newly Independent States* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publications, 1997, p. 317) and *Vremya novostei* 14 June 2001.

[7] For the classic study, see Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe C. Schmitter & Laurence Whitehead, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Prospects for Democracy* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986). Also see Juan J. Linz & Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation. Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

[8] On pacts, see Daniel V. Friedheim, 'Bringing Society Back Into Democratic Transition Theory after 1989: Pact Making and Regime Collapse', *East European Politics and Societies* 7(3), Fall 1993, pp. 482-512; and Graeme Gill, *The Dynamics of Democratisation. Elites, Civil Society and the Transition Process* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), pp. 52-58.

[9] See the argument in Gill, *The Dynamics of Democratisation*.

[10] They were however, divided into those who had been long-time members of official Soviet structures and those who had entered political life under perestroika.

[11] Formally Gaidar was deputy prime minister from November 1991, first deputy prime minister from April 1992, and acting prime minister from June 1992. Until April 1992, Yeltsin formally was both prime minister and president. Gaidar left office in December 1992 at which time Chernomyrdin became prime minister.

[12] The importance of Western support for the Yeltsin administration is a continuing theme in Peter Reddaway & Dmitri Glinski, *The Tragedy of Russia's Reforms. Market Bolshevism Against Democracy* (Washington: United States Institution of Peace Press, 2001).

[13] For a survey of these, see B. N. Berezovskii, N. I. Krotov & V. V. Cherviakov (eds.), *Rossiia: Partii, Assotsiatsii, Soiuzy, Kluby. Spravochnik* (Moscow: Institute Massovykh Politicheskikh Dvizhenii, 1991). There was a second, expanded, edition in 1993.

[14] For example, see the comments in *Nezavisimaia gazeta,* 12 November 1991.

[15] On these, see Irina Busygina, 'Predstaviteli prezidenta', *Svobodnaia mysl'*, 4, 1996, pp. 52-61.

[16] For a discussion of this, see Graeme Gill & Roger Markwick, *Russia's Stillborn Democracy? From Gorbachev to Yeltsin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 129-130.

[17] For a schematic diagram of this *Kto est' Kto v Rossii: 1997 goda* (Moscow: Olymp, 1997), p. 99. For its development, see Eugene Huskey, *Presidential Power in Russia* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1999), ch. 3; and Gill & Markwick, *Russia's Stillborn*, pp. 130-132.

[18] See the comments of Justice Minister Nikolai Federov, *Izvestiia,* 29 January 1992.

[19] *Izvestiia,* 15 January 1992.

[20] This had initially been created in June 1991, but was dissolved in November of that year when Yeltsin became prime minister. It was re-established in March 1992. *Rossiiskaia gazeta,* 6 May 1992.

[21] The symbolism of the image of him standing on an armoured vehicle in front of the White House and addressing the surrounding populace was particularly powerful in this regard.

[22] On charisma, see Max Weber, *Economy and Society. An Outline of Interpretive Sociology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978, (eds.), Guenther Roth & Claus Wittich), Vol. 1, pp. 241-255 & 1111-1158.

[23] In May 1990 Yeltsin had been elected Chairman of the Supreme Soviet by a slender majority of deputies. Even though this support dissipated following his direct election in June 1991 and his commitment to radical economic reform policies, which were opposed by a large number of deputies, Yeltsin made no real attempt to shore up his support.

[24] *Nezavisimaia gazeta,* 7 April 1992.

[25] *Nezavisimaia gazeta,* 28 May 1992.

[26] For the questions, see Gill & Markwick, *Russia's Stillborn*, p. 159.

[27] The April 1993 referendum did suggest that Yeltsin had greater legitimacy in the eyes of the populace than the legislature.

[28] For a list of these, see *Nezavisimaia gazeta,* 11 November 1993.

[29] *Izvestiia,* 4 May 1994.

[30] *Izvestiia,* 4 May 1994.

[31] Respectively *Rossiiskaia gazeta,* 25 December 1993 and V. Dorofeev, Iu. Solodukhin & E. Topoleva, *Vybor* 1 (7-15 Oktiabria) (Moscow: Postfactum, 1993), pp. 3-13.

[32] For discussions of the presidency, see Stephen White, 'Russia: Presidential Leadership Under Yeltsin', Ray Taras (ed.), *Postcommunist Presidents* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Gerald M. Easter, 'Preference for Presidentialism: Postcommunist Regime Change in Russia and the NIS', *World Politics* 49(2), January 1997, pp. 184-211; Thomas M. Nichols, *The Russian Presidency. Society and Politics in the Second Russian Republic* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999); Huskey, *Presidential Power*. Nichols is more intent on emphasising what he sees as the democratic aspects of the presidency.

[33] See the discussion in Thomas F. Remington, 'The Evolution of Executive-Legislative Relations in Russia since 1993', *Slavic Review* 59(3), Fall 2000, pp. 505-514.

[34] See e.g. Matthew S. Shugart & John M. Carey, *Presidents and Assemblies: Constitutional Design and Electoral Dynamics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Juan J. Linz & Arturo Valenzuela, *The Failure of Presidential Democracy* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1994); and Arend Lijphart (ed.), *Parliamentary versus Presidential Government* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992). On Russia, see Robert Moser, 'The Electoral Effects of Presidentialism in Post-Soviet Russia', *The Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 14(1 & 2), March/June 1998, pp. 54-75.

[35] On the impact of PR on party development, see Giovanni Sartori, *Comparative Constitutional Engineering. An Enquiry into Structures, Incentives and Outcomes* (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1997), esp. chps. 3 & 4.

[36] Iu. M. Baturin et al., *Epokha El'tsina. Ocherki politicheskoi istorii* (Moscow: Vagrius, 2001), pp. 382 & 532-535.

[37] Calculated from the electoral results reprinted in Richard Sakwa, *Russian Politics and Society* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 393-393, and Yitzhak M. Brudny, 'Continuity or Change in Russian Electoral Patterns? The December 1999-March 2000 Election Cycle', Brown, *Contemporary Russian Politics*, p. 164.

[38] *Moscow News* 22, 28 May 1993.

[39] See Iu. G. Korguniuk & S. E. Zaslavskii, *Rossiiskaia mnogopartiinost'* (stanovlenie, funktionirovanie, razvitie) (Moscow: INDEM, 1996), pp. 35-45.

[40] Fish argued in 1995 that a stable party system had developed, the parties had clear programmatic differences and generally were not merely the vehicles for individual leaders. M. Steven Fish, 'The Advent of Multipartism in Russia, 1993-1995', *Post-Soviet Affairs* 11(4), October-December 1995, p. 343. While the judgement about stability now appears less certain, the issue of the balance between leader-centred and programme-based parties remains. See below.

[41] For example, see William M. Reisinger, Arthur H. Miller & Vicki L. Hesli, 'Ideological Divisions and Party-building Prospects in Post-Soviet Russia'; Matthew Wyman, Stephen White & Sarah Oates (eds.), *Elections and Voters in Post-Communist Russia* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 1998), pp. 136-166. On a link between voter attitudes and party platforms in the 1993 election, see Matthew Wyman, Bill Miller, Stephen White & Paul Heywood, 'Parties and Voters in the Elections'; Peter Lentini (ed.), *Elections and Political Order in Russia. The implications of the 1993 elections to the Federal Assembly* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1995), pp. 124-142. For the argument that the parties generally failed to represent distinct constituencies in 1995, see Stephen White, Richard Rose & Ian McAllister, *How Russia Votes* (Chartham NJ: Chatham House, 1997), pp. 146-147 & 232-234.

[42] This is despite claims that emergent social divisions within the population are becoming increasingly embedded in differences of economic interests and that support for parties and presidential candidates has a social basis. Stephen Whitefield

& Geoffrey Evans, 'The Emerging Structure of Partisan Divisions in Russian Politics', Wyman, White & Oates, *Elections and Voters*, p. 92. We should be careful not to assume that similar levels of aggregate support across elections necessarily means that the same people are consistently voting for the party.

[43] White, Rose & McAllister, *How Russia Votes*, p. 135. For one discussion of party identification in Russia, see Arthur H. Miller & Thomas F. Klobucar, 'The Development of Party Identification in Post-Soviet Societies', *American Journal of Political Science* 44(4), October 2000. Higher figures have been cited by McFaul, but as he acknowledges, there has been considerable instability at this level. He cites a figure of 49 percent identification in late 1995, dropping to 31 percent in mid-1996, rising to about 49 percent again in January 2000. Michael McFaul, 'Party Formation and Non-Formation in Russia', Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Russian Domestic Politics Project, Working Paper No. 12, May 2000, p. 5.

[44] The proportions for the major parties were as follows: Liberal Democrats 59 percent, Russia's Democratic Choice 55 percent, Communist Party 37 percent, Yabloko 33 percent, Women of Russia 31 percent, and Agrarians 29 percent. Ian McAllister, Stephen White & Olga Kryshtanovskaia, 'Voting and Party Support in the December 1995 Duma Elections', *The Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 13(1), March 1997, p. 118.

[45] For 1999 figures, see Richard Rose, Neil Munro & Stephen White, 'Voting in a Floating Party System; the 1999 Duma Election', *Europe-Asia Studies* 53(3), 2001, p. 428.

[46] For example, Whitefield & Evans, 'The Emerging Structure', and McFaul, 'Party Formation', p. 10.

[47] For the argument that solidarity within factions/parties in the chamber really only began after 1995 and then was most prominent in the KPRF and the Liberal Democrats, see V. M. Sergeev, A. V. Beliaev, N. I. Biriukov & L. Iu. Gusev, 'Stanovlenie parlamentskikh partii v Rossii. Gosudarstvennaia duma v 1994-1997 godakh', *Polis* 1, 1999, pp. 50-72.

[48] Richard Rose, Evgeny Tikhomirov & William Mishler, 'Understanding Multi-party Choice: The 1995 Duma Election', *Europe-Asia Studies* 49(5), 1997, p. 801. For the 1999-2000 figures, see Rose, Munro & White, 'Voting in a Floating Party', p. 425. Such figures include independents banding together to take advantage in the Duma of belonging to a formal party. There were also significant shifts of allegiance later in the lives of the respective Dumas.

[49] For an interesting discussion suggesting that Russians generally fail to see their political institutions as either reflecting their views or expressing their interests, see Ellen Carnaghan, 'Thinking About Democracy: Interviews with Russian Citizens', *Slavic Review* 60(2), Summer 2001, pp. 336-366. A recent survey has also suggested that a majority of Russians believed that the 1999 election would make little dif-

ference to how Russia was governed and that they had no more influence over government than they had before perestroika. Rose, Munro & White, 'Voting in a Floating Party' p. 427.

[50] For the argument that the formation of a "party of power" should be seen as the attempt by the ruling group to form a majority party in parliament, see G. V. Golosov & A. V. Likhtenshtein, ''Partii vlasti' i rossiiskii institutsional'nyi dizain: teoretich-eskii analiz', *Polis* 1, 2001, pp.6-14. This paper looks at Russia's Choice, Our Home is Russia, and Unity.

[51] For comments relating to Tatarstan, see V. V. Mikhailov, V. A. Bazhanov & M. Kh. Farukshin, *Osobaia zona: vybory v tatarstane* (Ulyanovsk, Kazanskoe Otdelenie Mezhdunarodnoi Pravozashchitnoe Assamblei, 2000). Also Grigorii V. Golosov, 'From Adygeya to Yaroslavl: Factors of Party Development in the Regions of Russia, 1995-1998', *Europe-Asia Studies* 518), December 1999, pp. 1333-1365.

[52] Robert G. Moser, 'The Impact of Parliamentary Electoral Systems in Russia', *Post-Soviet Affairs* 13(3), July-September 1997, p. 297.

[53] In 1999 four parties - Unity, the Union of Rightist Forces, Zhirinovskii Bloc and Yabloko - won 54 percent of the list seats and 8 percent of the single member constituency seats.

[54] This also reflects the ability of those three parties - KPRF, Yabloko and Zhirinovskii Bloc, although perhaps the Union of Right Forces as the continuation of Russia's Choice and then Russia's Democratic Choice should be included - to survive, and it may be that these are emerging as the nucleus of the future party system.

[55] Hence the failure of various attempts to construct such a party by Yeltsin's supporters.

[56] See David Remnick, 'The War for the Kremlin', *The New Yorker*, 22 July 1996, pp. 40-57, and Reddaway & Glinski, *The Tragedy of Russia's Reforms*, chp. 8.

[57] For example, see V. V. Mikhailov, 'Kolichestvo demokratii (Analiz vyborov Prezidenta RF 1996g v regionakh)', *Armageddon* 3, May-June 1999, pp. 134-153; and John Lowenhardt, 'The 1996 Presidential Elections in Tatarstan', *The Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 13(1), March 1997, pp. 132-144.

[58] There is a suspicion that the votes were manipulated to enable him to win on the first ballot. Valentin Mikhailov, 'Demokratizatsiia Rossii: razlichnaia skorost' v regionakh. (Analiz vyborov 1996 I 2000gg. Mesto Tatarstana sredi sub'ektov RF)', Mikhailov, *Osobaia*, pp. 25-84, esp. pp. 48-78. Also Yevgenia Borisova, 'And the Winner Is?', *Moscow Times*, 9 September 2000. According to the CEC there was some minor inflation of his vote in some areas. *Kommersant*, 26 April 2000.

[59] For one, perhaps exaggerated, discussion of the power such advisers could wield, see Aleksandr Korzhakov, *Boris Yeltsin: Ot rassveta do zakata* (Moscow: Interbuk, 1997).

[60] Although there was tension in mid-1995 when the legislature discussed the issue of whether it retained confidence in the government.

[61] There were open differences in mid-1997 on economic reform, in March 1998 and September 1998 over the appointment of a new prime minister (respectively Kirienko and Chernomyrdin), and a move to impeach the president in May 1999.

[62] Remington, p. 501.

[63] Natalia Gevorkian, Natalia Timakova & Andrei Kolesnikov (eds.), *Ot pervogo litsa. Razgovory s Vladimirom Putinym* (Moscow: 2000). For an interesting article canvassing the use of charisma to boost Putin's position, see Aleksandr Ageev, 'Nuzhna li Putinu kharizma?', *Profil'* 32, 3 September 2001, pp. 18-21. Also the discussion in *Obshchaia gazeta* 21, 24-31 May 2001.

[64] For the claim that this apparatus was at the heart of Putin's drive for "total political control of society", see *Kommersant*, 5 May 2000.

[65] *Vremya novostei,* 24 May 2001.

[66] *Izvestiia,* 27 July 2000.

[67] *Kommersant,* 13 July 2001.

[68] *Vremya novostei,* 4 September 2000.

[69] In January 2001 the Duma effectively enabled 69 governors to run for a third term and 17 for a fourth term by adopting a measure which, while limiting them to two terms, ignored any incumbency prior to 16 October 1999, when the original law was adopted. On 17 May a further amendment denied the right of a third term, while another amendment in early July limited the right to run for more than a second term to those whose regional constitutions or charters did not limit them to two terms as at 16 October 1999. *Kommersant,* 19 May and 5 July 2001.

[70] For the establishment of the districts and appointments to them, see *Rossiiskaia gazeta,* 16 May 2000 and *Kommersant,* 19 May 2000. N. Arkhangel'skaia, 'Vertikal'naia Rossiia', *Ekspert* 19, 22 May 2000, pp. 53-56.

[71] In the lead up to the 1999 legislative election, Luzhkov was vigorously attacked by the pro-Yeltsin media, but following the election and the failure of Fatherland-All Russia to have an impact, the tension and attacks ceased and Luzhkov finally expressed his support for Putin, e.g. *Nezavisimaia gazeta,* 17 March 2000 where he supported Putin's candidacy for the presidency.

[72] *Vremya novostei,* 14 June 2001.

[73] On the role of organised labour, see Simon Clarke, 'Russian Trade Unions in the 1999 Duma Election', *The Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 17(2), June 2001, pp. 43-69. For discussion of the place of organised interests, see Sergei Peregudov, Natalia Lapina & Irina Semenenko, *Gruppy interesov i Rossiiskoe gosudarstvo* (Moscow: Editorial URSS, 1999), and Irina Stanislavovna Semenenko, *Gruppy*

interesov na zapade i v Rossii. Kontseptsii i praktika (Moscow: Institut mirovoi ekonomiki i mezhdunarodnykh otnoshenii, 2001), esp. pp. 69-78.

[74] For an exchange on this between a reporter who left NTV when Gazprom took over and the new General Director of NTV Boris Jordan, see Masha Lipman, 'Russia's Free Press Withers Away' and 'A Free Press in Russia?', *The New York Times Review of Books*, respectively 31 May 2001 and 5 July 2001.

[75] *Izvestiia*, 22 June 2001.