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**RETHINKING THEORIES OF TRANSITIONS  
IN THE FORMER SOVIET UNION**

**A Dissertation Presented**

**by**

**LUKE PERRY**

**Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Massachusetts Amherst in  
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the of**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**September 2007**

**Political Science**

UMI Number: 3289233

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my advisor, Jeffrey Sedgwick, and fellow committee members Eric Einhorn and R.E. Jones, for all their time, patience, and support during the process of creating, researching, and writing my dissertation. I am particularly thankful that the committee was willing to work with me out of residence, which allowed me to teach full time for two years as I worked on this project. My graduate school experience was an extraordinarily transformative portion of my life which I will remember fondly. Throughout each challenge, past and future, I will be entirely grateful to my family and friends for all their love and support, particularly my parents, Chad and Diane, and my wife, Janelle.

**RETHINKING THEORIES OF TRANSITIONS  
IN THE FORMER SOVIET UNION**

**SEPTEMBER 2007**

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**ABSTRACT**

This dissertation seeks to provide an empirical evaluation of whether scholars are justified in calling for the end of the transition paradigm, the dominant model of democratization study among Comparative Politics scholars. My thesis argues that the predominant emphasis on elections and institutions among transition theorists is largely ineffective in understanding democratic transitions in the former Soviet Union. To test my thesis, I conduct qualitative case studies of Ukraine and Russia that focus on the role of elections and institutions in the transition process.

Under the transitions model, one would reasonably expect the transition process in each country to be relatively similar, given the similar timing and manner in which elections and institutions were implemented, coupled with strong geographic, cultural, and historic commonalities. Instead, both cases have experienced highly divergent paths of development with varied levels of success.

This comprehensive study sheds serious doubt on the ability of the transitions model to accurately comprehend the dynamics of democratic development in the former Soviet Union. Though many scholars have criticized certain assumptions or components of the transitions model, few if any, have constructed a comprehensive, empirical analysis of the transitions model on its own terms.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Though America has long sought to protect democracy and encourage its spread, the stakes in this pursuit have never been higher. With the end of the Cold War, America ascended as a unipolar world power in contrast to the 20<sup>th</sup> century norm of bi-polar or multi-polar international systems. Meanwhile, the pace of political, economic, social, military, and technological integration reached unprecedented levels giving rise to new and more destructive forms of resistance to American power, including well-organized and widely dispersed international terrorist organizations. Despite these obstacles, America has a unique opportunity to use its power and influence in a way that can realize its historic aspirations to spread freedom and democracy. At the same time, this potential has been put to the test with regime changes in Afghanistan and Iraq that raised doubts over America's ability to foster nation building and indigenous desires for democratic government. Now more than ever, America must clearly understand the dynamics of democratic development, in order to effectively promote democracy around the world.

Past scholars have astutely observed that it would be tedious to chronicle a full catalog of historic declarations that reflect the importance of promoting freedom and democracy in American foreign policy making.<sup>1</sup> Still, it is important to understand how the promotion of liberty and democracy has been a dominant concern of American foreign policy since the Founding. America's fundamental premise for revolt was a set of universal principles that placed liberty at the core. The Founders understood the creation of American government in a broad historical context that went beyond the immediate interests of the Founders and the national interests of the new nation. The Founders were

unsure if popular government could work, but if successful, the Founders were certain the world would be better off. This is evident in the colonial writings of many founders, such as John Adams, who argued that liberty held an unparalleled capacity for human development even though rulers often impeded the natural desire for liberty as a means of control.<sup>2</sup>

Despite universal conceptions of liberty and oppression, America's independence was fragile. George Washington famously stated in 1796 that America's true policy was to "steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world."<sup>3</sup> Though early American foreign policy was isolationist in rhetoric, the Founders produced a long term vision of America's future. This ambiguity is evident in one of the era's most ambiguous figures, Thomas Jefferson, who foresaw an "empire of liberty" in which our rapid multiplication would "cover the whole northern, if not southern continent, with people speaking the same language, governed by similar forms, and by similar laws."<sup>4</sup>

Conventional thinking toward democracy promotion began with Woodrow Wilson who expanded the objectives of American foreign policy making beyond an "empire of liberty" to a world of democracy. In contrast to past foreign policy doctrines, Wilson felt American intervention abroad must have a moral rationale, rather than being solely based on our interests or the interests of our allies.<sup>5</sup> In this spirit Wilson made the famous statement that "the world must be made safe for democracy. Its peace must be planted upon the tested foundations of political liberty."<sup>6</sup> Wilson stated after the war that "the moral climax of this the culminating and final war for human liberty has come," but the Senate failed to ratify the League of Nations, which undercut Wilson's vision for the postwar world.<sup>7</sup> Importantly, however, democracy remains a dominant theme of



American foreign policy to this day, though it is an open question whether democracy, liberty, and freedom are interchangeable terms. Indeed, they may coexist only uneasily and under special, not universal, conditions.

Franklin Roosevelt sought to build America into “the great arsenal of democracy” to overcome “the threat to our democratic faith.”<sup>8</sup> America fought Fascism politically, with the Atlantic Charter, economically, with the Lend Lease Act, and militarily, in response to the attack on Pearl Harbor.<sup>9</sup> Roosevelt died a month before the war ended and Harry Truman became President. The fragile peace of allied leaders soon deteriorated. Once again, America assumed a hostile posture toward a contrasting political ideology that did not share American values of freedom and democracy: Communism.

The Truman Doctrine understood Communism as “the will of the minority forcibly imposed on the majority,” which “relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio, fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedoms.”<sup>10</sup> In 1947, Truman famously defined American policy for the next generation: “I believe it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.”<sup>11</sup> This meant that whenever and wherever a popular government was threatened by Communism, the United States would supply political, economic, and military support.<sup>12</sup>

Throughout the Cold War, subsequent Presidents created various national programs that focused on democracy promotion. Two examples include the Alliance for Progress and National Endowment for Democracy. John F. Kennedy created the Alliance for Progress in 1961 to further political development in Latin America around the belief

that “economic progress and social justice can be achieved by free men working within a framework of democratic institutions.”<sup>13</sup> The goal of the Alliance was to transform the continent so as to provide “an example to all the world that liberty and progress walk hand in hand.”<sup>14</sup> Ronald Reagan created the National Endowment for Democracy in 1983 around the belief that “freedom is a universal aspiration that can be realized through the development of democratic institutions, procedures, and values.”<sup>15</sup>

In 1991, the Soviet Union collapsed, which from a Western perspective, significantly discredited Communism as an effective political ideology. There was much optimism surrounding the future of democracy around the world throughout the 1990’s. As George H.W. Bush stated in 1991 the world can seize the opportunity “to fulfill the long held promise of a new world order where brutality will go unrewarded and aggression will meet collective resistance.”<sup>16</sup> This opportunity can only be realized under American leadership because of America’s unique moral and military standing, which “has made America the beacon of freedom in a searching world.”<sup>17</sup>

The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001, fundamentally transformed how Americans and our government approached national security. George W. Bush adopted a preemptive military approach, in what the administration claimed was a deliberate contrast to the reactive approach of the Clinton administration. This was evident with America’s invasion of Afghanistan shortly after 9/11 to depose of the Taliban. The search for a democratic world, articulated by the elder Bush, gave way to a fight for a democratic world, implemented by the younger Bush.

In the Middle East, President Bush’s current approach to democracy promotion focuses on the consequences of failure and the need to do whatever it takes to be

successful. This is evident in the 2003 invasion of Iraq and the policy of using military force to simultaneously initiate regime change and establish a popular government as a model of democracy for the Middle East. Despite obstacles, the Bush administration clearly stated that America must stay the course because if we do not, “failure in Iraq would be a disaster for the United States.”<sup>18</sup> If policy changes are necessary, these should take the shape of increased American military involvement to better enhance security and the ability of Iraqi security forces to form a platform for popular government. As stated by George W. Bush in his Second Inaugural Address, such an approach would simultaneously promote American interests and world peace:

We are led, by events and common sense, to one conclusion: The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands. The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world . . . So it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world.<sup>19</sup>

In contrast to the predominantly military approach to regime change pursued by the Bush administration in Iraq, contemporary studies of comparative political development focus on government structures. This second approach to democracy promotion is called the transitions model and emphasizes the establishment of democratic political structures, such as elections and institutions. It is named after a group of scholars in comparative political scholarship who collectively understand democratic development as a dynamic process in contrast to earlier understandings of democracy as something attained all at once after the establishment of a number of prerequisites, such as economic development or a civic culture.

Notable scholars in this group, such as Samuel Huntington and Guillermo O’Donnell, emphasize the role of elections and institutions in successful transitions.

particularly the idea that the sooner they are established, the better. The Bush approach and transition approach are not mutually exclusive and instead complement one another. After overthrowing the Iraqi dictatorship with military force, American officials quickly sought to establish democratic institutions and elections were lauded as significant indicators of progress toward democratic governance.

As with Iraq, contemporary studies of comparative political development are in need of a new direction. The predominant emphasis on elections and institutions does not sufficiently capture how in many parts of the world these formal mechanisms are easily controlled, manipulated, or eroded by undemocratic trends and behaviors to such an extent that the effectiveness of the transitions approach is called into question. Elections and institutions are certainly an important part of democracy building, but mainstream scholarship over-emphasizes the establishment of such structures to the point that the process of implementation is often dismissed or overlooked, while other equally important factors, such as rule of law and independent media, are often ignored. The consequences of institutional implementation and ignorance of necessary institutional supports has led to variety of concepts to describe many countries that are stuck somewhere between democracy and authoritarianism.

Past scholars have sought to create new categories of democracy to capture this dynamic or called for the abandonment of the transitions paradigm without empirical evaluation. This work seeks to take the transitions approach head on by evaluating the effectiveness of elections and institutions in promoting democracy. Many scholars of comparative political development accept the establishment of elections and institutions

as the foundation of democracy promotion efforts, yet there is surprisingly little research or discussion as to why that is and how it should come about. This is a serious concern. To be fair to the transitions approach, the model should be tested with empirical rigor, in its own words, in a region where many other variables, such as timing, geography, history, culture, language, and religion are similar. To my knowledge, no critical evaluation of this nature has yet taken place.

My research question asks: *Have elections and institutions been highly effective in promoting political and economic development in the former Soviet Union?* My thesis argues that the predominant emphasis on elections and institutions among transition scholars is largely ineffective in understanding democratic transitions in the former Soviet Union and thus, hinders efforts to promote democracy. If the emphasis on elections and institutions of the transitions approach is justified, then democratic development in Ukraine and Russia would be relatively successful and similar in each case because elections and institutions were established and functioning early in the transition process. If, on the other hand, development experiences in Ukraine and Russia are ineffective and divergent than the emphasis on elections and institutions in the transitions approach should be reconsidered.

In contrast to Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East, the authoritarian rule of Eastern Europe was undertaken by a single regime with remarkably similar character and timing in terms of creation, implementation, consolidation, and collapse. Within the region, two countries have shared a particularly close historical connection: Ukraine and Russia. This connection dates back to the 9<sup>th</sup> century when Eastern Slavs settled to form the powerful state of Kievan Rus along the Dnieper River in modern Kiev. Over the next

14 centuries, the development of Ukraine and Russia shared many social commonalities including ethnicity, language, culture, and religion. Today, a flight from Moscow to Kiev is considered domestic, while many Ukrainian citizens in Eastern and Southern Ukraine still consider themselves an important partner, if not a part, of Russia. The numerous historical, political, and social characteristics shared by Ukraine and Russia make these two countries optimal cases to measure the degree and dynamics of democratic development since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. Both established elections and institutions in a relatively similar manner at relatively the same time.

This work focuses on five transition scholars: Samuel Huntington, Guillermo O'Donnell, Phillippe Schmitter, Juan Linz, and Alfred Stepan. In examining the seminal works of these authors, two core perspectives emerge. First, all provide relatively similar understandings of functioning democracy that center on the electoral process. Huntington adopts Joseph Schumpeter's definition of democracy: a political system is democratic to the extent the most powerful collective decision makers are selected through periodic, competitive elections with widespread voter eligibility.<sup>20</sup>

O'Donnell and Schmitter state that "the establishment of certain rules of regular, formalized political competition deserved priority attention by scholars and practitioners."<sup>21</sup> The authors understand functioning democracy to be a political system where government authority is derived from obligatory adherence to collective decision making procedures and due process is enjoyed by all citizens.<sup>22</sup> Linz and Stepan offer a multi-dimensional understanding of functioning democracy in which the public and government accept democratic procedures and institutions as the sole means to govern and resolve conflict.<sup>23</sup> All three of these perspectives place democratic elections,

collective decision making, and related democratic rights and procedures at the forefront of functioning democracy.

Second, all emphasize institutions in successfully consolidating democratic transitions. Huntington states that “all democratic regimes the principal officers of government are chosen through competitive elections in which the bulk of the population can participate. Democratic systems thus have a common institutional core that establishes their identity.”<sup>24</sup> O’Donnell and Schmitter state that an important element in transition cases is “the extent to which representative institutions- political parties, social movements, interest associations, autonomous agencies, local governments- have survived from the period prior to authoritarian rule.”<sup>25</sup> “If there is one characteristic common to all our cases,” O’Donnell and Schmitter explain, “it is the omnipresent fear, during the transition, and often long after political democracy has been installed, that a coup will be attempted and succeed.”<sup>26</sup> Linz and Stepan state that “consolidation requires that habituation to the norms and procedures of democratic *conflict* regulation be developed. A high degree of *institutional routinization* is a key part of such a process.”<sup>27</sup> All three of these perspectives emphasize establishing an institutional core as a form of democratic identity, the preservation of past legacies of representative institutions, and newly established avenues of institutional routinization in successfully consolidating democratic governance.

Valerie Bunce, Michael McFaul, and Thomas Carothers are a few prominent scholars who have begun to categorize and criticize aspects of transition theories. This has been met with resistance by transition scholars. In “In Partial Defense of an Evanescent Paradigm,” O’Donnell questions that such an approach even exists

considering that transitions scholarship is a large and diverse body of work.<sup>28</sup> The fact that O'Donnell does not actively consider himself a "transitologist" does not in itself mean that either category is invalid, nor exempt from classification or criticism. The transitions approach is large and diverse, but several prominent scholars within the approach share certain basic core perspectives that justify the category.

O'Donnell may have forgotten about former coauthor Phillippe Schmitter who clearly described the development of "transitology" with Terry Karl in 1994. Schmitter and Karl state that the widespread political change in the third wave of democratization was accompanied by "the gradual and unobtrusive development of two proto-sciences: transitology and consolidology. The claim of these embryonic subdisciplines is that by applying a universalistic set of assumptions, concepts, and hypotheses, they together can explain and hopefully help to guide the way from an autocratic to a democratic regime."<sup>29</sup> Niccolo Machiavelli is "the founder and patron saint of transitology" because Machiavelli was the first great political theorist to "recognize the specific problematics and dynamics of regime change," gave to transitology its fundamental principle of uncertainty, and "warned that the potential contribution of the discipline would always be modest."<sup>30</sup> Hence, according to prominent, self-proclaimed transitologists, transitology was born "with limited scientific pretension and marked practical concerns."<sup>31</sup> It is exactly this lack of scientific concern that this work seeks to address.

O'Donnell defends the electoral emphasis of transition scholars on the grounds that genuinely free and fair elections require certain fundamental political freedoms. In turn, the combination of regular elections and relevant freedoms marks a significant departure from authoritarian rule.<sup>32</sup> This mistakenly assumes that all freedoms that



guarantee a free and fair election process will produce a democratic electoral environment. Free and fair elections regularly occur in countries that do not necessarily have democratic electoral environments because of government restrictions on freedoms such as press, speech, assembly, and expression. Are these countries still democracies? Either way, elections can be deemed free and fair by international observers, yet still be significantly tainted by limited freedoms, corruption, and violence.

This suggests that free and fair elections in themselves may have a more limited role in democratic development than suggested by O'Donnell and other proponents of an election-centered approach to transitions. Elections have certainly been a central part of American governance dating back to the Election of 1800, the first peaceful transition of power between political parties in world history. In many other parts of the world, however, elections have had little, no, or different meanings than commonly understood in the Western tradition. I do not question that elections and institutions can play an important role in development, but instead seek to create greater dialogue about exactly what roles elections and institutions have played in the development process and what other factors are necessary for effective development to be best understood.

I conclude that scholars of comparative political development need to reorient predominant understandings of transitions away from election-centered, institution-centered models of democratic development toward a multifaceted approach that incorporates the lessons of the last fifteen years of post Soviet development. . Essentially, we must determine what should be more seriously considered aside from elections and institutions in understanding how a country can move toward a functioning democracy. I label these considerations "environments" and develop seven that are worth

consideration: 1) popular environment; 2) historical-cultural environment; 3) international environment; 4) institutional environment; 5) legal environment; 6) economic environment; 7) civil environment. Environments are chosen to distinguish different aspects of democratic development that are static, yet must be sustainable to be effective.

The following research is divided into four main sections. The first section introduces the project and discusses the development of the transitions approach to democracy promotion in comparative political scholarship. The second section provides a detailed case study of Ukrainian development. The third section provides a detailed case study of Russian development. The final section provides conclusions on how well the case studies fit with the thesis statement and provides suggestions for where democratic scholarship should go from here.

I create ten indicators to measure the effectiveness of elections in promoting democratic development. When effective, elections fundamentally promote the peaceful and legitimate transition of power. Indicators of an effective electoral process include holding frequent elections, high voter turnout, popular candidate selection, effective oversight procedures to resolve electoral disputes, low levels of fraud, low levels of violence, wide acceptance of results, low levels of media favoritism, ideological variance among candidates, and candidates that represent stable and principled parties. These indicators seek to cover informal and formal aspects of the electoral process.

I create five indicators to measure the effectiveness of democratic institutions in promoting democratic development. When effective, democratic institutions fundamentally promote stable and representative government. Indicators of effective

institutional operation include the establishment of a democratic constitution, low levels of corruption, low levels of violence, wide acceptance of the political system, and a meaningful role for the opposition. These indicators consider both formal and informal aspects of institutional development and operation.

The former Soviet Union is fairly unique compared to other third-wave transitions because post-Soviet transitions consist of three simultaneous transformations: political, economic, and social. As a result, comprehensive studies of post-Soviet development must address this multi-dimensional nature. In turn, I create five indicators to measure the effectiveness of institutions in promoting capitalist development. When effective, democratic institutions fundamentally promote stable and sustained economic growth. Indicators of effective institutional operation include a rising gross domestic product, a balanced budget, significant privatization of state owned industries, rising wages, and rising foreign direct investment. These indicators focus on macroeconomic indicators that measure basic health of a developing economy.

When all indicators are present in a respective category, the development process is considered exceptional. Conversely, lower percentages correspond with lower levels of effectiveness. If a percentage of effectiveness in a case study falls below 60%, the category will be considered highly ineffective in promoting their respective objectives. The scale of effectiveness is as follows:

- Scores between 60% and 69% will be considered ineffective.
- Scores between 70% and 79% will be considered moderately effective.
- Scores between 80% and 89% will be considered effective.
- Scores between 90% and 100% will be considered highly effective.

These twenty indicators and the corresponding scale of effectiveness will shed significant light on the effectiveness of elections and institutions in Ukraine and Russia since the fall of the Soviet Union. Still, there are areas for improvement. First, the transitions model is understood through five major transition theorists that combined to form some of the most important works in the approach. This seeks to build on the works of Bunce and McFaul, who have reflected a certain assertions of transition scholars in light of post-Soviet development, and Carothers who called for the abandonment of the transitions model, without clearly identifying the contours of the model and its proponents. Future works can further develop this foundation for understanding the transitions model by expanding the breadth and depth of what is presented. Second, the case studies rely heavily on election and economic reports from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the World Bank because there were the most frequent and detailed. Future works could incorporate comprehensive reports from other NGO's and systematically incorporate social indicators, such life expectancy and population growth, into the study.

Scholars of democratic development are currently met with a certain level of disdain in American society. Many resist the idea that America should be establishing democracy by force in parts of the world that are unaccustomed to American occupation and norms of popular government. Historically, however, the peaceful, as well as violent, pursuit and promotion of political principles, such as liberty, and particular forms of

government, such as democracy, have been a major part of American foreign policy for generations. The question that emerges is where to go from here.

Given America's unique position as the sole world superpower in an era of globalization, the use of American power and prestige is uniquely important. In thinking about the future of democratic development it becomes abundantly clear that the consequences of failure are heightened. This is not because non-democracies, such as Iraq, will necessarily become safe-havens for terrorists, but because information is globally dispersed at unprecedented levels due to electronic media and the internet. In turn, instant knowledge of American missteps and failures has never been so widespread, nor so damaging to the basic national objectives of promoting free governments and economies.

Now more than ever, scholars of comparative political development need to think of new and effective ways to explain the myriad of development scenarios that have emerged since Rustow developed the transitions approach that Huntington and others pioneered for over thirty years. The predominant emphasis on elections and institutions that has persisted throughout this time has silently become core perspectives of many democracy proponents in and out of academia and government. If successful, this work will create greater dialogue over the usefulness and effectiveness of these basic perspectives in the hopes of forging new and better perspectives in this very important and timely area of study.

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- <sup>1</sup> Whitehead (1986), 5.
- <sup>2</sup> Adams defines “human development” as self-improvement. Adams wrote that an “enemy to liberty” is “an enemy to human nature.” Webking (1988), 82.
- <sup>3</sup> George Washington, Farewell Address (1796).
- <sup>4</sup> Hook (2005), 25.
- <sup>5</sup> Hook (2005), 32.
- <sup>6</sup> Woodrow Wilson, address to joint session of Congress, April 2, 1917.
- <sup>7</sup> Woodrow Wilson, address to joint session of Congress, January 8, 1918.
- <sup>8</sup> Franklin Roosevelt, Radio Address, December 29<sup>th</sup>, 1940.
- <sup>9</sup> Hook (2005), 35.
- <sup>10</sup> Harry Truman, address to joint session of Congress, March 12, 1947.
- <sup>11</sup> Ambrose and Brinkley ((1997), 82.
- <sup>12</sup> Ambrose and Brinkley, (1997), 82.
- <sup>13</sup> Whitehead (1986), 5.
- <sup>14</sup> Address by President Kennedy at a White House Reception for Latin American Diplomats and Members of Congress, March 13, 1961
- <sup>15</sup> Mission Statement as presented on their website, <http://www.ned.org/>.
- <sup>16</sup> George H.W. Bush, State of the Union Address, January 29, 1991.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>18</sup> Primetime national address, January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2007.
- <sup>19</sup> George W. Bush, Second Inaugural Address, January 20, 2005.
- <sup>20</sup> Huntington adopts this definition in “Will More Countries Become Democratic?” *Political Science Quarterly*, 99.2 (1984): 193-218.
- <sup>21</sup> O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986), 3.
- <sup>22</sup> O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986), 8.
- <sup>23</sup> Linz and Stepan (1996), 6.
- <sup>24</sup> Huntington (1992), 580.
- <sup>25</sup> O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986), 21.
- <sup>26</sup> O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986), 23.
- <sup>27</sup> Linz and Stepan (1996), 10. Emphasis original.
- <sup>28</sup> O’Donnell (2002), 6-12.
- <sup>29</sup> Schmitter and Karl (1994), 173.
- <sup>30</sup> Schmitter and Karl (1994), 174.
- <sup>31</sup> Schmitter and Karl (1994), 174.
- <sup>32</sup> O’Donnell (2002), 7-8.

## CHAPTER II

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSITOLOGY AND ITS CRITICS

The current body of scholarship that examines democratic development in Comparative Politics is called “transitology.” This name was developed around the belief that the study of democratic transitions is so important to the work of comparative political scholarship that it needs a separate category with a distinct name. The focus of scholarship on democratic development over the last three decades has centered upon the notion of transition. The placement of transitions at the forefront of understanding democratic development began in 1970 with Dankwart Rustow. Prior to Rustow, scholarship on democratic development centered upon the notion that democracy developed from certain prerequisites that enabled democracy to emerge. Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba (1963) argued that a civic culture was necessary for democracy to develop. Civic culture was defined as a pluralistic culture that places communication and persuasion at the heart of the political process. According to Almond and Verba, democracy emerges in a civic culture because this culture promotes consensus in diverse societies, while effectively balancing moderation with desires for change.

Seymour Lipset (1959) focused on the economies of developing nations, rather than cultures, claiming that democracy could have multiple prerequisites, rather than just one. Lipset argued that national unity and economic affluence were two preconditions of democracy. Economic development allows democracy to emerge by creating a large middle class that can influence the political values of economic elites, which promotes widespread acceptance of democratic norms, such as economic redistribution.

Walt Rostow (1960) was a prestigious economist who also believed that economic development must occur before democratic development can occur. Rostow constructed a model of democratic development based on five stages of economic growth. In the first stage of *Traditional Society*, political organization is based on family and clan relationships and subsistence agriculture dominates economic activity. In the second stage, *Preconditions for Takeoff* emerge, such as a rise in the rate of investment and the development of one or more substantial manufacturing sectors. *Takeoff* is defined as an industrial revolution in which economic growth becomes a normal part of social activity. Approximately 50 years after takeoff, there is a *Drive to Maturity* in which the society masters modern technologies and the corresponding increase in quality of life produces political moderation. In the final stage, called the *Age of High Mass Consumption*, citizens begin to manipulate the physical environment for economic advantage and a large middle class develops.

Rostow argued that all democracies must pass through these five stages in sequence. In turn, every society faces a similar set of choices in the process of economic and political development, which relevant scholars termed “modernization.” Modern nations were considered to have capitalist economies and democratic political systems. Modernization scholars sought to both explain and promote democratic development by better understanding what conditions were necessary for democracy to develop. Modernization scholars incorporated many disciplines into understanding development including Anthropology, Sociology, and Psychology.

The notion of democratic pre-requisites came under fire throughout the late 1960’s and early 1970’s from a new wave of graduate students and young scholars who



studied under modernization scholars. According to Howard Wiarda (2002), criticisms included ethnocentrism, ignorance of how international events influenced domestic politics, exclusion of class and power relations, misunderstanding of indigenous institutions throughout the world, and misunderstanding of the role of timing and sequence in democratic development. America's involvement in Vietnam and an increasing number of field studies led to more critical analysis of American policy and scholarship on political development. In 1968, Samuel Huntington's *Political Order in Changing Societies* was the first major work in Comparative Politics to argue that rapid economic growth and social mobilization can upset national traditions and create chaos, just as easily as these factors can produce modernization. Consequently, the one-size-fits-all understanding of democratic development, which sought to understand and duplicate Western experiences on the rest of the world, was cast in serious doubt.

In 1970, Dankwart Rustow transformed predominant understandings of democratic development away from prerequisites toward more dynamic understandings of political change. Rustow argued that democratic development is a process that can move forward, toward lasting democratic reform, as well as backward, toward repressive government. Conceptually, Rustow understood a transition as a circular relationship between democratic development and democratic regression, rather than a universally linear progression from economic development to democratic development. In turn, the democratic transitions need not be geographically, temporally, or socially uniform.

Huntington propelled Rustow's focus on transitions into a new body of theory with the article "Will More Countries Become Democratic?" In the article, Huntington claimed that scholars of prerequisites often confuse the correlation of democracy and

other economic, social, cultural, and psychological factors with conclusions that these factors necessarily produce democracy. Huntington also shared Rustow's concern that political factors had been overlooked in approaches that focus on prerequisites. At the same time, Huntington did not want to completely abandon previous democratic scholarship.

Huntington argued that "the emergence of democracy in a society is helped by a number of factors" that "can be grouped into four broad categories- economic, social, external, and cultural."<sup>1</sup> These factors include: 1) higher levels of economic well-being; 2) the absence of extreme inequalities in wealth and income; 3) greater social pluralism, including particularly a strong and autonomous bourgeoisie; 4) a more market-orientated economy; 5) greater societal influence from existing democratic states; and 6) a culture that is less monistic and more tolerant of diversity and compromise.<sup>2</sup> In contrast to earlier scholars who focused on preconditions, Huntington argued that "with the possible exception of a market economy, no single precondition is necessary to produce (democratic) development."<sup>3</sup> Huntington claimed that the optimism of the 1950's, which looked favorably upon the prospects of democratic development around the world, returned in the 1980's with greater caution and less naivety.<sup>4</sup> Political developments in Southwestern Europe produced significant democratic transformation, which gave hope that similar developments would follow.

Huntington sought to examine the extent to which this new optimism was justified and in doing so, provided several reasons as to why democratic transitions should be studied in more detail. First, the correlation between democracy and individual liberty is very high. Second, the more democracy prevails around the world, the more congenial

the world environment will be to American interests and the future of American democracy. Third, the increasing trend toward global interdependence will not allow a part-democratic, part-authoritarian existence for long. Fourth, the extension or decline of democracy has implications for other social values, such as economic growth, political stability, and social justice, that Americans tend to believe are normatively desirable. These arguments laid the foundation for normative perspectives of subsequent comparative scholars who focus on democratic transitions.

Huntington created four phases to describe democratic development and adopted Joseph Schumpeter's definition of democracy: a political system is democratic to the extent the most powerful collective decision makers are selected through periodic, competitive elections with widespread voter eligibility. Huntington was most interested in understanding the fate of democratic transitions over time. The first phase began in 1820 and witnessed democratic expansion in colonial America, Northern Europe, Western Europe, and British dominions. Expansion peaked in 1920, which led to a second phase of democratic retrenchment, where democratic trends were extinguished in Germany, Italy, Austria, Poland, Spain, Brazil, and Japan.

The third phase of democratic development was a short-lived boom of new democracies which began in 1942 and ended in 1953. During this phase, American established democracy in West Germany, Austria, Italy, and Japan, while former colonies, such as India, Israel, and the Philippines, experienced significant democratic advancements. According to Huntington, "the fourth period in the evolution of democratic regimes," which lasted from 1953 to 1984, was different from the other three in that there was no dominant trend of democratic extension or retrenchment.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the

number of democratic regimes expanded in the 1950's, shrunk in the mid to late 1960's, and then expanded again in the late 1970's and early 1980's. After examining this record of democratic development, Huntington concluded that optimism toward the prospects of democratic development was justified, though the future of democratic expansion is uncertain.

*The Third Wave* (1991) tightened up Huntington's earlier "phases" of democratic development with a more concise metaphor. Huntington chose to discuss democratic development in terms of waves to capture the global pattern of democratic retrenchment, which appears to follow each major phase of democratic expansion in world history. According to Huntington, the world experienced three global waves of democratic development. The first wave of democratic expansion (1829-1929) was rooted in the French and American Revolution and witnessed the gradual development of democratic institutions in European countries throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The reverse wave (1922-1942) shifted away from democracy and returned to traditional forms of authoritarian rule or introduced mass based, brutal and pervasive forms of authoritarianism like Mussolini in Italy.

The second wave of democratic expansion (1943-1962) was rooted in the liberation of oppressed countries in World War II, furthered by allied occupation, and promoted the development of democratic institutions in West Germany, Italy, Austria, Japan, and Korea. The reverse wave (1958-1975) witnessed a second shift from democracy toward authoritarianism, which largely took place in Latin America. The third wave (1974-present) first manifested itself in Southern Europe, and then swept across Latin America, Asia, and Eastern Europe. As can be seen in figure 1 and figure 2, the

phases of democratic development constructed by Huntington in 1984 are similar, though not identical, to the waves constructed by Huntington in 1991.

**Figure 1:**  
**Phases of Democratic Development**

1984

Phase 1: Democratic Expansion  
(1829-1920)

Phase 2: Democratic Retrenchment  
Retrenchment (1920-1942)

Phase 3: Democratic Expansion  
(1942-1953)

Phase 4: Expansion/Retrenchment  
Retrenchment (1953-1984)

**Figure2:**  
**Waves of Democratic Development**

1991

1<sup>st</sup> Wave: Democratic Expansion  
(1820-1920)

Reverse Wave: Democratic  
(1922-1942)

2<sup>nd</sup> Wave: Democratic Expansion  
(1943-1962)

Reverse Wave: Democratic  
(1958-1975)

3<sup>rd</sup> Wave: Democratic Expansion  
(1974-Present)

Since Huntington’s book, many scholars have sought to prevent a reverse wave of democratic retrenchment by better understanding the consolidation aspect of the transition process.<sup>6</sup> Huntington defines a “wave of democratization” as “a group of transitions from nondemocratic to democratic regimes that occurs within a specified period and that significantly outnumbers transitions in the opposite direction in the same period.”<sup>7</sup> According to the Huntington, “between 1974 and 1990 more than thirty countries in southern Europe, Latin America, East Asia, and Eastern Europe shifted from authoritarian to democratic systems of government.”<sup>8</sup> Huntington described this development as a “global democratic revolution” and “the most important political trend of the late twentieth century.”<sup>9</sup> Rather than focusing on the cause of the third wave,

which is “complex and peculiar to that wave,” Huntington was most concerned with “how third wave democratizations occurred: the ways in which political leaders and publics in the 1970’s and 1980’s ended authoritarian systems and created democratic ones.”<sup>10</sup>

What should be the focus in studying democratic consolidations? For Huntington, democratic identity is based on elections and institutions.

“All democratic regimes the principal officers of government are chosen through competitive elections in which the bulk of the population can participate. Democratic systems thus have a common institutional core that establishes their identity. Authoritarian regimes- as the term is used in this study- are defined simply by the absence of this institutional core.”<sup>11</sup>

In understanding how best to implement functioning elections and institutions, transition scholars, such as Huntington, begin with classifying non-democratic systems. According to Huntington, non-democratic regimes have historically taken many different forms, which varied depending on the particular wave of democratization. In the first wave, non-democratic regimes “were generally absolute monarchies, lingering feudal aristocracies, and the successor states to continental empires.”<sup>12</sup> In the second wave, non-democratic regimes were “fascist states, colonies, and personalistic military dictatorships.”<sup>13</sup> In the third wave, non-democratic regimes are one-party systems, military regimes, and personal dictatorships.

In the most recent wave, “one-party systems were created by revolution or Soviet imposition.”<sup>14</sup> In these systems, access to power is controlled by “the party,” which holds a monopoly of power and legitimates its rule through ideology.<sup>15</sup> One-party systems are primarily communist countries. Military regimes “were created by coups d’etat replacing democratic or civilian governments.”<sup>16</sup> In these regimes, the military exercised power by

ruling as a junta in conjunction with some existing government leaders or distributing top government positions among top generals. Military regimes are primarily found in Latin America. Personal dictatorships are distinguishable by an individual leader who is the source of authority, so that power is dependent on “access to, closeness to, dependence on, and support from the leader.”<sup>17</sup> Examples include Spain under Francisco Franco, the Philippines under Ferdinand Marcos, India under Indira Ghandi, and Romania under Nicole Ceausescu. Huntington concludes that “one-party systems, military regimes, and personal dictatorships suppressed both competition and participation.”<sup>18</sup>

After classifying non-democratic regimes, Huntington classified different types of transitions. In doing so, Huntington compares the role of external forces to internal forces on transition processes. According to Huntington, democratization in the second wave was largely a product of foreign imposition and decolonization, whereas democratization in the third wave was “overwhelmingly indigenous.”<sup>19</sup> Huntington states that “for analytical purposes it is useful to group the cases into three broad types of processes.”<sup>20</sup>

One type of transition is “transformation.” Transformation is “when elites in power took the lead in bringing about democracy.”<sup>21</sup> A second type of transition is “replacement.” Replacement is “when opposition groups took the lead in bringing about democracy.”<sup>22</sup> A third type of transition is “transplacement.” Transplacement is “when democratization resulted largely from joint action by government and opposition groups.”<sup>23</sup>

The common theme in different types of transitions is negotiation. According to Huntington, “almost all transitions, not just transplacement, involved some negotiation—explicit or implicit, overt or covert – between government and opposition groups.”<sup>24</sup> In

the third wave, “the crucial participants” in transition processes were “the standpatters, liberal reformers, and democratic reformers in the governing coalition, and democratic moderates and revolutionary extremists in the opposition.”<sup>25</sup> Participants engaged in “the three crucial interactions in democratization processes.”<sup>26</sup> These crucial interactions occurred “between government and opposition, between reformers and standpatters in the governing coalition, and between moderates and extremists in the opposition.”<sup>27</sup>

After classifying non-democratic regimes, types of transitions, key players, and transition processes, Huntington discussed the relationship between the nature of authoritarian regimes and the nature of the transition process. Transitions from military regimes were characterized by transformation and transplacement.<sup>28</sup> Commonly, military regimes instigated regime change in the face of public pressure, rarely defined themselves as permanent leaders, and stated that once the political situation was corrected power would be returned to political leaders. In doing so, military leaders demanded guarantees upon relinquishing power: a promise of no legal consequences for their actions and respect for the institutional autonomy of the military. As a result, the transition process made it “relatively easy for military rulers to withdraw from power and to resume professional military roles.”<sup>29</sup> At the same time, it was also “relatively easy for military leaders to return to power when exigencies and their own interests warranted.”<sup>30</sup>

Transformation and transplacement were also the common transition types for one-party systems.<sup>31</sup> In one-party systems the party and the state were interwoven. This created institutional and ideological obstacles in transitions to democracy. Institutionally, the regular armed forces had to be “depoliticized.”<sup>32</sup> Ideologically, “the ideology of the party defined the identity of the state.”<sup>33</sup> This meant that “opposition to the party



amounted to treason to the state.”<sup>34</sup> To democratize, “the monopolistic party places at risk its control of government and becomes one more party competing in a multiparty system.”<sup>35</sup> When complete, the “former monopolistic party is in no better position than any other political group to reinstate an authoritarian system.”<sup>36</sup>

According to Huntington, transitions from one-party systems are more difficult to consolidate than transitions from military regimes because of the ideological obstacles, in addition to the institutional obstacles. At the same time, transitions from one-party systems are more likely to be permanent, if completed, because of the ideological change. In transitions from personal dictatorships, dictators rarely give up power voluntarily and seek to maintain political power as long as possible. As a result, replacement is the typical transition process for transitions from personal dictatorships. Sometimes replacement was the product of the violent overthrow of the dictator.<sup>37</sup>

Several important observations emerge in examining the works of Samuel Huntington. Huntington was instrumental in facilitating scholarly focus on the transition process of democratic development, in contrast to the predominant literature focused on prerequisites, and placed the study of democratic transitions within a broad view of historical development. In doing so, Huntington clearly articulated a normative position for why greater study of democratic development is desirable that was adopted by many scholars in the subsequent body of literature. Huntington’s approach became an important model for understanding and promoting democratic development with an emphasis on the two basic systematic components of functioning democracies, elections and institutions.

In 1986, for example, Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe Schmitter edited and co-authored a seminal multi-set volume entitled *Transitions From Authoritarian Rule*. According to the authors, the "eventual consolidation of political democracy constitutes per se a desirable goal."<sup>38</sup> In turn, "the establishment of certain rules of regular, formalized political competition deserved priority attention by scholars and practitioners."<sup>39</sup>

O'Donnell and Schmitter seek "to capture the extraordinary uncertainty of the transition, with its numerous surprises and difficult dilemmas."<sup>40</sup> Given that transitional regimes, especially those from authoritarian rule, are very different from established political regimes so that "normal science methodology" is not appropriate. As a result, scholars are unable to rely on "stable economic, social, cultural, and partisan categories to identify, analyze, and evaluate the identities and strategies of those defending the status quo and those struggling to reform or transform it."<sup>41</sup>

According to O'Donnell and Schmitter, the uncertainty that permeates transitions makes it "almost impossible to specify *ex ante* which classes, sectors, institutions, and other groups will take what role, opt for which issues, or support what alternative" because "most- if not all- of those 'standard' actors are likely to be divided and hesitant about their interests and ideals and, hence, incapable of coherent collective action."<sup>42</sup> As a result, transitions from authoritarian rule "should be analyzed with distinctly political concepts, however vaguely delineated and difficult to pin down they may be."<sup>43</sup> The authors argued that this is not "a denial of the long-run casual impact of 'structural' (including macroeconomic, world systematic and social class) factors."<sup>44</sup> Rather, the approach recognizes "the high degree of indeterminacy embedded in situations where

unexpected events (*fortuna*), insufficient information, hurried and audacious choices, confusion about motives and interests, plasticity, and even indefiniteness of political identities, as well as the talents of specific individuals (*virtu*), are frequently decisive in determining the outcomes.”<sup>45</sup>

O’Donnell and Schmitter define “transition” as “the interval between one political regime and another.”<sup>46</sup> Transitions typically begin when authoritarian regimes face “legitimation problems.” Between World War I and World War II, for example, authoritarian rulers sought to legitimate their regimes by portraying themselves as “as the best possible modes of governance for their societies, especially when compared to impotent and divided parliamentary democracies elsewhere in Europe and to the prepotent and monolithic regime in the Soviet Union.”<sup>47</sup> This was done by “mobilizing imagery of Fascism and references to more traditional forms of corporatism.”<sup>48</sup> After the demise of Fascism in 1945, legitimation was more challenging. As a result, authoritarian regimes became “ideologically schizophrenic.”<sup>49</sup> In other words, such regimes practiced dictatorship and repression, while promising democracy and freedom sometime in the future. This creates situations where “the often haphazard attempts of these regimes at institutionalizing themselves clash with the limits imposed by their own discourse.”<sup>50</sup> As a result, the stamp of the regime “opens the ideological space within which they can express what often becomes their fundamental demand: the removal of the authoritarian regime and its replacement by a democratic one.”<sup>51</sup>

Once the authoritarian regime “opens,” two groups of political actors become central to the transition process. Hard-liners “are those who contrary to the consensus of this period of world history, believe that the perpetuation of authoritarian rule is possible

*and* desirable.”<sup>52</sup> This is undertaken through outright rejection of democracy or “erecting some facade behind which they can maintain inviolate the hierarchical and authoritarian nature of their power.”<sup>53</sup> According to O’Donnell and Schmitter, “the main core of the hard-liners is formed by those who reject viscerally the ‘cancers’ and ‘disorders’ of democracy and who believe they have a mission to eliminate all traces of such pathologies from political life.” Ironically, this is the same view that O’Donnell, Schmitter, and other transition scholars have toward authoritarianism, seeing it (rather than democracy) as a “cancer” or “disorder” that must be eliminated from political life.

Soft-liners “may be equally disposed to use repression and to tolerate the arbitrary acts of the appropriate ministry or security agency,” but soft-liners are increasingly aware that the regime they helped establish will have to make use of some form of electoral legitimation in the near future.<sup>54</sup> Timing is very important in determining if legitimation is feasible. Soft-liners believe that “the regime cannot wait too long before reintroducing certain freedoms.”<sup>55</sup> The more time that passes, the less likely moderate segments of the domestic opposition and international public opinion will support the regime.

Transitional openings can take many forms. According to O’Donnell and Schmitter, a military defeat has been the most frequent type of opening in recent decades. A second type of opening is “occupation by a foreign power which was itself a political democracy.”<sup>56</sup> Most recently, the most common form of opening in contemporary politics is domestic, internal resistance.

Like Huntington, O’Donnell and Schmitter are heavily concerned with institutions. According to O’Donnell and Schmitter, an important element in transition cases is “the extent to which representative institutions- political parties, social

movements, interest associations, autonomous agencies, local governments- have survived from the period prior to authoritarian rule.”<sup>57</sup> This reflects how democratic development in the cases they examine, primarily from Latin America and Southern Europe, was typically a cyclical process between military-controlled authoritarianism and democratization. “If there is one characteristic common to all our cases,” O’Donnell and Schmitter explain, “it is the omnipresent fear, during the transition, and often long after political democracy has been installed, that a coup will be attempted and succeed.”<sup>58</sup> Thus, the primary challenge of democratization is “coaxing the military out of power and inducing them to tolerate a transition toward democracy.”<sup>59</sup>

O’Donnell and Schmitter are “guardedly optimistic about the prospects for controlling the behavior of those within the armed forces who are antagonistic to democracy,” but acknowledge that “the success of the transition may depend even more on whether some civilian, as well as military, leaders have the imagination, the courage, and the willingness to come to interim agreements on rules and mutual guarantees.”<sup>60</sup> As a result, “pacts” are central to stabilizing the vast uncertainty of transition processes. O’Donnell and Schmitter define a pact as “an explicit, but not always publicly explicated or justified, agreement among a select set of actors which seeks to define (or, better, to redefine) rules governing the exercise of power on the basis of mutual guarantees for the ‘vital interests’ of those entering into it.”<sup>61</sup> Pacts are temporary solutions to avoid conflict that may “pave the way for more permanent arrangements for the resolution of conflicts.”<sup>62</sup> Some elements of pacts may become permanent, however, by being incorporated into legislation or constitutions.

O'Donnell and Schmitter observed that "modern pacts move the polity toward democracy by undemocratic means."<sup>63</sup> Pacts are undemocratic because pacts are typically negotiated by a small number of participants who represent oligarchic groups, tend to reduce political competition, often seek to limit public accountability, control the policy agenda, and deliberately undermine political equality. According to O'Donnell and Schmitter, "the core of a pact" is "a negotiated compromise under which actors agree to forgo or underutilize their capacity to harm each other by extending guarantees not to threaten each others' corporate autonomies or vital interests."<sup>64</sup> This typically involves abstaining from violence, prohibiting appeals from outsiders (military or masses), and committing to use pacts in future conflict resolution. O'Donnell and Schmitter argued that "the general scenario for negotiating a pact is fairly clear: it is a situation in which conflicting or competing groups are interdependent, in that they can neither do without each other, nor unilaterally impose their preferred solution on each other if they are to satisfy their respective divergent issues."<sup>65</sup> Pacts are not essential to all transitions, but O'Donnell and Schmitter "are convinced that where they are a feature of the transition, they are desirable- that is, they enhance the probability that the process will lead to a viable political democracy."<sup>66</sup>

O'Donnell and Schmitter understand transitions to democracy as chaotic and uncertain experiences in contrast to Huntington, who understands the history of democratic development as a wavelike experience, characterized by universal and regular periods of expansion and retrenchment. O'Donnell and Schmitter describe democratic transitions as multilayered chess games "with people challenging the rules on every move, pushing and shoving to get to the board, shouting out advice and threats from the

sidelines, trying to cheat whenever they can- but, nevertheless, becoming progressively mesmerized by the drama they are participating in or watching, and gradually becoming committed to playing more decorously and loyally to the rule they themselves have elaborated."<sup>67</sup> A transition is not "a linear or a rational process."<sup>68</sup> As a result, "political democracy is produced by stalemate and dissensus rather than prior unity and consensus."<sup>69</sup> Or, put another way, transitions to democracy are highly contingent affairs that are ill-suited to be described by social scientific models that aspire to universality.

Several important conclusions emerge in examining the work O'Donnell and Schmitter. First, political actors are central to understanding transitions because underlying economic, social and cultural factors cannot satisfactorily explain a process of constant, widespread, and idiosyncratic change. Second, the interests of political actors shape transitions. When faced with significant opposition, authoritarian leaders seek to preserve their interests by negotiating pacts. Pacts are normatively desirable and empirically effective in reducing violence and promoting democratic reform. Third, the timing of transitions is important. The shorter and more unexpected a transition, the greater the likelihood a popular upsurge will produce a lasting impact on the outcome of the transition.<sup>70</sup>

In Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan's first major work, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes* (1978), the authors conclude the top priority of future work on democratic development is examining the process of transition from authoritarian to democratic regimes, particularly the political dynamics of consolidation. *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation* (1996) was an effort to contribute to that research. Like O'Donnell and Schmitter, Linz and Stepan understood democratic development as a

multidimensional process, but provided a much more detailed understanding of the transition process. Consolidated democracy is divided into behavioral, attitudinal, and constitutional dimensions:

- “Behaviorally, a democratic regime in a territory is consolidated when no significant national, social, economic, political, or institutional actors spend significant resources attempting to achieve their objectives by creating a nondemocratic regime or turning to violence or foreign intervention to secede from the state.”<sup>71</sup>
- “Attitudinally, a democratic regime is consolidated when a strong majority of public opinion holds the belief that democratic procedures and institutions are the most appropriate way to govern collective life in a society such as theirs and when the support for antisystem alternatives is quite small or more or less isolated from the pro-democratic forces.”<sup>72</sup>
- “Constitutionally, a democratic regime is consolidated when governmental and nongovernmental forces alike, throughout the territory of the state, become subjected to, and habituated to, the resolution of conflict within the specific laws, procedures, and institutions sanctioned by new democratic processes.”<sup>73</sup>

According to Linz and Stepan, these three dimensions of consolidated democracy are produced by five interacting arenas that “reinforce one another in order for such consolidation to exist.”<sup>74</sup> Linz and Stepan described these arenas as necessary and supportive conditions of consolidated democracy.<sup>75</sup> First, “conditions must exist for the development of a free and lively civil society.”<sup>76</sup> Linz and Stepan define civil society as an “arena of the polity where self-organizing groups, movements, and individuals, relatively autonomous from the state, attempt to articulate values, create associations and solidarities, and advance their interests.”<sup>77</sup> Second, consolidated democracy requires “a relatively autonomous and valued political society.”<sup>78</sup> Linz and Stepan define political society as an “arena in which the polity specifically arranges itself to contest the legitimate right to exercise control over public power and the state apparatus.”<sup>79</sup>



Linz and Stepan emphasized how civil society and political society are distinctive, yet complementary. This requires a third arena that provides “a working consensus about procedures of governance, and constitutionalism and a rule of law.”<sup>80</sup> According to Linz and Stepan, constitutionalism and rule of law are virtually definitional prerequisites of a consolidated democracy. The interaction between these three arenas is described as follows:

Democratic consolidation requires parties, one of whose primary tasks is precisely to aggregate and represent *differences* between democrats. Consolidation requires that habituation to the norms and procedures of democratic *conflict* regulation be developed. A high degree of *institutional routinization* is a key part of such a process. *Intermediation* between the state and civil society and the structuring of *compromise* are likewise legitimate and necessary tasks of political society. In short, political society, informed, pressured, and periodically renewed by civil society, must somehow achieve a workable agreement on the myriad ways in which democratic power will be crafted and exercised.<sup>81</sup>

The fourth arena necessary for democratic consolidation is a state apparatus. This apparatus establishes rational and legal bureaucratic norms. The final arena necessary for democratic consolidation is an economic society. Linz and Stepan argue there has never been and “cannot be a non-wartime consolidated democracy in a command economy.”<sup>82</sup> At the same time, “there never will be a modern consolidated democracy in a pure market economy.”<sup>83</sup> Thus, an economic society “mediates between state and market.”<sup>84</sup> According to Linz and Stepan, “any way (they) analyze the problem, democratic consolidation requires the institutionalization of a socially and politically regulated market.”<sup>85</sup>

Linz and Stepan use the tentative conclusions of O’Donnell and Schmitter to develop a theory of democratic development that is much more comprehensive than their predecessors. Like O’Donnell and Schmitter, Linz and Stepan stress the importance of

making citizens accustomed to the norms of democratic conflict resolution, such as elections, and the key role that institutions play in that normalization process. Unlike O'Donnell and Schmitter, Linz and Stepan incorporate economic considerations and postcommunist cases in their model of democratic consolidation.

As the third wave of democratic development unexpectedly unfolded throughout the Soviet Union in the early 1990's scholars of democratic development faced a central question: could theories of democratic transitions derived from the study of Southern Europe and Latin America be applied to other regions? This led to a heated debate within comparative political scholarship of democratic development. At the heart of this debate were Philippe Schmitter and Terry Karl, who advocated incorporation of postcommunist cases into previous models of democratic development, and Valerie Bunce, who questioned how well past models of democratization fit with development experiences in the former Soviet Union.

Bunce recognized that the predominant understandings of recent democratization were heavily influenced by previous experiences in Latin American and Southern Europe and was not surprised by this development because the third wave began in Southern Europe and then moved to Latin America. These regions "contained a large number of countries, virtually all of which had redemocratized over the course of a decade and a half."<sup>86</sup> According to Bunce, commonalities in history and culture, combined with differences of timing and mode of transition, made for "instructive comparison" within and between these two regions.<sup>87</sup> Bunce also recognized that the breakdown of state socialism in the Soviet Union provided an opportunity to geographically broaden the discussion of recent democratization, but did not want to presume that post-communist

democratization was part of a larger global process. “If recent democratization is, indeed, a global process,” Bunce argued, “then the terrain of these studies (Eastern Europe, Central Asia) should better reflect that fact.”<sup>88</sup> In turn, Bunce sought to use the 27 cases of postcommunist development in Eastern and Central Europe “to rethink our understanding of recent democratization.”<sup>89</sup> In rethinking democratization, Bunce took direct aim at O’Donnell and Schmitter.

Bunce stated that analysis of democratization is premised on several core assumptions, which come directly from O’Donnell and Schmitter:

- “that immediate influences are more important than historical considerations in shaping transitional dynamics;”
- “that transitions are inherently quite uncertain;”
- “that the central dynamic in a transition is bargaining between authoritarian leaders and leaders of the democratic opposition, with outcomes a function of relative power;”
- “that the key issues on the table during the transition are breaking with authoritarian rule, building democratic institutions, and eliciting the cooperation of authoritarians.”<sup>90</sup>

According to Bunce, “the postcommunist experience seems to challenge many of these assumptions about transitional strategies.”<sup>91</sup> One such experience is the process of mass mobilization. Contrary to the third core assumption stated above, mass mobilization was often helpful to democratic transitions in the postcommunist context. The most successful cases of postcommunist transition, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Slovenia, all began with mass mobilization, except for Hungary.

Bunce argued that political protest was valuable in several ways. First, popular protests “signaled the breakdown of the authoritarian order” and “created a widespread

sense that there were alternatives.”<sup>92</sup> Second, “popular protests pushed authoritarian leaders . . . to the bargaining table” and created “a large opposition united by its rejection of the incumbent regime.”<sup>93</sup> Third, political protests “gave opposition leaders a resource advantage when bargaining with authoritarian elites.”<sup>94</sup> Finally, “mass mobilization created a mandate for radical change that subsequently translated into a large victory for the democratic forces in the first competitive elections” and later led to “far-reaching economic and political reforms.”<sup>95</sup>

Like mass mobilization, the role of uncertainty in the transition process differed from the claims of O’Donnell and Schmitter. Bunce acknowledged that transitions in postcommunist countries were highly uncertain, but asserts that managing uncertainty did not necessarily promote democratic outcomes, even after elections were established. In most competitive elections, for example, Communists were victorious. According to Bunce, “the larger the victory, the more likely that authoritarian rule continued.”<sup>96</sup> “Even ten years after the transition began,” Bunce explained, “only one-third of the postcommunist regimes were ranked fully free.”<sup>97</sup> This percentage is much less than democratic development in Latin America and southern Europe. In turn, “these patterns suggest that the uncertainty surrounding postcommunist political trajectories varied significantly.”<sup>98</sup> This led Bunce to suggest that “the existence of a more certain political environment in some countries calls into question both the necessity and the logic, outlined earlier, of safeguarding the new democracy by forging compromises between authoritarians and democrats.”<sup>99</sup>

Bunce acknowledged that “many of the most successful transitions in the postcommunist area included pacting;” however, “the transitions in the postcommunist

region that combined pacting with demobilized publics- or what has been asserted to be the preferred approach in the South- were precisely the transitions that were most likely to continue authoritarian rule in the postcommunist region.”<sup>100</sup> Furthermore, “compromises that were deemed so beneficial for the southern European and Latin American transitions were rejected by opposition leaders in Poland, Hungary, Slovenia, and the like.”<sup>101</sup> Instead, these regimes “were strongly positioned to favor an immediate and sharp break with the authoritarian past.”<sup>102</sup>

Another significant difference between what Bunce termed “East,” Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and “South,” Latin America and Southern Europe, is the “very different role of the military.”<sup>103</sup> Bunce explains how the consensus among Latin American specialists was that the military is “the biggest threat to democracy today.”<sup>104</sup> In contrast, “there is a long tradition of civilian control over the military- a tradition that goes far back in Russian history and that, following the Bolshevik Revolution and the demilitarization after the Civil War, was maintained at home and then after World War II was projected outward to the members of the Soviet bloc.”<sup>105</sup> Thus, “civil-military relations, in short, constituted one area where the authoritarian past proved to be beneficial, rather than a burden, for democratization after state socialism.”<sup>106</sup>

By incorporating postcommunist transitions into contemporary scholarship on democratic transitions, Bunce cast significant doubt on O’Donnell and Schmitter’s understanding of global democratic development, specifically, experiences with mass mobilization, uncertainty in the transition process, pacts, and civil-military relations. This was not the first scholarly encounter between Phillippe Schmitter and Valerie Bunce however. In 1994, Phillippe Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl articulated their thoughts on

the future of “transitology” and “consolidology,” which instigated a series of scholarly exchanges Bunce. In “The Conceptual Travels of Transitologists and Consolidologists,” Schmitter and Karl argued that studies of democratic transitions should include cases from the Soviet Union. In doing so, the authors explained what they mean by “transitology” and “consolidology,” provided advice for “apprentices” and “neophytes” who undertake either of these “proto-sciences,” and defended their position of incorporating the former Soviet Union in theories of democratic transitions.<sup>107</sup>

According to Schmitter and Karl, widespread political change in the third wave of democratization was accompanied by “the gradual and unobtrusive development of two proto-sciences: transitology and consolidology.”<sup>108</sup> “The claim of these embryonic subdisciplines,” Schmitter and Karl explain, “is that by applying a universalistic set of assumptions, concepts, and hypotheses, they together can explain and hopefully help to guide the way from an autocratic to a democratic regime.”<sup>109</sup> Schmitter and Karl claim that Niccolo Machiavelli is “the founder and patron saint of transitology” because Machiavelli was the first great political theorist to “recognize the specific problematics and dynamics of regime change,” gave to transitology its fundamental principle of uncertainty, and “warned that the potential contribution of the discipline would always be modest.”<sup>110</sup> Hence, transitology was born “with limited scientific pretension and marked practical concerns.”<sup>111</sup> Unlike transitology, consolidology “has no such obvious a patron saint” and “reflects a much more consistent preoccupation among students of politics with the conditions underlying regime stability.”<sup>112</sup>

Consolidologists seek to better understand political actors by adopting a primarily retrospective viewpoint. In the consolidation process, “unpredictable and often

courageous individuals take singular risks and make unprecedented choices, and adjust to analyzing a much more settled form of 'bounded rationality' that is both conditioned by capitalist class relations, long-standing cultural and ethnic cleavages, persistent status conflicts and international antagonisms, and staffed by increasingly professional politicians filling more predictable and less risky roles."<sup>113</sup> "Apprentice consolidologists" must navigate around two special problems: "separating idiosyncratic and contingent properties from eventual outcomes" and deciding "to what extent lessons taken from these past experiences can be applied to the present dilemmas of neo-democracies."<sup>114</sup> Despite these challenges, Schmitter and Karl asserted that both undertakings are important components of comparative political scholarship and as such, should continue to be pursued vigorously.

Why do transitologists and consolidologists want to incorporate postcommunist cases into existing comparative theories of democratic development? Adding post-communist cases to transition studies enable scholars of democratic transitions to "manipulate equations" so that variables do not outnumber the cases and "test their tentative conclusions in cultural and historical contexts quite different from those which generated them in the first place."<sup>115</sup> The "initial working assumption" of Schmitter and Karl "is that, provided the events or processes satisfy certain definitional requirements, their occurrence in Eastern Europe or the former Soviet Union should be considered, at least initially, analogous to events or processes happening elsewhere."<sup>116</sup> In turn, "all these cases of regime change- regardless of their geopolitical location or cultural context should (at least hypothetically) be regarded as parts of a common process of diffusion and causal interaction."<sup>117</sup> Schmitter and Karl stressed that only after an effort of

incorporation, and not before, can conclusions be drawn as to whether or not “concepts and hypothesis generated from the experiences of early comers should be regarded as ‘overstretched’ or ‘underverified’ when applied to latecomers.”<sup>118</sup>

Schmitter and Karl were not surprised by “specialists on the area” who stress the “cultural, ideological, and national peculiarities of these cases- especially the distinctive historical legacy bequeathed by totalitarian as opposed to authoritarian anciens regimes.”<sup>119</sup> Schmitter and Karl claimed that these specialists were resistant to “acultural extrapolation,” some of whom, “would bar all practicing transitologists from reducing their countries (now more numerous, diverse, and autonomous in their behavior) to mere pinpoints on a scatterplot or frequencies in a crosstabulation.”<sup>120</sup> Valerie Bunce is one of the specialists Schmitter and Karl alluded to.

The title of Bunce’s response asked “Should Transitologists Be Grounded?” Bunce argued that Schmitter and Karl “cannot justify their comparisons of east and south by simply stating that these cases meet ‘certain definitional requirements’ or by arguing that we should compare first and worry about comparability second.”<sup>121</sup> The issue of comparability is central to Bunce, particularly the justification that what is being compared is similar to enough to merit comparison. The “burden of proof,” as Bunce puts it, rests with self-described transitologists. According to Bunce, “all of this suggests . . . that the debate about transitology is in fact a debate among comparativists about comparative methodology.”<sup>122</sup> Thus, “to label critics area specialists, then, is to misrepresent the concerns that have been voiced about comparative studies of democratization, east and south.”<sup>123</sup>



For Bunce the crux of the debate is not between transitologists and area scholars, but whether differences between cases “constitute variations on a common process- that is, transitions from dictatorship to democracy- or altogether different processes- that is, democratization versus what could be termed postcommunism.”<sup>124</sup> According to Bunce, “Schmitter and Karl take the first position and their critics the second.”<sup>125</sup> “The differences between postcommunism and the transitions in the south are *far* more substantial than Schmitter and Karl’s discussion seems to imply, ” including the nature of authoritarian rule, mode of transition, international context of transition, and the transitional agenda.<sup>126</sup>

According to Bunce, state Socialism, the nature of authoritarian rule in postcommunist cases differs from previous transition experiences “along virtually every dimension that economists, sociologists, and political scientists recognize as important.”<sup>127</sup> As such, “there is no equivalent in the southern cases either to the diffusion process we saw in Eastern Europe in 1989 or thus to the role of international factors in ending the Communist Party’s political monopoly.”<sup>128</sup> Most striking to Bunce, however, was the transitional agenda. Democratization in the south could be reduced to “a process involving interactions among a handful of political elites.”<sup>129</sup> In sharp contrast, “what is at stake in Eastern Europe is nothing less than the creation of the very building blocks of the social order.”<sup>130</sup>

In responding to Bunce’s criticism, Karl and Schmitter claimed that Bunce mischaracterized their attitudes toward area scholars as one of hostility, when in fact Karl and Schmitter believed that they want to improve how area studies are conducted. Karl and Schmitter “observed that the field of communist studies- and especially its subfield

of Sovietology- has long suffered a partially self-imposed isolation from major social science disciplines.” Karl and Schmitter fundamentally disagreed “with those scholars steeped in this academic tradition who rely heavily (if not exclusively) on assumptions about the allegedly unique legacy of ‘totalitarianism,’ ‘Marxism-Leninism Stalinism,’ ‘Soviet political culture,’ etc. as an excuse for eschewing all comparison with other world regions- even though we fully agree that all countries and regions have some properties which are unique.”<sup>131</sup> Thus, Karl and Schmitter were concerned that “Bunce and others who a priori reject the application of theories generated elsewhere to ‘post-communist transitions’” will continue the aforementioned and “unfortunate tradition of isolation.”<sup>132</sup>

The second argument presented by Karl and Schmitter was that the “exclusive concentration on intra-regional studies can restrict the ability of area specialists to understand their own region or particular country.”<sup>133</sup> Karl and Schmitter stressed that “just because area studies were born in the untested notion that specific geocultural regions were somehow ‘unique’ does not mean this comfortable assumption should remain forever unexamined.”<sup>134</sup> The third and “most important” argument presented by Karl and Schmitter was that “a narrow insistence on intra-regional studies and the consequent exclusion of cross-regional comparisons could have a deleterious impact on the development of theory.”<sup>135</sup> Postcommunist cases are so essential to developing theories on democratic transitions because they enable the “testing, verifying, modifying and/or falsifying concepts and hypotheses that have been generated elsewhere.”<sup>136</sup>

Bunce’s final response to Karl and Schmitter explained why the author preferred intra-regional comparisons of postcommunist transformations over cross-regional comparisons. Bunce was “not convinced that we are safe in assuming that transitions

from authoritarianism in the south produce the same outcome as the processes involved in leaving state socialism.”<sup>137</sup> As a result, “there will be too much variance- in independent *and* dependent variables- to narrow down the field of explanation to a reasonable number of plausible factors.”<sup>138</sup>

There are some inherent problems with carrying out comparative research with a large number of cases. These problems include forcing “diverse countries into predetermined categories that do not fit them” or creating categories with such flexibility that every case fits, making it difficult to accurately interpret the relationships observed.<sup>139</sup> In turn, Bunce claimed that scholars had already “reaped most of the benefits to be had from comparing a very large number of cases involving transitions from authoritarian rule.”<sup>140</sup> This was evident in the differences that emerged between the east and south, which have “exposed the limitations of the transitions approach as developed by Phillippe C. Schmitter, Guillermo O’Donnell, Laurence Whitehead, Terry Lynn Karl, and others.”<sup>141</sup> For these reasons, Bunce concluded that intra-regional comparison “allow us to strike a useful balance between the benefits of comparison- that is, the ability to control some factors while exploring variation- and the benefits of working with good data and precise categories.”<sup>142</sup>

Scholars on both sides of this debate make valid points. Karl and Schmitter are justified in using postcommunist cases to test theories of democratic development derived from development experiences in Southern Europe and Latin America. Transitions to democracy from state socialism are in some ways very different than transitions from other types of authoritarian rule, but not so different that interregional comparison is completely futile. Transitions can vary both in the government that precedes the

transition and the type of government which results from a transition. Including a specific type of authoritarianism, state socialism, into comparative scholarship on transitions is useful, because this inclusion complements, rather than distorts, the study of transitions.

At the same time, Bunce is justified in arguing that the benefit from this type of research is inherently limited because experiences with authoritarianism were so different in Eastern Europe compared to Latin America. Rather than advocating comparative political scholarship be limited to intraregional comparison, however, I advocate the creation of hypotheses that test the effectiveness of predominant models of comparative democratic scholarship in capturing development experiences around the world. This would enable scholars to empirically evaluate existing models, rather than debating comparative methodology or questioning contrasting assumptions; both of which fail to offer a path toward resolving the debate.

After the debate between Bunce, Schmitter, and Karl, critics of the predominant focus on democratic transitions soon confronted a new question: should scholarship on democratic transitions be modified or abandoned? As the third wave spread from Eastern Europe to Africa, critics responded with varying degrees of skepticism toward the ability of the transitions approach to capture new and different development experiences. Two prominent critics of predominant understandings of democratic transitions were Michael McFaul and Thomas Carothers. McFaul sought to use development experiences to refine some predominant assumptions of transitions scholarship, while Carothers sought the outright rejection of what he calls the transitions paradigm.

Like Bunce, McFaul is a scholar of Eastern Europe and Central Asia whose work on democratic transitions illuminates several differences between postcommunist

transition and other transitions in the third wave. McFaul acknowledged that “the collapse of communism did not lead smoothly or quickly to the consolidation of liberal democracy in Europe and the former Soviet Union.”<sup>143</sup> Soon after independence, popular democratic movements occurred in the Baltic States, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, eastern Germany, and Western Czechoslovakia. “Quick and successful democratic breakthroughs were the exception,” McFaul explained, but over time the “gravitational force of the European Union” helped to pull non-democratic regimes toward democracy in countries such as Bulgaria, Croatia, and Romania.<sup>144</sup> The farther from Western Europe one travels, however, the weaker the democratic pull. Throughout most of Central Asia, for example, full-blown dictatorships entrenched themselves and semi-autocracies spread to other post-Soviet states, such as Russia.

Russian development experiences in the 1990’s were described by McFaul as a “protracted transition.”<sup>145</sup> McFaul argued that Russia did not fit Linz and Stepan’s criteria of consolidated democracy even “when Russia voters ratified a new constitution and elected a new parliament.”<sup>146</sup> “Whether the end of the transition is seen as 1993, 1996, or the year 2000,” McFaul explained, “the process has been a long one, especially when compared to the more successful transitions in Eastern Europe.”<sup>147</sup>

In fact, McFaul argued that “Russia experienced not one but three transitions.”<sup>148</sup> The first transition began with liberalization measures initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev. These measures led to new and independent political actors who desired more radical political change. Gorbachev and other reformers within the Soviet regime unsuccessfully tried to negotiate a transition agreement with moderates in Russia’s democratic movement. In turn, “regime hard-liners tried to roll back reform by decreeing emergency

rule in August 1991, an action that Russia's democratic forces succeeded in defeating."<sup>149</sup>

The failed coup in 1991 "created propitious conditions for another attempt at democratic transition."<sup>150</sup> Boris Yeltsin used this "unique window of opportunity to erect new democratic institutions by negotiating a new set of political rules with their communist opponents."<sup>151</sup> McFaul argued that the construction of a new constitution and subsequent elections could have helped to "legitimate a new democratic order," but Yeltsin "devoted very little time at all to designing new political institutions within Russia, focusing instead on dismantling the Soviet Union and initiating economic reform."<sup>152</sup>

Conflict between Yeltsin and parliament reached a violent crossroads in 1993, which led to a third Russian transition. The uprising "represented a real blow to popular support for Russian democracy" and the military was used to control the pro-Communist, anti-Yeltsin MP's. Despite this breakdown of institutions, a majority of Russians participated in subsequent elections, where a new constitution was ratified. Furthermore, major opposition parties, such as the Communist Party and Agrarian Party, participated in these elections. Throughout the rest of the decade, elections were competitive and became "the only game in town for winning political power," while the constitution "survived as the ultimate guide for resolving conflicts between the executive and legislative branches."<sup>153</sup>

McFaul explained the prolonged and conflict-ridden nature of Russia's transition as a product of the contested agenda of change:

In transitions from authoritarian rule in Latin America and Southern Europe, questions concerning the basic organization of the economy were generally off-

limits. Transitions from communist rule, on the other hand, placed economic questions squarely on the table, complicating the transition process. Multiethnic states like the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia also had to face a third issue- defining state borders. Soviet and Russian leaders therefore faced a more complex challenge in negotiating this triple transition than did their counterparts in Poland, let alone Spain. It was the intensity of opposing views on this three-part agenda that really prolonged the transition processes and fueled confrontation."<sup>154</sup>

In contrast to O'Donnell and Schmitter, McFaul argued that stalemate played a negative role in the Russian transition because "the relatively equal balance of power fostered conflict," rather than inducing compromise.<sup>155</sup> The protracted nature of democratic development in Russia created several outstanding obstacles that continue to hinder progress. These obstacles include "superpresidentialism, an underdeveloped party system, a disengaged civil society, the lack of an independent judiciary, and declining popular support for democracy."<sup>156</sup> Since 2000, however, "democracy gained new dynamism in the region in unexpected ways and places."<sup>157</sup> Significant progress in democratic development was made in Serbia, Georgia, and Ukraine. These "cases of democratic breakthrough resemble one another and differ from other democratic transitions or revolutions in four critical respects."<sup>158</sup>

First, the impetus for regime change was a fraudulent national election, not division between ruling elites, war, or economic crisis. Second, democratic challengers solely relied on extra constitutional means "to defend the existing, democratic constitution rather than to achieve a fundamental rewriting of the rules of the political game."<sup>159</sup> Third, challengers and incumbents made "competing and simultaneous claims to hold sovereign authority- one of the hallmarks of a revolutionary situation."<sup>160</sup> Fourth, "all of these revolutionary situations ended without mass violence."<sup>161</sup> Finally, few analysts predicted democratic breakthroughs. According to McFaul, "identifying the

common factors that contributed to success in these cases may be our best method of predicting future democratic breakthroughs not only in this region but perhaps in others as well.”<sup>162</sup> McFaul states several factors for success:

- 1) a semi-autocratic rather than fully autocratic regime;
- 2) an unpopular incumbent;
- 3) a united and organized opposition;
- 4) an ability quickly to drive home the point that voting results were falsified;
- 5) enough independent media to inform citizens about the falsified vote;
- 6) a political opposition capable of mobilizing tens of thousands or more; demonstrators to protest electoral fraud; and
- 7) divisions among the regime’s coercive forces.<sup>163</sup>

Both Bunce and McFaul use postcommunist experiences to illuminate conceptual problems with the focus of transition scholars. Bunce emphasizes methodological flaws in the transitions approach and advocates intraregional comparison, rather than interregional comparison, as undertaken by scholars of democratic transitions. McFaul, emphasizes variations in the nature of transitions within the former Soviet Union and between postcommunist cases and other third wave transitions. Both Bunce and McFaul present their research as a way to improve and correct how predominant scholars of democratic transitions conceptualize transition processes. A third major critic of prominent scholars of democratic transitions, Thomas Carothers, argued for “the end of transition paradigm,” rather than modification of methodological approaches or predominant models.<sup>164</sup>

Carothers observed that seven different regions converged in the last quarter of the twentieth century to reshape the international political landscape:

- 1) the fall of right-wing authoritarian regimes in Southern Europe in the mid-1970’s;
- 2) the replacement of military dictatorships by elected civilian governments across Latin America from the late 1970s through the late 1980s;



- 3) the decline of authoritarian rule in parts of East and South Asia starting in the mid-1980s;
- 4) the collapse of communist regimes in Eastern Europe at the end of the 1980s;
- 5) the breakup of the Soviet Union and the establishment of 15 post-Soviet republics in 1991;
- 6) the decline of one-party regimes in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa in the first half of the 1990s; and
- 7) a weak but recognizable liberalizing trend in some Middle Eastern countries in the 1990s.<sup>165</sup>

Carothers argued that “the causes, shape, and pace of these different trends varied considerably,” but the “striking tide of political change was seized upon with enthusiasm by the U.S. government and the broader U.S. foreign policy community” who regularly referred to Huntington’s third wave as “the worldwide democratic revolution.”<sup>166</sup>

Carothers argued that third wave transitions in Southern Europe and Latin America led democracy promoters to rapidly to embrace the analytic model of democratic transition. This model was principally derived “from their own interpretation of the patterns of democratic change taking place, but also to a lesser extent from the early works of the emergent academic field of ‘transitology,’ above all the seminal work of Guillermo O’Donnell and Philippe Schmitter.”<sup>167</sup> When the third wave spread to Eastern Europe and sub-Saharan Africa democracy promoters accepted the transitions model “as a universal paradigm for understanding democratization.”<sup>168</sup> Carothers concluded that the transitions paradigm “became ubiquitous in U.S. policy circles as a way of talking about, thinking about, and designing interventions in processes of political change around the world.”<sup>169</sup> The paradigm “stayed remarkably constant despite many variations in those patterns of political change and a stream of increasingly diverse scholarly views about the course and nature of democratic transitions.”<sup>170</sup>

Carothers acknowledged that the transitions paradigm “has been somewhat useful” in understanding a period of significant political upheaval.<sup>171</sup> Currently, however, “it is increasingly clear that reality is no longer conforming to the model.”<sup>172</sup> Carothers expressed concern with how “many countries that policy makers and aid practitioners persist in calling ‘transitional’ are not in transition to democracy, and of the democratic transitions that are under way, more than a few are not following the model.”<sup>173</sup> Carothers stated that “sticking with the paradigm beyond its useful life is retarding evolution in the field of democratic assistance” and argued that “it is time to recognize that the transitions paradigm has outlived its usefulness and to look for a better lens.”<sup>174</sup>

In laying out the argument, Carothers defined the transitions paradigm and then explained why the paradigm was no longer useful. Carothers used five core assumptions to define the transitions paradigm. The first core assumption is that “any country moving *away* from dictatorial rule can be considered a country in transition *toward* democracy.”<sup>175</sup> This was particularly pronounced in the first half of 1990’s, when many policy makers and aid practitioners labeled any former authoritarian country attempting liberalization a democratic transition, up to 100 countries, Carothers estimates. The second core assumption is that “democratization tends to unfold in a set sequence of stages.”<sup>176</sup> The first stage is called an “opening.” This is when political liberalization and democratic ferment cracks the ruling dictatorial regime. The second stage is a “breakthrough.” This is when the dictatorial regime collapses and a democratic infrastructure is established with institutions and elections. The third stage is called “consolidation.” This is the long process by which a democratic infrastructure makes a democratic political process a normal part of social interaction.

Carothers explained how the first two assumptions work in practice:

Democracy activists admit that it is not inevitable that transitional countries will move steadily on this assumed path from opening and breakthrough to consolidation. Transitional countries, they say, can and do go backward or stagnate as well as move forward along the path. Yet even the deviations from the assumed sequence that they are willing to acknowledge are defined in terms of the path itself. The options are all cast in terms of the speed and direction with which countries move on the path, not in terms of movement that does not conform with the path at all. And at least in the peak years of the third wave, many democracy enthusiasts clearly believed that, while the success of the dozens of new transitions was not assured, democratization was in some important sense a natural process, one that was likely to flourish once the initial break-through occurred. No small amount of democratic teleology is implicit in the transition paradigm, no matter how much its adherents have denied it.<sup>177</sup>

The third core assumption is that elections are deterministic. Carothers stated that democracy promoters do not believe that elections equal democracy, but promoters tended “to hold very high expectations for what the establishment of regular, genuine elections will do for democratization.”<sup>178</sup> This included the expectations that elections would give post dictatorial governments democratic legitimacy and the expectation that elections “broaden and deepen political participation and the democratic accountability of the state to its citizens.”<sup>179</sup> Thus, democracy promoters assume that “elections will be not just a foundation stone but a key generator over time of further democratic reforms.”<sup>180</sup>

The fourth core assumption is that economics, political history, institutional legacies, ethnicity, and culture are not major factors in democratic transitions. These structural factors are completely overshadowed by a focus on political actors. This was problematic for Carothers when “all that seemed to be necessary for democratization was a decision by a country’s political elites to move toward democracy and an ability on the part of those elites to fend off the contrary actions of remaining antidemocratic forces.”<sup>181</sup> The fifth core assumption is that “the democratic transitions making up the

third wave are being built on coherent, functioning states.”<sup>182</sup> In turn, “the creation of new electoral institutions, parliamentary reform, and judicial reform” are understood as modifications in an existing state framework.<sup>183</sup> As a result, democracy promoters “did not give significant attention to the challenge of society trying to democratize while it is grappling with the reality of building a state from scratch or coping with an existent but largely nonfunctional state.”<sup>184</sup> When the state was considered, democracy promoters assumed that democracy-building and state-building activities would mutually reinforce one another.

After conceptualizing the transitions paradigm, Carothers examined how development experiences around the world fit with the five core assumptions of the transitions paradigm. “Of the nearly 100 countries considered as ‘transitional’ in recent years,” Carothers explains, “only a relatively small number- probably fewer than 20- are clearly en route to becoming successful, well-functioning democracies or at least have made some democratic progress and still enjoy a positive dynamic of democratization.”<sup>185</sup> Most of these success stories are from Central Europe and the Baltics, such as Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Estonia, and Slovenia, with some from South America and East Asia, such as Chile, Uruguay, and Taiwan. By far, Carothers argued, the majority of third wave countries “have not achieved relatively well-functioning democracy or do not seem to be deepening or advancing whatever democratic progress they have made,” though most made some progress in liberalization efforts.<sup>186</sup> Thus, most transition countries “have entered a political gray zone.”<sup>187</sup>

In this gray zone, countries “have some attributes of democratic political life, including a limited political space for opposition parties and independent civil society, as

well as regular elections and democratic constitutions.”<sup>188</sup> At the same time, countries also “suffer from serious democratic deficits, often including poor representation of citizens’ interests, low levels of political participation beyond voting, frequent abuse of the law by government officials, elections of uncertain legitimacy, very low levels of public confidence in state institutions, and persistently poor institutional performance by the state.”<sup>189</sup>

The number countries between democracy and dictatorship led to a proliferation of different terms that sought to capture this dynamic, including semi-democracy, formal democracy, electoral democracy, pseudo-democracy and illiberal democracy. This led Carothers to make the following conclusion:

Useful though these terms can be, especially when rooted in probing analysis such as O’Donnell’s work on ‘delegative democracy,’ they share a significant liability: By describing countries in the gray zone as types of democracies, analysts are in effect trying to apply the transition paradigm to the very countries whose political evolution is calling the paradigm in question. Most of the ‘qualified democracy’ terms are used to characterize countries as being stuck somewhere on the assumed democratization sequence, usually at the start of the consolidation phase.<sup>190</sup>

In the gray zone, two broad political syndromes exist. The first is feckless pluralism. In this syndrome, countries “have significant amounts of political freedom, regular elections, and alternation of power between genuinely different political groupings,” but despite these features, “democracy remains shallow and troubled.”<sup>191</sup> Trouble stems from a general perception that elites are self-interested and corrupt, coupled with a lack of political participation beyond elections. As a result the public is “extremely unhappy about the political life of the country.”<sup>192</sup> This syndrome is most commonly found in Latin America.

The second political syndrome in the gray zone is dominant-power politics. In this syndrome, countries “have limited but still real political space, some political contestation by opposition groups, and at least most of the basic institutional forms of democracy.”<sup>193</sup> Still, “one political grouping- whether it is a movement, a party, an extended family, or a single leader- dominates the system in such a way that there appears to be little prospect of alternation of power in the foreseeable future.”<sup>194</sup> In contrast to feckless pluralism, a “key problem in dominant-power countries is the blurring of the line between the state and the ruling party (or ruling political forces).”<sup>195</sup> Elections are dubious, but not outright fraudulent. This syndrome is most commonly found in sub-Saharan Africa, the former Soviet Union, and the Middle East.

Given that most contemporary cases of transition did not fit with the transitions paradigm, Carother’s concluded that “it is time for the democracy-promotion community to discard the transitions paradigm.”<sup>196</sup> As a result, it is no longer appropriate to make any of the five core assumptions of the transitions paradigm. Carothers then presented some suggestions for where to go from here. First, democracy promoters should begin from some very different assumptions:

They should start by assuming that what is often thought of as an uneasy, precarious middle ground between full-fledged democracy and outright dictatorship is actually the most common political condition today of countries in the developing world and the postcommunist world. It is not an exceptional category to be defined only in terms of its not being one thing or the other; it is a state of normality for many societies, for better or worse. The seemingly continual surprise and disappointment that Western political analysts express over the very frequent falling short of democracy in ‘transitional countries’ should be replaced with realistic expectations about the likely patterns of political life in these countries.<sup>197</sup>

A second suggestion is that aid practitioners and policymakers rethink their analytic approach and predominant assumptions. Instead of asking “How is the transition

going?” scholars should ask “What is happening politically?”<sup>198</sup> This “more open-ended” approach helps to avoid “optimistic assumptions that often shunt the analysis down a blind alley.”<sup>199</sup> In turn, “democracy promoters need to focus in on the key political patterns of each country in which they intervene, rather than trying to do a little of everything according to a template of ideal institutional forms.”<sup>200</sup> Given the hopeful vision and conceptual order of the transitions paradigm, Carothers recognizes it is hard to let go of. At the same time, the usefulness of the paradigm has been exhausted and needs to be discarded.

A number of scholars directly responded to Carother’s piece in the *Journal of Democracy*, including Guillermo O’Donnell. O’Donnell agreed with many of Carother’s statements, but criticized how Carothers lumped together many works under the heading of “transition paradigm,” when in fact transitions scholarship is “a large and uneven body of work.”<sup>201</sup> O’Donnell then responded to each of Carother’s core assumptions. O’Donnell claimed that his past work explicitly stated that transitions do not necessarily lead to democracy and do not unfold in stages. If *Transitions From Authoritarian Rule* was truly a seminal work, then O’Donnell contends that observers should takes seriously the assumption that nothing in the transition process was predestined. “When Carothers complains about ‘democracy enthusiasts’ who hold the naïve view that democratization is inevitable,” O’Donnell agreed with him, but wondered who these people are.<sup>202</sup> In turn, O’Donnell suggested that Carothers explicitly state who proposed and adopted the transition paradigm.

O'Donnell and Carothers face greater substantive differences over the third core assumption, which stated that elections are deterministic. O'Donnell emphasized his agreement with the transitions paradigm on this particular point:

I do think that fair elections are extremely important. This is not because such elections will necessarily lead to wonderful outcomes. It is because these elections, per se and due to the political freedoms that must surround them if they are to be considered fair (and consequently, if the resulting regime is to be democratic), mark a crucial departure from the arbitrariness of authoritarian rule. When some fundamental political freedoms are respected, this means greater progress in relation to authoritarian rules and gives us ample reason to defend and promote fair elections.<sup>203</sup>

In response to the fourth core assumption, O'Donnell explained why he prioritized political factors in understanding the transition process. During the 1970's, predominant scholars believed that it took a long time for economic development and the maturation of political culture to occur. O'Donnell claimed that scholars of Latin America found this discouraging and engaged in "thoughtful wishing" by assuming that "purposive political action could be effective and that good analysis might be helpful to this end."<sup>204</sup> O'Donnell did not question the fifth assumption that third wave transitions develop within a coherent and functioning state.

As a whole, O'Donnell questioned the importance granted to his work and the coherence granted the larger body of literature. O'Donnell disagreed with the criticism of how transition scholars emphasize elections, but agreed that scholars have assumed a functioning state, and justified the optimistic approach of early transitions scholars as an understandable byproduct of the time period. O'Donnell embraced serious discussion of transitions, but concluded that the transitions scholarship "rests on grounds far more solid than the evanescent 'transition paradigm' that Carothers sketches."<sup>205</sup>



Like McFaul and Carothers, I am critical of assumptions made by predominant scholars of democratic transitions, such as Samuel Huntington, Guillermo O'Donnell, Phillipe Schmitter, Laurence Whitehead, Terry Karl, Juan Linz, and Alfred Stepan. My research seeks to engage the debate between Carothers and O'Donnell over the deterministic nature of elections in the transition process and broaden this electoral focus to include other institutions. My research also seeks to engage the debate over whether the predominant focus of transitions theory should be abandoned. I engage both debates by creating a testable hypothesis that measures the effectiveness of democratic elections and institutions in promoting democratic development. Like Bunce, I am skeptical that useful and accurate generalizations and theories can be constructed from development experiences in Latin America and Southern Europe, then applied to Eastern Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. Without in-depth, empirical analysis, however, I am not prepared to advocate the outright rejection of a predominant focus on democratic transitions. This is the purpose of this project.

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<sup>1</sup> Huntington (1984), 198, 214.

<sup>2</sup> Huntington (1984), 214.

<sup>3</sup> Huntington (1984), 214.

<sup>4</sup> Huntington (1984), 214.

<sup>5</sup> Huntington (1984), 196.

<sup>6</sup> Democratic consolidation is the process by which a transition to democracy culminates in a fully functioning democracy.

<sup>7</sup> Huntington (1992), 579.

<sup>8</sup> Huntington (1992), 579.

<sup>9</sup> Huntington (1992), 579.

<sup>10</sup> Huntington (1992), 579-580.

<sup>11</sup> Huntington (1992), 580.

<sup>12</sup> Huntington (1992), 580.

<sup>13</sup> Huntington (1992), 580.

<sup>14</sup> Huntington (1992), 580.

<sup>15</sup> Huntington (1992), 580.

<sup>16</sup> Huntington (1992), 580.

<sup>17</sup> Huntington (1992), 581.

<sup>18</sup> Huntington (1992), 581.

<sup>19</sup> Huntington (1992), 583.

<sup>20</sup> Huntington (1992), 583.

<sup>21</sup> Huntington (1992), 583.

<sup>22</sup> Huntington (1992), 583.

<sup>23</sup> Huntington (1992), 583.

<sup>24</sup> Huntington (1992), 583.

<sup>25</sup> Huntington (1992), 588.

<sup>26</sup> Huntington (1992), 590.

<sup>27</sup> Huntington (1992), 590.

<sup>28</sup> Huntington provides Argentina, Greece, and Panama as exceptions.

<sup>29</sup> Huntington (1992), 585.

<sup>30</sup> Huntington (1992), 585.

<sup>31</sup> Huntington provides East Germany and Grenada as exceptions.

<sup>32</sup> Huntington (1992), 586.

<sup>33</sup> Huntington (1992), 586.

<sup>34</sup> Huntington (1992), 586.

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- <sup>35</sup> Huntington (1992), 586.  
<sup>36</sup> Huntington (1992), 586.  
<sup>37</sup> Huntington's examples include Cuba, Nicaragua, Haiti, Iran.  
<sup>38</sup> O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), 3.  
<sup>39</sup> O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), 3.  
<sup>40</sup> O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), 3.  
<sup>41</sup> O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), 4.  
<sup>42</sup> O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), 4. Emphasis original.  
<sup>43</sup> O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), 4.  
<sup>44</sup> O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), 4.  
<sup>45</sup> O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), 5.  
<sup>46</sup> O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), 6.  
<sup>47</sup> O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), 15.  
<sup>48</sup> O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), 15.  
<sup>49</sup> O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), 15.  
<sup>50</sup> O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), 15.  
<sup>51</sup> O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), 15.  
<sup>52</sup> O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), 16. Emphasis original.  
<sup>53</sup> O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), 16.  
<sup>54</sup> O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), 16.  
<sup>55</sup> O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), 16.  
<sup>56</sup> O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), 18.  
<sup>57</sup> O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), 21.  
<sup>58</sup> O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), 23.  
<sup>59</sup> O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), 36.  
<sup>60</sup> O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), 36.  
<sup>61</sup> O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), 37.  
<sup>62</sup> O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), 37.  
<sup>63</sup> O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), 38.  
<sup>64</sup> O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), 38.  
<sup>65</sup> O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), 38.  
<sup>66</sup> O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), 39.  
<sup>67</sup> O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), 66.  
<sup>68</sup> O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), 72.  
<sup>69</sup> O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), 72.  
<sup>70</sup> O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), 55.  
<sup>71</sup> Linz and Stepan (1996), 6.  
<sup>72</sup> Linz and Stepan (1996), 6.  
<sup>73</sup> Linz and Stepan (1996), 6.  
<sup>74</sup> Linz and Stepan (1996), 7.  
<sup>75</sup> Linz and Stepan (1996), 11.  
<sup>76</sup> Linz and Stepan (1996), 8.  
<sup>77</sup> Linz and Stepan (1996), 7.  
<sup>78</sup> Linz and Stepan (1996), 7.  
<sup>79</sup> Linz and Stepan (1996), 8.  
<sup>80</sup> Linz and Stepan (1996), 10.  
<sup>81</sup> Linz and Stepan (1996), 10. Emphasis original.  
<sup>82</sup> Linz and Stepan (1996), 11.  
<sup>83</sup> Linz and Stepan (1996), 11.  
<sup>84</sup> Linz and Stepan (1996), 11.  
<sup>85</sup> Linz and Stepan (1996), 13.  
<sup>86</sup> Bunce (2003), 167.  
<sup>87</sup> Bunce (2003), 167.  
<sup>88</sup> Bunce (2003), 167. Parenthesis added.  
<sup>89</sup> Bunce (2003), 169.

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- <sup>90</sup> Bunce (2003), 169-170.
- <sup>91</sup> Bunce (2003), 170.
- <sup>92</sup> Bunce (2003), 171.
- <sup>93</sup> Bunce (2003), 171.
- <sup>94</sup> Bunce (2003), 171.
- <sup>95</sup> Bunce (2003), 171.
- <sup>96</sup> Bunce (2003), 173.
- <sup>97</sup> Bunce (2003), 173.
- <sup>98</sup> Bunce (2003), 172.
- <sup>99</sup> Bunce (2003), 172.
- <sup>100</sup> Bunce (2003), 173.
- <sup>101</sup> Bunce (2003), 173-174.
- <sup>102</sup> Bunce (2003), 174.
- <sup>103</sup> Bunce (2003), 174.
- <sup>104</sup> Bunce (2003), 175.
- <sup>105</sup> Bunce (2003), 174.
- <sup>106</sup> Bunce (2003), 174.
- <sup>107</sup> Schmitter and Karl (1994), 173-175.
- <sup>108</sup> Schmitter and Karl (1994), 173.
- <sup>109</sup> Schmitter and Karl (1994), 173.
- <sup>110</sup> Schmitter and Karl (1994), 174.
- <sup>111</sup> Schmitter and Karl (1994), 174.
- <sup>112</sup> Schmitter and Karl (1994), 175.
- <sup>113</sup> Schmitter and Karl (1994), 176.
- <sup>114</sup> Schmitter and Karl (1994), 176.
- <sup>115</sup> Schmitter and Karl (1994), 177.
- <sup>116</sup> Schmitter and Karl (1994), 178. Definitional requirements refer to verifying regime change has taken place.
- <sup>117</sup> Schmitter and Karl (1994), 178.
- <sup>118</sup> Schmitter and Karl (1994), 178.
- <sup>119</sup> Schmitter and Karl (1994), 177.
- <sup>120</sup> Schmitter and Karl (1994), 177.
- <sup>121</sup> Bunce (1995), 113.
- <sup>122</sup> Bunce (1995), 113.
- <sup>123</sup> Bunce (1995), 113.
- <sup>124</sup> Bunce (1995), 119.
- <sup>125</sup> Bunce (1995), 119.
- <sup>126</sup> Bunce (1995), 119. Emphasis original.
- <sup>127</sup> Bunce (1995), 119.
- <sup>128</sup> Bunce (1995), 120.
- <sup>129</sup> Bunce (1995), 121.
- <sup>130</sup> Bunce (1995), 121.
- <sup>131</sup> Bunce (1995), 966.
- <sup>132</sup> Bunce (1995), 966.
- <sup>133</sup> Bunce (1995), 967.
- <sup>134</sup> Bunce (1995), 968.
- <sup>135</sup> Bunce (1995), 968.
- <sup>136</sup> Bunce (1995), 971.
- <sup>137</sup> Bunce (1995), 980.
- <sup>138</sup> Bunce (1995), 980.
- <sup>139</sup> Bunce (1995), 980.
- <sup>140</sup> Bunce (1995), 981.
- <sup>141</sup> Bunce (1995), 981.
- <sup>142</sup> Bunce (1995), 981.
- <sup>143</sup> McFaul (2005), 5.

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- <sup>144</sup> McFaul (2005), 5.  
<sup>145</sup> McFaul (1999), 6.  
<sup>146</sup> McFaul (1999), 6.  
<sup>147</sup> McFaul (1999), 6.  
<sup>148</sup> McFaul (1999), 6.  
<sup>149</sup> McFaul (1999), 6.  
<sup>150</sup> McFaul (1999), 6.  
<sup>151</sup> McFaul (1999), 6.  
<sup>152</sup> McFaul (1999), 6.  
<sup>153</sup> McFaul (1999), 7.  
<sup>154</sup> McFaul (1999), 7.  
<sup>155</sup> McFaul (1999), 9.  
<sup>156</sup> McFaul (1999), 11.  
<sup>157</sup> McFaul (2005), 5.  
<sup>158</sup> McFaul (2005), 6.  
<sup>159</sup> McFaul (2005), 6.  
<sup>160</sup> McFaul (2005), 6.  
<sup>161</sup> McFaul (2005), 6.  
<sup>162</sup> McFaul (2005), 6.  
<sup>163</sup> McFaul (2005), 7.  
<sup>164</sup> Carothers (2002), 5.  
<sup>165</sup> Carothers (2002), 5.  
<sup>166</sup> Carothers (2002), 5-6. Carothers claims this rhetoric began in the early 1980's with President Ronald Reagan and Secretary of State George Schultz.  
<sup>167</sup> Carothers (2002), 6.  
<sup>168</sup> Bunce (2002), 6.  
<sup>169</sup> Carothers (2002), 6.  
<sup>170</sup> Carothers (2002), 6.  
<sup>171</sup> Carothers (2002), 6.  
<sup>172</sup> Carothers (2002), 6.  
<sup>173</sup> Carothers (2002), 6.  
<sup>174</sup> Carothers (2002), 6.  
<sup>175</sup> Carothers (2002), 6. *Emphasis original.*  
<sup>176</sup> Carothers (2002), 7.  
<sup>177</sup> Carothers (2002), 7-8.  
<sup>178</sup> Carothers (2002), 8.  
<sup>179</sup> Carothers (2002), 8.  
<sup>180</sup> Carothers (2002), 8.  
<sup>181</sup> Carothers (2002), 8.  
<sup>182</sup> Carothers (2002), 8.  
<sup>183</sup> Carothers (2002), 8.  
<sup>184</sup> Carothers (2002), 8.  
<sup>185</sup> Carothers (2002), 9.  
<sup>186</sup> Carothers (2002), 9.  
<sup>187</sup> Carothers (2002), 9.  
<sup>188</sup> Carothers (2002), 9.  
<sup>189</sup> Carothers (2002), 10.  
<sup>190</sup> Carothers (2002), 10.  
<sup>191</sup> Carothers (2002), 9.  
<sup>192</sup> Carothers (2002), 9.  
<sup>193</sup> Carothers (2002), 10.  
<sup>194</sup> Carothers (2002), 10-11.  
<sup>195</sup> Carothers (2002), 10-11.  
<sup>196</sup> Carothers (2002), 17.  
<sup>197</sup> Carothers (2002), 17.

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- <sup>198</sup> Carothers (2002), 17.  
<sup>199</sup> Carothers (2002), 17-18.  
<sup>200</sup> Carothers (2002), 17-18.  
<sup>201</sup> O'Donnell (2002), 6.  
<sup>202</sup> O'Donnell (2002), 8.  
<sup>203</sup> O'Donnell (2002), 7-8.  
<sup>204</sup> O'Donnell (2002), 10.  
<sup>205</sup> O'Donnell (2002), 11.

## CHAPTER III

### CASE STUDY OF UKRAINE

Ukraine is a land that predominantly consists of rolling plains and exceptionally fertile soil. Home to the earliest agricultural communities of Europe, Ukraine means “borderland.” This fits the territory which occupied the border between protecting forests and exposed steppe and currently lies on the edges of Asia and the Mediterranean. Given its location on main trade routes between Europe and Asia, the traditional Ukrainian villages have been exposed to competing cultures for centuries. Aside from Russia, Ukraine is the largest country in Europe, in terms of area, with a current population comparable to France. Ukraine is arguably among the richest countries in Europe in terms of natural resources because of its large amounts of coal and iron ore.<sup>1</sup>

Most contemporary accounts of Ukrainian history begin in the 7<sup>th</sup> century when Eastern Slavs settled in small villages on the right bank of Dnieper River. Villages gradually subdivided and expanded to form approximately fourteen tribal confederations in present-day Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia. Little is known about the political organization of this territory called *Rus*, but with no centralized authority, various tribes were most likely led by patriarchs who made decisions based on communal consensus. Though a ruling class emerged (*kniazi*), land and livestock was widely understood to be communal property of extended families. As a result, disparities between property holdings were minimal.<sup>2</sup>

Historians debate which of the three East Slavic peoples were the original and dominant in *Rus*. Some Ukrainian scholars acknowledge a shared origin among the groups, but contend that subsequent development was unique. Others contend that

Ukraine predates Russia. Russian textbooks state that Kiev is the “mother of all Russian cities” and thus, the city is currently located “abroad” because of mere formality.

Nationalist Belorussian historians portray Rus as a loose federation with significant autonomy for certain principalities.<sup>3</sup> Regardless of these scholarly divisions, all three groups of Eastern Slavic peoples clearly share historical and cultural roots that date back several centuries to a time of great prestige and prosperity.

By the middle of the 11<sup>th</sup> century Kievan Rus was “a mighty political conglomerate well on the way to creating one of the most sophisticated societies and flourishing economies in Europe at the time.”<sup>4</sup> Location was critical in the development of the territory. Kiev was an important transit point between Varangian settlements to the North and the Byzantine Empire to the South. Early Kievan princes were relentless in their pursuit of wealth. The conquests of Oleh, the first historically verifiable ruler Kiev, were “a successful attempt to unite and control both Kiev and Novgorod, the main depots of the ‘Greek’ trade route.”<sup>5</sup>

Kievan princes controlled “a commercial enterprise composed of loosely affiliated towns whose garrisons collected tribute and maintained, in a rough sort of way, public order.”<sup>6</sup> Still, political organization was minimal and distances between territories were substantial. As a result, regionalism prohibited the formation of a unified political establishment and thus interaction between rulers and the ruled was limited aside from occasional payments of tribute ensured by the threat and exercise of brute force. With the death of Sviatoslav in 972, Kievan Rus underwent “the first outbreak of what was to become a chronic, debilitating political malady: internecine struggle among members of the Riurikid dynasty for supreme power in the realm.”<sup>7</sup>



Volodymyr the Great Christianized Rus in 988. Volodymyr sensed traditional animism and paganism had run its course and considered Christianity to be a more sophisticated way to express spiritual, social, and political values. Both Islam and Christianity were considered, the dominant religions of the lands Kiev wanted to generate the tightest commercial contacts. Folklore suggests that Islam was nixed because its prohibition of alcohol and the splendor of religious services in Byzantine Christianity. Christianity had roots in Kiev, evident in Prince Olha's conversion decades earlier. Volodymyr demanded the hand of Anne in marriage, the sister of Byzantine co-emperors, after helping to quell a rebellion in 987. To make the best of what was viewed as a bad situation, the Byzantines demanded Volodymyr accept Christianity, which he did in 988. Determined that subject should quickly convert, baptisms were held in mass and pagan idols were destroyed, despite resistance. Importing an organizational structure straight from Constantinople, the political prestige of the ruling empire was greatly enhanced under Volodymyr. Kievan Rus was hence aligned with the Christian West rather than the Islamic East.

The long tenure of Yaroslav the Wise (1036 to 1054) is considered the high point of Kievan Rus. Yaroslav extended an already expansive territorial realm, married himself and family members in other European dynasties, created over 400 churches in Kiev, and codified a system of laws called *Ruska pravada* (Rus justice). Kievan Rus transformed itself from isolated, forest bound tribes crossed with Scandinavian warrior-merchants to an increasingly wealthy and urbanized society.<sup>8</sup> In less than a century, however, several factors would diminish the influence of Kiev as the dominant center of Kiev and ultimately lead to the end of the dynasty in 1132.

Like many medieval empires in Europe, Kievan Rus lacked the technical and institutional means to keep power effectively consolidated among widespread territories. Unity was achieved when males of the Riurikid dynasty agreed on power sharing, but transitions of power were commonly characterized by fratricidal wars. Over time princely clans developed deeper roots in patrimonial lands as “it became increasingly apparent to them that their future was tied to their hereditary holdings and not to Kiev, which was continually being contested.”<sup>9</sup> During the 12<sup>th</sup> century principalities became increasingly more autonomous and in doing so, developed independent political and economic existences. This weakened the resources of Kiev, but did not diminish competition for control of the city. Twenty-four princes ruled Kiev between 1146 and 1246 on forty-seven different occasions.

Meanwhile, the importance of trade between Varangians and Greeks declined as “enterprising Italian merchants established direct links between Byzantium, Asia Minor, and the Middle East on the one hand, and Western Europe on the other, thus bypassing Kiev in the process.”<sup>10</sup> This development had a devastating impact on Kiev’s economy as did the pillaging of Constantinople by Crusaders and the beginning of a sharp period of decline in Baghdad. With the loss of two major trading partners, tensions festered among different economic classes in Kiev, which caused frequent upheavals.

The deathblow to Kiev ultimately came from outside intruders. The Mongols, referred to as Tatars in Eastern Europe, were nomads along the northwestern borders of China in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. United by Temujin, who deemed himself Jenghiz Khan or Khan of Khans, the Mongols became a powerful military force that attacked sedentary civilizations in the region. Though limited in number, at most 120,000 to 140,000

warriors, Mongols were “extremely mobile, well organized, and superbly led.”<sup>11</sup> This was evident in the conquering of China, Central Asia, and Iran. In 1237, the Mongol army, led by Batu, the grandson of Jenghiz Khan, first approached the perimeters of Kievan Rus and in 1240 took Kiev.

Though Prince Mykhailo fled, residents put up a strong resistance under a military commander by the name of Dmytro who was dispatched by Danylo of Galicia. After a “long and bitter siege,” the Mongols penetrated the city walls, fighting broke out from street to street, house to house, and in early December of 1240, the city fell. The story of Kievan Rus is important to understanding the common historical roots shared by Ukrainians and Russians and appreciating the fact that Ukrainian ancestors were once among the elite of European civilization, even though many Westerners today label Ukraine as “backward” politically, economically, and socially. Afterwards, however, Ukraine experienced centuries of foreign invasion and occupation, which has bred contemporary concern for the protection of Ukrainian culture and identity, particularly in the age of post-Soviet globalization.

After the Mongol invasion Kievan Rus was divided between Poland, Lithuania, and Hungary, while Muscovy became a power in its own right.<sup>12</sup> Territories around Kiev maintained much of their legal autonomy until 1569. In doing so, much of the social structure, including the Orthodox religion, remained in place. The Cossacks resisted Polish rule, particularly the threat of enserfment, and established a quasi-state called the Hetmanate after the Great Rebellion in 1648.<sup>13</sup> Today, Ukrainian Cossacks are revered as a militant group of fierce warriors resistant to foreign domination and depicted in some Ukrainian textbooks as the forefathers of democracy.

Western Ruthenian territories were absorbed by the Habsburg Empire in the 1770's where "relatively tolerant Austrian rule, and the intensity of the local competition with the Poles, allowed the west Ruthenians to develop a strong sense of district identity by 1914, and during the course of the nineteenth century, to settle on the name of 'Ukrainian.'"<sup>14</sup> The Ukrainian national movement developed under "semiclandestine conditions during the latter phases of (Soviet) imperial rule, mainly after political restraints were relaxed in the wake of the 1905 revolution."<sup>15</sup> The first Ukrainian political groups include the Society of SS. Cyril and Methodius, which developed in the 1840's and *Hromada* (community), which developed in the 1860's. With a small intelligentsia and illiterate peasantry, efforts to establish independence in opportunities that arose after 1917 were unsuccessful.

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics ended attempts for Ukrainian independence. The constitution of this newly created multi-republic federation formally limited Soviet intervention in domestic affairs and protected the right of member states to secede, while authority over foreign affairs, the military, commerce, and transportation ultimately resided in Moscow. Essentially, however, Moscow exercised extensive authority over all levels of government via the military, secret police, and Communist Party apparatus. The Communist Party of Ukraine, for example, declared itself to be a subordinate part of a single Russian Communist Party, subservient in all affairs.

At the same time, Ukraine did enjoy a brief period of cultural revival in the 1920's, prior to Stalin's consolidation of power. This led to "brutal clampdown from 1929-30, a halt to further Ukrainization in 1933, and worst of all, the Great Famine of 1932-3, in which an estimated five to seven million perished."<sup>16</sup> Reform policies targeted

*kulaks* (wealthy peasants) in efforts to redistribute wealth through progressive taxation, seizing of property, and even deportation. Resistance to collectivization took the form of revolts, cattle slaughters, and machinery destruction and was typically met with increased delivery quotas. By the outbreak of World War II, industrial production quadrupled, industrial workers tripled, and urban residents grew to over one-third of the overall population. Heavy industry was the primary focus of industrialization, with a regional bias toward Eastern Ukraine, which is still the center of industry today.

The 1930's also witnessed a series of purges throughout the USSR in which the vast majority of Ukrainian dissidents were killed. As a result, there was no national uprising in 1941, when the Germans invaded. Favorable sentiments toward shedding Soviet occupation quickly faded with the brutal nature of Nazi rule. After the war, Lviv and Kiev became the main hubs of a dissident movement that developed in the 1960's among a new generation of cultural intelligentsia. In three waves of suppression (1965-66, 1972-73, 1976-80), the KGB eliminated this movement. Demographically, 20<sup>th</sup> century occupation made Ukraine more homogenous as large Polish, German, and Jewish minorities were deported or killed in the holocaust. At the same time, Russians grew to over 20% of the population by the fall of the Soviet Union.<sup>17</sup>

In April of 1986, the worst nuclear accident in history occurred in Chernobyl. The long-term impact of this disaster is still being felt today. That same year, Gorbachev initiated a campaign of perestroika (*restructuring*) and glasnost (*openness*). Ukraine proceeded cautiously with the advent of these reforms, in contrast to mass movements experienced in the Baltics and Transcaucasian Republics. The spontaneous creation of unofficial groups began in 1987, mostly in Lviv and Kiev. A year later mass mobilization

emerged in the public demonstrations and the establishment of national organizations. National revival became widespread and overt in 1989. National leaders (re)emerged, mostly cultural activists and dissidents of 1960's. In the fall of 1989, the Ukrainian language gained official status as the national language. Intellectual attention toward history and religion resurfaced, in addition to new social movements centered upon economic and environmental concerns.

The first contested elections for the Supreme Soviet, the parliamentary body in Soviet Ukraine, were held on March 4, 1990. This ended the Communist Party's monopoly of power. A strong democratic block formed by May, which was aided by defections of Communist party members on various issues. Leadership positions rapidly shifted and Leonid Kravchuk, the former secretary of ideology in the Communist Party of Ukraine, was elected chairman of the Supreme Soviet. Kravchuk was a pragmatic transitional leader who navigated between the Communist majority and democratic opposition.

On July 16<sup>th</sup>, 1990 sovereignty was declared. Full independence of Ukraine was declared on August 24, 1991 after the failed coup in Moscow in August of 1991. During the emergency session which established independence, MP's brought a huge blue and yellow banner into the chamber, the traditional colors of Ukraine, to symbolize their break with the Soviet Union. The Rada passed a new citizenship law in October and state boundary law in November. This laid the foundation for the transformation of Ukraine from a union republic to an independent state. A national referendum on independence was held on December 1<sup>st</sup> along with the first presidential election.<sup>18</sup> Voter turnout was

84% and the referendum on independence passed with 90% support. Kravchuk was elected the first president of independent Ukraine and took office December 5<sup>th</sup>.

Ukraine's statement of independence actually consisted of two documents, a Declaration of State Sovereignty and Law of Economic Independence of Ukraine. This reflects the multifaceted nature of the transition process. These documents stated that the Verkhovna Rada (Supreme Council), formerly called the Supreme Soviet, was the only body that could speak on behalf of the Ukrainian people, and that the territory formerly called the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic was indivisible within its current boundaries. Seeking to emphasize economic, as well as political independence, independent Ukraine expressed its intentions to create independent price, customs, and fiscal systems. Independent Ukraine claimed responsibility for its budget and reserved the right to introduce its own currency. The country sought to promote national-cultural development of the Ukrainian people, protect the right of cultural development for all nationalities within the country, and create its own armed forces and domestic security services.

Future foreign policy was to be neutral, without participation in military blocks, while adhering to anti-nuclear principles of never accepting, making, or purchasing nuclear weapons. The most pressing task facing the new government was deciding on Ukraine's relationship with former Soviet neighbors. On December 8, 1991 the government leaders from Ukraine, Russia, and Belarus signed the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in Minsk. The treaty eliminated the political existence of the Soviet Union and recognized that all spheres of common activity between the three

nations would be conducted on the basis of equal rights. Later that month, 11 of the 15 former Soviet republics joined CIS on the same terms.

On June 28, 1996 a new democratic constitution was ratified, nearly five years after independence. This gave Ukraine the dubious distinction of being the last former Soviet republic to do so. The historic document was the product of intense negotiations between Rada deputies, ending in an all-night, sixteen-hour session without breaks. Ukraine was constituted as a “sovereign and independent, democratic, social, law-based state.” The political system was a “republic” in which state power is “exercised on the principles of its division into legislative, executive, and judicial power.”<sup>19</sup> The “main duty of the state” is to “affirm and ensure human rights and freedoms.”<sup>20</sup> These freedoms include the right to:

life, freedom, thought, speech, religion, association, assembly, petition  
property, entrepreneurial activity, strike, rest, social protection, housing  
sufficient standard of living, safe environment, free access to information,  
marriage, education, expression, compensation for damages, to know rights, legal  
assistance

According to the Constitution, the “will of the people is exercised through elections.”<sup>21</sup> Citizens at least 18 years of age are eligible to vote. Legislative power is vested in the Rada. The Rada consists of 450 National Deputies who are elected by secret ballot to four-year terms based on universal, equal, and direct suffrage. Deputies must be citizens at least twenty-one years of age with the right to vote and residence in Ukraine for five years prior to election. Rada elections are conducted the last Sunday of March in the fourth year of the term. Deputies must take an oath that swears allegiance to Ukraine, protection of the sovereignty and independence of Ukraine, and compliance with the Constitution and laws of Ukraine. Deputies are not to be “held criminally liable, detained



or arrested without the consent of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine.”<sup>22</sup> Regular sessions of the Rada begin on the first Tuesday of February and on the first Tuesday of September each year. Meetings are to be conducted openly, unless the majority of the Rada decide to hold a closed session. According to the Constitution, the Rada has thirty-six enumerated powers, which include making laws, approving the budget, declaring war, impeaching the President, and making appointments, such as the members of the Central Electoral Commission.

The President is the head of the state and “guarantor of state sovereignty and territorial indivisibility of Ukraine, the observance of the Constitution of Ukraine and human and citizens’ rights and freedoms.”<sup>23</sup> Presidents are elected by secret ballot for five-year terms on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage. To be eligible for election one must be a citizen who is at least 35 years old, have the right to vote, resided in Ukraine ten years prior to Election Day, and have command of the state language (Ukrainian). Presidents are limited to two consecutive terms. Once elected, the President elect must take an oath administered by the Chairman of the Constitutional Court that swears allegiance to Ukraine and pledges to protect the sovereignty of Ukraine and the rights of citizens, as well as provide for the welfare of the Ukrainian people. According to the Constitution, the President has 31 enumerated powers, which include signing bills into laws, representing the state in international relations, commanding the armed forces, and appointing diplomats, the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

The Cabinet of Ministers is the highest government body in the executive branch. The Cabinet is composed of the “Prime Minister, First Vice Prime Minister, three Vice Prime Ministers and the Ministers.”<sup>24</sup> The Prime Minister is appointed by the President

and approved by one-half of the Rada. The President, based on the submission of the Prime Minister, also appoints other Cabinet members. The Cabinet has ten enumerated powers including implementation of domestic and foreign policy of the State and the execution of the Constitution and the laws of Ukraine.

In Ukraine, justice is “administered exclusively by the courts.”<sup>25</sup> The Constitutional Court and courts of general jurisdiction undertake judicial proceedings. To become a judge on a general court, one must be at least twenty-five years of age, resided in Ukraine for at least ten years, command the state language, have a legal education, and have at least three years work experience in law.<sup>26</sup> Judges are prohibited from taking part in any political activity, including membership in political parties and trade unions.

There are nine main principles that guide judicial proceedings:

- 1) Legality
- 2) Equality before the law
- 3) Ensuring that guilt is proved
- 4) Freedom to present and debate evidence
- 5) Prosecution undertaken by State representative
- 6) Ensuring right of accused to defend himself or herself
- 7) Public trial
- 8) Right to appeal
- 9) Court decisions are binding

The Supreme Court is the highest court of the courts of general jurisdiction. The Constitutional Court is the “sole body of constitutional jurisdiction in Ukraine” and “provides the official interpretation of the Constitution of Ukraine and the laws of Ukraine.”<sup>27</sup> The Court consists of eighteen judges. The President, Rada, and Congress of Judges, each appoints six judges. To become a judge on the Constitutional Court, one must be at least 40 years of age, have resided in Ukraine for the last 20 years, command

the state language, have a legal education, and have at least ten years work experience in law. Court members are appointed for nine-year terms without the right to serve a “repeat term.”<sup>28</sup> The Chairman of the Court is elected by secret ballot to one three-year term at a special meeting of Court members. The authority of the Court is twofold: 1) to determine the constitutionality of the actions of the President, Cabinet, and Rada; and 2) to interpret the meaning of the Constitution.<sup>29</sup>

Ukraine is a federal republic with both centralized and decentralized powers. The Constitution defines local self-government as the right of a territorial community to “independently resolve issues of local character within the limits of the Constitution and the laws of Ukraine.”<sup>30</sup> District and oblast councils are bodies of local government that represent the interests of villages, settlements, and cities. Council members are elected by secret ballot to four-year terms on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage. Council members elect a chairman to their respective council, whether district or oblast, to lead the executive staff of the council. The State participates in the creation of local budgets and “financially supports local self-government.”<sup>31</sup>

Serhii Holovaty, one of the principal authors of the Constitution, stated that by adopting this Constitution Ukraine had “joined the league of European nations- nations that have chosen democracy and freedom, and there is no going back.”<sup>32</sup> Holovaty gave up his seat in the Rada, as required in the new Constitution, to retain his duties as Justice Minister. Other politicians were less inclined to follow the newly instituted constitutional procedure. Rada Chairman, Oleksandr Moroz was a key player in efforts to force politicians who held various political positions to choose one. Moroz took several politicians to court, such as Anton Butenko, First Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs. A

majority of Rada deputies took an oath of allegiance to uphold the Constitution on July 12<sup>th</sup>, 1996, but 63 deputies did not. 57 of these deputies were from the Communist faction. Communists argued that the Constitution and corresponding oath of allegiance were implemented after they were elected, which precluded deputies from being bound to it during the current convocation.

The new Constitution constituted a significant step in solidifying democracy as the formal political system in Ukraine. The major challenge since ratification has been the application and adherence to the delineated powers and rights. Experience has shown that formal political power in independent Ukraine has had less to do with constitutional provisions and much more to do with the allocation of resources. Listing dozens of freedoms that government may not infringe on makes sense, considering the generations of foreign rule that repeatedly abused human rights, but constituting Ukraine in an extensive set of ideas with which the country had little experience with has proved very difficult to implement. The political process has yet to fulfill constitutional obligations, creating apathy and cynicism for much of the first fifteen years since independence

The foundation for real political power in independent Ukraine was set by the massive transformation from a Soviet-controlled command economy to a capitalist economy. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ukraine inherited an economy based in heavy industry and dependent on outdated technology. Ukraine's primary challenge since independence has been to diversify its economy and reduce dependence on industries like steel, coal, and weaponry, which have become even less viable after traditional export markets broke down. Significant restructuring, however, has been impeded by vested bureaucratic and economic interests. These interests seek to maintain elements of central

planning for personal benefit, creating a lack of consensus among political and business elites regarding the direction and scope of economic reform. As a result, diversification progressed gradually at best.

Oligarchy is essential to understanding post-Soviet economic development in the Ukraine. The meaning of “oligarch” in the contemporary Ukrainian context is slightly different than political-historical understandings of oligarchy as rule of the wealthy. Ukrainian oligarchs are individuals that serve as the primary owners of major conglomerates and have direct access and influence with the most powerful political leaders. Oligarchic groups developed with the end of Communism, though several members previously served as Communist officials. These groups largely formed along regional lines and built their power within a system that enabled oligarchy, through a powerful presidency at the head of government, and a competitive economic structure, with no foundation of law.

Commodity trading was the main source of revenue for oligarchs in the first decade after the fall of the Soviet Union. Commodities, like gas, coal, and steel, were highly lucrative through the use of fraud and stealing additional profit from government assistance. This practice took a variety of forms, often simultaneously. The state granted regional monopolies to varying oligarchs for gas sales. Oligarchs would buy gas at state controlled prices and resell the gas at much higher, market-driven prices. Many oligarchs would refrain from actually paying for their purchases; some even gave these bills to the state, as in the case of Russian gas imports. When oligarchs paid, sizeable discounts were given through barter deals, often reducing tax bills with deliveries in kind. Oligarchs also

benefited from many legal exemptions that allowed them to avoid paying taxes all together and government subsidies which helped finance their enterprises.

Regional oligarchic groups expanded and consolidated power in a variety of ways. Oligarchs compromised the idea of divided government by simultaneously developing close personal connections with the president and constituting large party factions in the Rada. This enabled oligarchs to control significant government officials across many offices in government. Oligarchic control over formal powers was most damaging to democratic development in the law enforcement sector. Oligarchs owned media empires, which enabled them to manifest extraordinary leverage over government and society outside of formal government structures. Those involved changed yearly based on standing with the president. Violent crime was common given the amount of money that rested on just one gas contract. Gas oligarchs, such as Ahati Bragin and Yevhen Scherban from Donetsk, traveled with armies of up to 150 bodyguards. Bragin (in 1995) and Scherban (in 1996) were both murdered, most likely by competitors, though like many mysterious murders, these cases remain unresolved.

Kravchuk's flexible positions toward democratic reform enabled him to provide a moderating and compromising presence among both conservatives and reformists. Substantive political change was limited, though formal sovereignty and relations with the West were established. Kravchuk faced significant pressure from Russia to retain common military forces and currency within the CIS, but refused. Kravchuk's prime focus was nation building, though the president is most remembered for his economic policy, described by some as "neglect."<sup>33</sup> Kravchuk failed to prevent corruption from dominating Ukraine's privatization process. A small number of individuals made a

fortune, while prosperity was elusive for most. Meanwhile, Ukraine's inflation rate reached an astronomical 10,000%. The demise of the Black Sea Steamship Company constituted a symbolic low of the Kravchuk era. The largest merchant fleet in the world was secretly sold to foreign companies, mostly for fake debts.

In 1993, the Rada decided to hold a public referendum or vote of confidence in itself and President Kravchuk. If either should not gain a majority of electoral support new elections would be held. As the referendum date approached, however, the Rada decided to forgo the referendum and hold new elections in March of 1994 for the Rada and in June of 1994 for the president. These were the first democratically contested parliamentary elections in Ukraine since November 1917 when elections were held for the All-Russian Constituent Assembly.<sup>34</sup> Deputies had faced steady pressure to resign and hold new elections since the 1990 elections were characterized by widespread intimidation of opposition candidates and their supporters. The Rukh movement, for example, had no access to mass media were unable to contest half of the 450 constituencies because of obstructionist efforts by the Communist Party.

To guide the new elections, the Rada passed a new electoral law on November 18, 1993. Every citizen 18 years old and over was able to vote for one of the 450 deputies in the Rada via secret ballot. In contrast to other former Soviet republics, like Russia and Poland, the electoral system was based entirely on single member constituencies. Candidates were required to be Ukrainian citizens, at least 25 years old, who lived in Ukraine for at least two years prior to the election. Candidates could be nominated by three different sources: their constituency, their workplace, or their party. To be nominated by one's party was the most difficult. This was evident in the legal

requirements. For example, prospective candidates had to generate a list of the first 100 members in the regional party convocation, including occupation, address, passport number and signature. Requirements were similar in nature for other nomination methods, but varied in degree. For example, the necessary list of supporting voters and personal background information in a constituency was only ten.

Voting procedures required voters to cross out each candidate the voter did not support on a paper ballot. If these procedures were not followed, the ballot was discarded. This was reminiscent of the preceding Soviet voting process where voters would receive a ballot with one name on it and then drop it the voting box without having to enter a voting booth. The cross-out method proved to be cumbersome in a new voting context with many candidates on a single ballot. To be elected, at least half of the registered votes in the respective constituency must participate and the candidate must receive at least half of the votes cast. A run off between the top candidates was necessary if the first threshold was met, but not the second. Once again, at least half of the voters in a constituency must participate in the run off for the results to be valid. If at least half of registered voters in a constituency failed to participate in both elections, entirely new elections would be held.

The new electoral law faced criticism on many fronts. Center-right party leaders were disappointed that the new law did nothing to stimulate the development of new political parties. In responding to criticism, Ihor Tsylyuko, Secretary of the Central Electoral Commission, explained that the demands placed on the registration process for political parties was to ensure that proportional representation was not abused by many parties who were quickly conceived just for the election. When proportional



representation was removed from the law, party requirements sloppily remained in place.<sup>35</sup>

Party development faced many obstacles in Ukraine, including the institutional legacy of communism, the psychological legacy of communism, regional differentiation, and burdensome electoral laws.<sup>36</sup> Scholars point to survey evidence compiled in the early 1990's that showed parties were largely unpopular and largely unknown by the Ukrainian public. Some claimed that Ukrainians possessed a "party allergy."<sup>37</sup> In 1992, for example, only 9% of deputies in the Rada declared any type of party affiliation. At the same time, political parties performed much stronger than anticipated in the 1993 elections. Party candidates constituted just 11% of the total number of registered candidates, but won 40% of the total seats in the Rada. The success of party candidates in the 1994 Rada elections was particularly impressive considering how relevant electoral laws hindered party development. By the 1998 Rada elections, many obstacles to party development were removed. The cumbersome 1993 Electoral Law<sup>38</sup> was replaced with a mixed system that coupled single-member districts with proportional representation.

At the same time, significant social cleavages were tied to specific regions, which made it very difficult for genuinely national parties to develop. The three dominant cleavages are ethnicity, language, and religion. The Russian minority in Ukraine consists of about 11 million people, who primarily reside in the east and south. Ethnic Ukrainians in these regions speak Russian, in line with Russification policies under Soviet rule, while ethnic Ukrainians in the west speak Ukrainian. Given that western regions were absorbed into the Soviet Union later than other regions, there now exists a more nationally-orientated population compared to the country at large. Religiously, western

Ukrainians largely belong to the Greek Catholic Uniate Church, whereas most Ukrainians at large belong either to the Russian or Ukrainian Orthodox churches.<sup>38</sup> These cleavages are evident in electoral politics. National democratic parties, such as Rukh and the Ukrainian Republican Party, receive most of their support from western oblasts, whereas leftist parties, such as the Communist Party and Socialist Party of Ukraine, receive most of their support from eastern oblasts and rural central oblasts. Since independence, the industrialized and heavily populated leftist parties of the east have been most successful in parliamentary elections.

A second criticism of the 1993 electoral law was that turnout barriers were too high to be realistically met. Critics of the party in power suggested these barriers were deliberately put in place to obstruct a smooth electoral process and prolong the tenure of incumbents in the meantime. A third criticism was that Central and District Electoral Commissions had too much power. Commissions were appointed by leaders of the Rada and oblast councils, respectively. Responsibilities included registering candidates, printing campaign literature, organizing state-run media, counting ballots, validating election procedures, interpreting electoral law, settling electoral disputes, and officially releasing the results. In handling disputes, the Central Commission (CEC) could overrule a District Commission (DEC). Only the Supreme Court could overrule the Central Commission, but the Supreme Court was practically nonexistent in 1994 because the Rada had not determined how to elect its members.

These criticisms illuminate several problems surrounding post-independence electoral procedures in Ukraine. Former Communist elites had a significant impact on the conduct of new democratically-contested elections. This had a negative impact on

democracy building activities, such as the construction of a stable party system centered upon the creation of stable electoral coalitions that could persist from one election to the next. New electoral procedures concentrated power in electoral commissions who were appointed by leaders from the party in power in the Rada. A lack of institutional oversight emerged from the Rada's failure to determine how members of the Supreme Court should be chosen. As a result, the power to settle disputes resided with the same commissions who were largely responsible for administering the elections. This runs counter to the purpose of divided government in democratic systems, which seeks to promote competition among self-interested individuals to ensure one group or component of government does not abuse power.

5, 833 candidates registered for the election with an average of 13 candidates per constituency. The highest number of candidates in one constituency was 31 in Kiev. Voter groups nominated 63.3% of candidates. Work collectives nominated 26.7% of candidates, while just 11% of candidates were nominated by political parties.<sup>39</sup> Half of the previous seats were uncontested. This, coupled with the fact that the largest age demographic elected was 41-50 (39%), suggests that a process of generational change was underway. Candidates tended to be more educated than the rest of the population with engineers, lawyers, economists, and educators being the most popular professions. About 75% of candidates entered the race as independents. The lack of clear party labels and high number of candidates made it very difficult for voters to make informed choices.

Survey evidence indicates that the electorate had serious concerns. The Kiev International Institute of Sociology found that economic crisis, relations with Russia, and

crime, were the three most important issues facing the electorate. The next tier of issues included the security of the Ukrainian state, status of the Russian language, nuclear weapons in Ukraine, and the future of the Crimea and Black Sea Fleet.<sup>40</sup> Only a small number of voters were able to gain a national perspective on the electoral process however. These voters had the resources to extrapolate consistent themes from divergent media outlets. Typical voters, on the other hand, tended to be saturated with regional politics. National democrats dominated the west, whereas far left parties dominated the east. Centrists were dispersed unevenly throughout the country.

Over 600 international election observers from 50 states and 12 international organizations declared the election generally free and democratic.<sup>41</sup> Violations of electoral law were reported to the Central Electoral Commission who promised to investigate all allegations. Viktor Pohorilko, the deputy head of the Commission, claimed that the most common violation reported was the promising and/or actual delivery of certain material goods and services to voters, such as new roads, bus routes, and gas supplies to villages.<sup>42</sup> There were reports of violence, but these were not covered widely by the mass media. Alleged acts of violence involved over a dozen candidates and included activities such as physical assault and destruction of homes and property. Among the most prolific of these episodes was the disappearance of Mykhailo Boychyshyn, a key leader in Rukh who sat on their electoral committee. Fellow Rukh leaders claimed that Boychyshyn had been kidnapped because he had evidence against high-level state officials that incriminated them in massive corruption. According to his colleagues, this information was about to be made public. The fate of Boychyshyn still remains a mystery.

75.6% of eligible voters turned out for the first round of voting and each of the 450 constituencies that took part made the threshold of necessary voter turnout for the results to be valid. This exceeded expectations. Still, candidates received over 50% of votes in only 49 constituencies. As a result, a second round of voting was held in 400 constituencies. Most candidates elected in round one were from oblasts in the far west (19) and the far east (14). These candidates tended to include national political figures, such as Ivan Plyushch, Speaker of the Rada.

Two-thirds of eligible voters turned out for the second round of voting. A majority of eligible voters turned out in 380 of the 400 constituencies involved. In 289 of participating constituencies one candidate earned a majority of votes. This meant that new elections were necessary for a total of 112 constituencies. After round two, 338 deputies were elected, a constitutional quorum. Demographic trends favored men under 50 years. Only 12 women were elected (3.6%), about half the number who ran (7%). 75% of newly elected deputies were between 25 and 50 years old.<sup>43</sup> 136 were elected, the largest electoral group with 40.2% of the vote. The Communist Party was by far the most successful party with 86 deputies, 25.4% of the vote. Rukh was the largest National Democratic Party with 25 deputies, 7.4% of the vote. The Interregional Bloc for Reforms was the most successful centrist party, electing 15 deputies, 4.4% of the vote. Generally, left orientated parties did the best, capturing approximately 36% of the seats. National Democratic parties took about 14% of the seats, while Centrist parties assumed only about 8% of the seats.

Soon after the Rada election, Kravchuk sought to postpone the previously scheduled presidential election, in the belief that the election would “intensify

destabilization processes, political polarization and the confrontation of political forces.”<sup>44</sup> In the two months between the Rada and presidential elections, Kravchuk feared that a “power vacuum” would emerge from the mix of a newly enacted electoral law, a newly elected Rada, and a presidential campaign.<sup>45</sup> Left orientated parties, who did very well in the Rada elections, did not favor postponing the elections. Though the postponement effort received some support, particularly from National Democrats, Kravchuk ultimately decided to go ahead with the elections and registered himself as a candidate relatively late in the game.

Six candidates sought to unseat the incumbent. Like Kravchuk, Ivan Pluishch (Parliamentary Speaker, 1990-1994) and Petro Talanchuk (Minister of Education, 1992-1994) both held prominent government positions. In fact, Pluishch was the front runner till Kravchuk formally joined the race. Moroz was the sole Socialist candidate. Volodymyr Lanovyi, Valeriy Babych, and Leonid Kuchma were three liberal-democratic candidates of different varieties. As the race quickly took shape, the main battle pitted Kravchuk against Kuchma.

Kuchma served as Prime Minister from 1992 to 1993. As a presidential candidate Kuchma’s political platform emphasized the creation of a new Constitution, the renewal of beneficial ties to Russia, and the reduction of organized crime and corruption. Kuchma’s economic platform emphasized a substantive transition from a command economy to a market economy, which included de-monopolization and greater privatization in all types of ownership. Unlike Kravchuk, Kuchma was heavily influenced by the opinions of his advisers.<sup>46</sup> Voters tended to gravitate toward Kuchma’s decisiveness and consistent calls for a powerful presidency. As the campaign unfolded,

Kuchma's platform became increasingly muddled as he sought support from divergent groups, such as Communists and pro-market reformers.

During the campaign, Kravchuk and Kuchma had few positive things to say about one another. Kuchma tended to focus his criticisms on high-level political leaders that surrounded Kravchuk, who he described as "simply incompetent."<sup>47</sup> Kravchuk came to power with the incredibly difficult task of building a state, nation, and economy.

Kravchuk's rejection of force, avoidance of direct confrontation, and use of compromise in resolving political disputes was portrayed as a sign of weakness and uncertainty by the Kuchma campaign. Kuchma even went so far as to suggest that President Kravchuk should voluntarily resign. Some scholars, such as Taras Kuzio, argue that "Kravchuk's greatest achievement may have been to make Kuchma possible."<sup>48</sup> As a whole, the 1994 elections were characterized by a lack of meaningful campaigning and harsh treatment of independent election-monitoring groups from within Ukraine.

The first round of voting went in favor of Kravchuk who reportedly took 37.7% of the vote over Kuchma's 31.2%. The only other candidate to reach double digits was Moroz with 13.4% of the vote. Candidates and observers voiced several concerns regarding the administration of the first round. Foreign observers questioned suspicious number of absentee voters in rural areas. The Kuchma campaign claimed that as many as a half million votes, up to 10% in some districts, had been falsified in Kravchuk's favor. Other grievances included violation of voter secrecy, manipulation of voting procedures, ballot-stuffing, and interference by local officials.

The second round was very close as well. Kuchma defeated Kravchuk 52.1% to 45%. Supporters of Plushch and Talanchuk voted for Kravchuk, whereas supporters of

Babych gravitated toward Kuchma. Lanovyi's 9% was most likely divided between businessmen who supported Kuchma, and liberals, who supported Kravchuk.<sup>49</sup> Many of Moroz-supporters backed Kuchma as the "lesser of two evils," though rural supporters favored Kravchuk. The results surprised many spectators as well. Some explained the outcome as a sizeable negative vote against the incumbent, rather than a demonstration of widespread support for the challenger.<sup>50</sup> Others described the election a positive development in Ukrainian democracy, but a negative development for the Ukrainian independence movement.<sup>51</sup> Given his desire to rekindle relations with Russia, a vote for Kuchma was certainly not a vote for reform.

Not surprisingly, fraudulent activities resurfaced in round two. Voters in Kiev, for example, were given ballots with Kravchuk's name already crossed out. American election observers and election observers from the Kravchuk administration were banned from some voting booths in Odessa and members of the electoral commission openly campaigned for Kuchma in Kharkiv. Meanwhile, the Kuchma campaign claimed that turnout was boosted in Lviv to aid Kravchuk. Given the surprising nature of the results and multiple claims of fraudulent activity, Kuchma's first task was heal sharp divisions within the electorate that split the country between very different political identifies in the far west and far east of the country.

The 1994 elections were the first exercise of democratic elections in independent Ukraine. The electoral process created a constitutionally legitimate legislature. Formal indicators, such as voter turnout and popular candidate selection, met or exceeded traditional democratic norms in both the legislative and presidential elections. This demonstrated that Ukrainians were very capable of certain democratic practices. At the



same time, the presidential elections experienced a significant amount of voting irregularities and fraud. To complicate matters more, mechanisms of electoral oversight, particularly the central and district electoral commissions, were either incapable or unmotivated to effectively resolve these disputes in a legitimate and transparent manner. As a result, informal indicators, such as low levels of fraud and electoral oversight, did not fit with norms of democratic governance. These trends would become all too common in subsequent elections.

Looking back at Ukraine's history, it becomes clear that the country was not at an ideal starting point for a democratic transition with the fall of the Soviet Union. In contrast to many other Eastern European countries, Ukraine had no history of democracy or dissent to speak of, nor did it have any democratic reformers who were part of the old regime. As a result, democratic nation building was undertaken as a modest and restricted process. Such a situation illuminates a problem with transition theorists who focus on the establishment of elections and institutions in the transition process. Without a democratic tradition or democratic leadership, the outcome of the transition can become quite distorted for some time, as was the case with Ukraine. In turn, scholarship in comparative political development would be better served by examining a country's history with democratic development, or lack of history, and evaluating whether this history will promote or hinder a democratic transition. Ukraine was certainly headed on a new path that differed from its Communist occupation. This path, however, led toward a new President who consolidated power in a system that was democratic in name only.

Kuchma's campaign centered upon fighting corruption, reforming the economy, and expanding economic links with Russia. Though positioned as a reformer, Kuchma previously served as the former manager of Ukraine's largest arms factory and would have been more accurately described as a technocrat. During his first year in office Kuchma disrupted previously established networks of corruption, but only to enhance and consolidate his position of power. Early oligarchs, like Yukhum Zviahilskiy from Donetsk, were out of favor. Zviahilskiy, a former prime minister, was prosecuted for stealing \$25 million of state gasoline by depositing funds from government sales directly into his personal bank account. Unfortunately, reform efforts constituted a mere reshuffling of power positions, rather than significant systematic change. After just a year of promoting market reforms, dominant oligarchs reconciled with Kuchma.

In contrast, Pavlo Lazarenko, a notorious oligarch, exemplified the prominent role oligarchs play in Ukrainian politics, particularly after a falling out with the President. Lazarenko partnered with Yulia Tymoshenko in the highly lucrative company United Energy Systems of Ukraine. A former governor of Dnipropetrovsk, Lazarenko became Prime Minister in 1996. Widely considered among the most corrupt of Ukrainian politicians for his manipulation of the gas market, privatization, and agricultural procurement, Lazarenko's power soon rivaled that of Kuchma and he was ousted just a year after taking office. Lazarenko had amassed a fortune from siphoning funds and accepting bribes in exchange for government contracts as Prime Minister. The first foreign government leader tried in the United States since Manuel Noriega, Lazarenko was convicted of 29 counts of money laundering, fraud, and extortion in June of 2005.

Kuchma sought Larzarenko's extradition on charges of money laundering and involvement with three contract killings, including the murder of politician Yevhen Scherban. Transparency International estimates that Larzarenko embezzled \$114 to \$200 million from 1996 to 1997, which ranked 8<sup>th</sup> among world leaders of the last several decades.<sup>52</sup> Lazarenko's legal team maintained his innocence and claimed that Kuchma withheld evidence that would have exonerated Lazarenko. Lazarenko's political fallout with Kuchma was significant in terms of building opposition because his fall from political leadership transformed allies, like Yulia Tymoshenko, into clear opponents to the President. Tymoshenko, also a former deputy prime minister, was arrested in February of 2001, for giving \$79 million in bribes to Lazarenko. Kuchma had fired Tymoshenko a month earlier in connection to charges of illegally exporting large amounts of Russian gas and hiding over \$1 billion of the profits. After several weeks in prison, Tymoshenko was released when Ukraine's highest court annulled the arrest warrants and dismissed the charges. The President's public pursuit of Tymoshenko transformed her from culprit to victim. Practically overnight, Tymoshenko became one of the most popular politicians in Ukraine.

Lazarenko was the sixth prime minister in the first five years after independence. In that time, there were also 11 vice first premiers and 28 vice premiers. This weakened continuity of economic policy and damaged credibility in the eyes of foreign investors.<sup>53</sup> Before being dismissed, Lazarenko formed *Hromada*, the first purely oligarchic political party, and one opposed to the president. In response, Kuchma appointed a weak, but completely loyal prime minister, Valery Pustovoitenko, and sought

to play the interests of oligarchs against each other to deflect direct opposition toward him.

What is often lost in discussions of Ukrainian oligarchs like Lazarenko is that corruption in Ukraine is not so much an external problem that infests the political system, as often conceived in the West, but something woven into the fabric of Ukrainian society. For decades of Soviet rule operating outside of the formal system was the means for a better life for many Ukrainians, rather than morally reprehensible behavior solely associated with violence and organized crime. This social dynamic reflects the disjuncture between theories of Socialist governance and the realities of varying satellite states. In theory, everyone would be sufficiently provided for and compensated justly by their ability. In reality, great disparities in power and wealth existed. Money and resources were the only reliable and effective means of social mobility. Many transition scholars emphasize the shortcomings of socialism in practice, but few emphasize how inherited and institutionalized behaviors of the Soviet era have failed to dissipate even though institutional titles and structures have changed. As one scholar put it, there have been many problems in Ukrainian nation building after the fall of the Soviet Union, but these problems exist today because they enable solutions, not because they are unsolvable.<sup>54</sup>

Oligarchy in Ukraine peaked under Kuchma. During this time the President and his administration were central to all oligarchic struggles. Direct access to the President was a prerequisite for being an oligarch. Many oligarchs also held positions as presidential administrators or advisors. This provided them with a formal source of political power, in addition to their overwhelming informal political power, manifested in

extraordinary wealth. These interactions were not well documented in the public sphere because of strict government restrictions on independent media outlets.

In 1996, Kuchma shut down a television station in 1996 that ran a story on the mysterious departure of several of aides in Kuchma's office. From that time on, phone calls to editors from the president's office became commonplace. Heads of regional administration would regularly contact networks when a newspaper or television station criticized the government or interviewed an "undesirable" politician.<sup>55</sup> In the 1998 elections, for example, the OSCE concluded "the media played a critical role in the election campaign, but not a neutral role."<sup>56</sup> According to the OSCE, the state and private media "clearly promoted particular parties over others."<sup>57</sup> These efforts largely took the form of financial inspections or legal actions by state authorities that were undertaken to limit freedom of the press. Although Ukraine had over 5,000 papers, 300 television companies, and 150 radio stations, the OCSE concluded that it was nearly impossible for Ukrainians to find an objective or neutral source of political information.<sup>58</sup>

A new election law was passed in December of 1997 that transformed the parliamentary election procedure into the mixed system it has today. 225 deputies are elected in single member districts and 225 deputies are elected in a party list proportional system. District candidates are nominated by parties, blocks, or by citizens, if the candidate is an independent. The law waived the requirement that candidates must receive 50% of the vote to decide the election. Parties or blocks can nominate candidates for proportional representation. The minimum threshold a party must receive to gain seats is 4%. The candidates who take office are taken from the top of the party list on down,

depending on the number of seats the party is entitled to. The first five names of each party list appear on the ballot.

The electoral law sought to better facilitate general elections in the wake of the 1994 elections that took nearly two years to complete. The mixed system was a compromise between a majoritarian system and proportional system.<sup>59</sup> Over 6,000 candidates competed in the 1998 parliamentary elections with approximately 30 parties and/or blocks vying for proportional seats. 400 foreign election observers worked alongside local election observers to monitor the election. 70% of Ukraine's over 37 million registered voters turned out for the election. This was between the 75% turnout for the first round of the 1994 elections and the 66% turnout for the second round.

The Communist Party of Ukraine was by far the most successful party, taking 26% of the vote and filling 115 seats. Other parties who met the 4% threshold included: Rukh (9.5%, 42 seats), the Socialist-Peasants' Alliance (6.3%, 28), the People's Democratic Party (6.3%, 28 seats), the Hromada Block (4.5%, 20), and the Green Party (4.3%, 19 seats). The number of seats gained by independents surpassed that of the Communist Party. Independents received 31.2% of the vote and assumed 138 seats, a slight increase from the 1994 election. 206 deputies elected were between 41 and 50 years old, nearly double the second highest age demographic, 51 to 60 years old (104 seats). Though the number of women elected nearly tripled from the previous election, the total number of women deputies was only 35 out of 500. Engineers were by far the most prevalent profession of newly elected deputies (162), with teachers (79), economists (57), and lawyers (53), well behind.

The new system presented many new problems in terms of electoral administration and oversight. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) reported that 17% of observers noted that voters had difficulty understanding the electoral process. This was primarily due to the fact that national and local elections were conducted simultaneously. Local government in Ukraine is highly fragmented. The country is separated into oblasts, which are separated into *rayons* (divisions) or cities. *Rayons* are then separated into villages, settlements, and cities. Each of these subdivisions elects council members and chairmen of councils. Citizens voted with 5 or 6 ballots on which candidates were chosen, rather than crossed out as in 1994. Disagreements regarding electoral arrangements even prevented major local elections, such as the mayors of Kiev and Sevastopol.<sup>60</sup>

A second set of problems revolved around the resolution of election related disputes. According to electoral law, complaints that seek to void elections results should be submitted to the Central Election Commission within 10 days of the results being made public and then legal action can be taken through the court system. This led to general confusion over which institution had ultimate jurisdiction to resolve disputes. In several cases, complaints went directly to the courts; one was filed after the 10-day deadline. An OSCE fact-finding mission concluded that participants capitalized on this confusion by shopping for the institutional alternative that best promoted desired outcomes.<sup>61</sup>

In addition to jurisdictional issues, electoral review processes were inhibited by a lack of standardization. What constituted appropriate evidence was unclear. This was complicated by the fact that many candidates in disputed elections did not participate in

review proceedings. Courts nullified elections for infractions that occurred inside polling stations, such as open voting, family voting, and unauthorized personal present. Many international observers witnessed these practices, but generally did not consider such irregularities sufficient to invalidate election results.

According to the OSCE, electoral problems contributed to public perceptions of selective enforcement of election laws. In turn, the OSCE strongly recommended that electoral procedures be simplified in future elections to reduce the number of electoral systems being used at various levels and recommended that all election officials receive training on the resolution of election disputes, particularly the principles and interests underlying contemporary elections laws.<sup>62</sup> Though the OSCE stated “the overall election period was characterized by violence and criminal activity,” the organization concluded that the “elections were conducted under a generally adequate legal and administrative framework.”<sup>63</sup>

Violence was particularly prevalent in Odessa and Crimea. A mayoral candidate in Odessa, for example, physically assaulted another candidate and was detained. The OSCE report accentuates how difficult it is to understand elections as a binary variable. Elections were simultaneously characterized as violent and criminal, as well as legal and administratively effective. Violence and criminal activity may not have distorted the outcome of the election per se, as the OSCE contends, but the widespread fraud and violence observed was significant enough to obfuscate the legitimate and peaceful transition of power.

There were many similarities between the 1994 and 1999 presidential elections. As in 1994, the 1999 elections were held amid economic turmoil and accusations of



corruption.<sup>64</sup> The election was settled in a second round of voting that pitted a candidate who portrayed himself as a democratic reformer, President Kuchma, against a candidate who sought a return to Soviet style rule, Petro Symonenko. Other top candidates included Oleksandr Moroz (Socialist), Nataliya Vitrenko (Progressive Socialist), and Yevhen Marchuk (Social Democratic Party). Twelve of the fifteen candidates who officially registered for the campaign held government posts.

Kuchma's first term witnessed three years of economic recession and minimal democratic advances. In turn, analysts criticized Kuchma for failing to make significant progress in escaping past political trends and advancing with the president's 1994 electoral platform.<sup>65</sup> In the 1999 elections, Kuchma sought to downplay Ukraine's economic decline and to portray Symonenko as a radical who threatened the stability of the State. Kuchma attempted to frame the election as a referendum on representative government. According to the President, a Communist victory would result in a return to repressive and unresponsive government. Symonenko, on the other hand, argued that strong leadership was necessary to revive the Ukrainian economy. Both candidates attempted to position themselves as the rational choice for overcoming contemporary challenges.

Kuchma finished atop the first round of voting with 36.5% of the vote compared 22.2% for Symonenko. Moroz and Vitrenko finished in a virtual tie with 11% of the vote, while Marchuk received 8.1% of the vote. Western Ukraine provided the base for Kuchma's support, where he received 55% of the vote. In contrast, Symonenko was strongest in the east (33.7%) and south (31.5%), compared to a paltry 4.9% in the west. Though Kuchma won a plurality, a run-off election between the top two candidates was

implemented in line with electoral law. A second round victory for Kuchma was no sure thing, considering that the top four opposition candidates combined to earn over 50% of the votes in round one.

Kuchma figured he could depend on votes from Marchuck supporters, but appointed Marchuck Secretary of National Security and Defense Council to be sure.<sup>66</sup> The fact that two far left candidates received 20% combined still left cause for concern. In round two, both top candidates largely retained their first round voters. Surprisingly, however, Kuchma attracted 45% of Vitrenko voters and 35% of Moroz voters. This combined with 78% of Marchuck voters resulted in a Kuchma victory.<sup>67</sup> Kuchma finished with 56.2% of total vote compared to 37.8% for Symonenko.

Kuchma voters tended to be younger, more religious, and predominately from western Ukraine, whereas Symonenko voters tended to be older and predominately from eastern Ukraine. Despite these demographic differences, Kuchma was able to win a majority among all categories.<sup>68</sup> In some ways this is puzzling to outside observers considering that economic conditions were so poor that “over 40% of the population reports that they regularly do not have enough money to buy food and similar percentage reveals that their income does permit them to buy clothes.”<sup>69</sup> Amazingly, approximately two-thirds of Ukrainians who perceived that economic conditions were getting worse still voted in favor of President Kuchma. One-third of those voting for Kuchma believed the economy would improve during the first year of this term. Roughly 15% of those who voted for Kuchma, however, thought the economy would actually worsen in the next year, but still voted for him. This suggests that Ukrainian voters in the 1999 elections

divided their personal economic problems from their attitudes toward reform and were willing to bear difficult times if the hope of future improvement.<sup>70</sup>

According to the OSCE, the first round of the 1999 presidential elections was largely carried out in a “peaceful and orderly manner despite minor irregularities in very few polling stations.” The second round, however, witnessed several serious irregularities.<sup>71</sup> The campaign period was filled with allegations of obstruction, illegal arrests, illegal seizure of campaign materials, circulation of defamatory materials, and involvement of state officials in the campaign. The OSCE report confirmed that “many of these allegations were true” and “substantial breaches of the legal framework” took place.<sup>72</sup> The most notorious allegation of violence was the grenade attack on presidential candidate Natalya Vitrenko.

According to eyewitness Nataliya Sokurenko, an aid of Vitrenko, Vitrenko found a note the evening before visiting supporters in the Kryvy Rih region that stated: “Don’t come to the meeting with N.Vitrenko or you will be blown up together with that (swear word).”<sup>73</sup> The planned meetings went ahead without a disturbance. After the meeting, Vitrenko walked to her car with a small group of political officials when an unknown man suddenly hurled a grenade at them. One of the political officials, Volodymyr Ovcharenko, spotted the grenade and was able to kick it away.

The grenade exploded three meters away from Vitrenko, who was wounded in the leg and fell to the ground. A bodyguard jumped over Vitrenko, prior to a second grenade being launched by a second unknown man. The second grenade exploded a good distance from the presidential candidate, but injured others. 47 people sought medical treatment from the incident, 18 of whom were seriously injured. Two suspects, both Russian

citizens, were arrested shortly after the attacks. Local police suggested that Moroz was involved in the attack, but this was largely dismissed as a ploy to settle personal scores between Moroz's chief of staff and law enforcement officials in Kryvy Rih. Several eyewitnesses contacted Vitrenko's staff claiming the suspects were not the ones who hurled the grenades. The case was never solved.

A second significant attack involved Vasylii Khara, a Communist deputy in the Rada and supporter of Symonenko. Three men assaulted Khara and his driver outside Khara's Donetsk apartment. Khara claimed the attack was directly related to his support of Symonenko. Local police blamed "local hooligans" for the attack.<sup>74</sup> This was typical. Police rarely accepted political motivations as the cause of attacks. Still, leading opposition candidates filed dozens of complaints claiming their ability to freely campaign was obstructed by personal threats, physical threats, removal of campaign material, and obstruction of campaign meetings.<sup>75</sup> The Moroz campaign, for example, claimed their campaign materials were taken in the oblasts of Zaporizhiya, Mykolaiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv, and Donetsk. The Symonenko campaign raised similar complaints in Donetsk. When the election officials discussed some of these concerns with the Ministry of Interior, at the local and national levels, the Ministry stated that materials were seized during routine spot checks by traffic police or in searches of allegedly illegal campaign offices.

The OSCE also confirmed many reports of senior political officials participating in illegal campaign activities. The President is responsible for appointing the Heads of Oblast State Administration (OSA). As civil servants, these individuals are prohibited from campaigning according to electoral law. After the parliamentary elections,

President Kuchma appointed 20 of the 27 heads of the OSA's. In Vinnytsia, OSCE officials witnessed OSA officials giving bundles of pro-Kuchma materials to the police for distribution. In Kharkiv, observers witnessed the police actually distributing materials at a concert. In Kerch, observers were given copies of a full-page article by the Mayor which encouraged voters to support Kuchma.<sup>76</sup> These are just a few examples of the many blatant violations of electoral law committed by state officials supporting Kuchma. According to the OSCE, both the 1998 parliamentary elections and 1999 presidential elections fell short of OSCE commitments and international standards.<sup>77</sup>

Yuri Scherbak, a foreign policy adviser to President Kuchma, declared that Europe should be happy with the outcome of the presidential election because "it means that Ukraine will develop towards a market economy, towards integration with Europe, and will become a normal country which belongs to the European region."<sup>78</sup> Scherbak emphasized the large number of young voters "who rejected the ideas of communism."<sup>79</sup> Symonenko had a different take on the outcome, stating "if these had been fair elections then I'm 100% certain that we'd be able to claim victory."<sup>80</sup> The Central Electoral Commission disagreed however. Vasil Spivak, a member of the commission, claimed "there have been no serious breaches of electoral law; at least no reports of any have reached the Central Electoral Commission."<sup>81</sup>

Kuchma blatantly abused his political position to significantly further his reelection chances and received immense campaign funding from oligarchs. Complaints of frequent attacks on opposition personnel and offices surfaced from all opposition candidates. None of the opposition groups were satisfied with the degree to which these irregularities were investigated. Though Kuchma expressed a desire to work with the

European Union and NATO, neither economic, nor political reforms, produced much in the way of results during his first five years in office. In December of 1999, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) told Ukraine that greater reforms must be implemented before further financial assistance would be granted. The statement was given after an IMF inquiry into whether loans to Ukraine should be resumed. IMF loans have been frozen several times in the past. Authorities in Kiev acknowledged their inability to collect revenues, a condition of the loans.<sup>82</sup> After the election, the new fear was that if things did not change disillusionment with liberalization would emerge among the populace, mirroring neighboring Russia.

Still, Communists sought to obstruct economic reform, often through means that differ from contemporary institutional practices in the West. In February of 2000, for example, a fight broke out in the Rada between rival factions when one group tried to seize the seats of a striking Communist faction, who brought a Communist flag into the chamber. The Communists were protesting changes supported by centrists and right wing factions, led by newly appointed Prime Minister Viktor Yushchenko, which would accelerate the pace of economic reform. Interestingly enough, the left dominated Rada had rejected Kuchma's first choice for Prime Minister, Valery Pustoviotenko, who held the position until the customary resignation with the presidential election. Many blamed Pustoviotenko for Ukraine's poverty and economic decline, which led to significant tension between the president and the Rada in Kuchma's first term.

Kuchma had hoped that working with the Rada would be easier in his second term, but this was not the case. Squabbles and personality clashes created gridlock, while Western investors lost patience and economic troubles failed to dissipate quickly enough.

Yushchenko cast swift and serious reform as an urgent matter that could not be overlooked any longer. “These months may turn out to be Ukraine’s last chance,” stated Yushchenko in December of 1999, “we should all recognize the fact that all these years the country has been living beyond its means.”<sup>83</sup> Natalya Vitrenko, representative of the far left Progressive Socialist Party, claimed that “Yushchenko is a puppet of the IMF and works against Ukraine’s national interests.”<sup>84</sup> The February 2000 incident continued with the pro-reform contingent storming out of the Rada and holding alternative parliamentary sessions in a nearby hall. At the alternative sessions a new speaker was elected, igniting further scuffles when center and right wing members returned and were met by left wing MP’s on a hunger strike.<sup>85</sup> Confrontations such as these illuminate the great divisions with Ukrainian politics at the turn of the century and by western standards, the extraordinary use of parliamentary institutions to implement the collective will of varying factions.

Kuchma’s brief efforts toward stabilization and reform in the early nineties had come and went. Post-Soviet elites and oligarchs dominated the economic realm, forcing many to find support in a growing underground economy. The collapse of the Russian economy in 1998, however, frightened many oligarchs. Oligarch parliamentarian Viktor Medvedchuk assembled a coalition of centrist and right party factions to prevent Ukraine from external default. This helped lead to Yushchenko, the widely respected Chairman of the Central Bank, becoming prime minister. Yushchenko appointed Yulia Tymoshenko to all the important position of deputy prime minister of energy. As a former oligarch on the outs with Kuchma, Tymoshenko knew the internal dynamics of the highly lucrative energy sector. Yushchenko, Tymoshenko, and a handful of assistants orchestrated a

substantial economic turnaround in 2000. A direct assault on oligarchic practices lay at heart of this transformation.

One focus was deregulation. In contrast to much of the West, the wealthiest in independent Ukraine tended to pay the least in tax. Immediately, Yushchenko's supporters eliminated 270 pieces of legislation that provided subsidies, tax, or regulatory privileges for entrenched, oligarchic businesses. A second focus was the reduction of barter. Barter was an important means to extract economic perks from government. In turn, the State accepted only cash payments for goods and services. A third focus was privatization. The government increased the private share of the economy from about 50% to 60%. Many large companies were sold, largely to Russian businessmen, who were willing to outbid Ukrainian oligarchs. Prime Minister Yushchenko's reforms raised state revenues, turning the 1999 deficit into a surplus in 2000. For the first time since independence, Ukraine experienced economic growth.

Oligarchs turned to the steel business to extract the profits previously extracted from the gas industry. Significantly, however, rent seeking was seriously reduced, transforming oligarchs into producers, rather than mere parasites of state resources. Yushchenko and Tymoshenko distinguished themselves as strong political leaders opposed to oligarchs. The Yushchenko-led efforts saved the country from default, but only diminished the role of oligarchs, rather than remove it.

Several important changes did emerge in how business was conducted. As enterprises became increasingly privatized, oligarchs accumulated more property and increasingly sought to publicly defend their holdings. This led to an enhanced focus on production and investment, a sharp contrast to past rent seeking. The courts worked



poorly in settling disputes, however, leaving partners and shareholders with few rights. Oligarchs increasingly relied on vertical integration in order to diminish reliance on subcontractors. As a result, enterprise ownership became highly concentrated, even more so than Russia. Competition increased, even among giants like SCM and ISD in Donetsk. These changes, coupled with Ukraine's desire for greater incorporation into the world economy and international financial associations, brought greater transparency of financial activity. Until 2000, there was little public knowledge regarding ownership of major corporations. Oligarchic enterprises have since clarified corporate structures and released organizational information, though journalists hope this is only the beginning of such efforts.

In the first decade of independence, Kiev itself was evidence of progress. The capital became a modern city, making the leap from strict government control to liberal democracy. The situation was much different beyond this and other urban centers however. Desperation was reflected in the decreased population and the life expectancy of males. In 1999, the life expectancy of a newborn boy was 65 years, 10 years below the average of Western Europe, much less than in Soviet times. Meanwhile, the population of Ukraine fell from 52 million at independence to 50 million.

Given the oligarchic nature of the regime, Ukrainians struggled to find hope. This continues to be a problem in a society with such large divisions between rich and poor.

This sentiment is encapsulated by one young professional:

I live one day at a time. I do not want to think about what tomorrow could bring. Our politicians will change nothing and we have stopped hoping. A few days ago I met my old music teacher in the street. She had trained at the Moscow Conservatory. Now she sells eggs to earn a living. That is what we have come to in Ukraine.<sup>86</sup>

In November of 2000, President Kuchma's popularity began a steady decline. The President was never able to recover. Moroz publicized over a thousand hours of audiotape, produced by Kuchma's bodyguard. The tapes documented Kuchma orchestrating the murder of journalist Georhiy Gongadze and discussed Kuchma's criminal harassment of other political opponents and involvement in prolific corruption. Kuchma was revealed at the center of a corrupt and criminal system of governance. Though played only for the Rada, transcripts were soon publicized on the internet. Gongadze was a persistent critic of the administration who mysteriously disappeared in 2000. Though Gongadze's body was later found, his decapitated head was not, nor were the murderers brought to justice. Gongadze soon became a fallen hero whose murder was a catastrophic event in Kuchma's political fate.

In response, Kuchma increasingly exceeded his formal powers to maintain power in relations with oligarchs, often resorting to outright fraud and corruption. For many analysts, Kuchma pursued neither eastern nor western agendas, but sought to rule Ukraine as a personal fiefdom.<sup>87</sup> In public, Kuchma labeled the unification of opposition parties to create forums and protests a threat to national security. This effort, called "Ukraine without Kuchma," was unique in the level of civic activity the movement generated and in the cooperation generated among previously splintered coalitions. As protests grew in frequency and size, President Kuchma described the actions as a form of blackmail beyond the scope of law. President Kuchma stated publicly that he could not see "a single constructive proposal from their side."<sup>88</sup>

In April of 2001, the Rada passed a vote of no confidence in Prime Minister Yushchenko's government. The vote was secured through an alliance between

Communists and oligarchs whose business interests were hampered by liberalization efforts. While the vote was tallied, protesters chanted “shame, shame, Kuchma out, Kuchma out.”<sup>89</sup> After the vote, Yushchenko stated that “as a citizen, I am convinced that democracy in Ukraine has suffered a serious loss.”<sup>90</sup> Further solidifying himself as the leader of the opposition movement, Yushchenko vowed not to retire from politics, but leave temporarily, in order to return more powerful. Kuchma did not look favorably upon the move. Instability and popular unrest were festering to a degree never before experienced in independent Ukraine. In the hours prior to the decision, Kuchma, Prime Minister Yushchenko, and parliamentary leaders held urgent negotiations in the hopes of resolving the dispute. Despite the vote, Yushchenko remained the most popular politician in Ukraine. According to Yushchenko, “those who voted against the Ukrainian Government today showed that they are not ready to recognize the legal economy and public politics as the only possible means for public development.”<sup>91</sup> This was a final parting shot at parliamentary oligarchs who were essential to his dismissal.

The media was another component of Ukraine’s “suffering democracy.” Prior to the 2002 parliamentary elections *Ukrainska Pravda* aired an article explaining *temnyky*. Translated as “themes,” *temnyky* was slang for the guidelines on how television networks should cover major stories. These guidelines were secret instructions that were regularly sent down from the administration to state-controlled and private media outlets. An example was as follows: “This week Viktor Yushchenko will make some statements on his political bloc Our Ukraine. Please Ignore Them.”<sup>160</sup> The effect of *temnyky* was evident in numerous commonalities throughout news coverage in Ukraine. Sometimes journalists would expectedly receive reports provided for them directly from the

presidential administration.<sup>161</sup> The response by journalists included resignations, initiation of parliamentary hearings on freedom of press, and the establishment a new Independent Media Trade Union. The impact was minimal.

State-owned *UTI* was the only network, as of 2002, which had nation wide coverage. This is particularly significant considering that television was the main source of information for 75% of the population.<sup>162</sup> Still, the 2002 elections provided a broader range of media that facilitated more diverse political views than the 1998 and 1999 elections. The OSCE concluded that despite these positive developments, “Ukraine still lacks a strong and independent media that could provide the electorate with objective coverage of the campaign.”<sup>163</sup>

Over the next several years, media networks came to self-regulate their behavior in anticipation of government pressure. Most television stations, for example, maintained lists of politicians the government did not want to receive publicity. This trickled down to reporters, who avoided working with listed politicians in order to avoid confrontation with editors. Eventually, pressure began to include the coverage of events, in addition to personalities. This shift illuminates the uncertain nature of media restraint in Ukraine. Under the Soviet system, the Communist Party distinguished between acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Such clarity did not exist in the modern system of oppression. As a result, networks were trapped in a risk/reward environment, where the reward of staying in business was best maintained by eliminating all information that might provoke the “key viewer,” Kuchma’s nickname among television managers.<sup>92</sup> Essentially, media networks were no different than other business in the country; all were dependent on the ultimate approval of the President.

Punishment took several forms. Government responses to minor irritations would typically be exclusion from the president's press pool. More serious responses included tax inspections, lawsuits, destruction of property, and/or disbandment. The government, however, denied that censorship existed. Instead, the Kuchma administration described such practices as a form of editorial policy. These efforts focused on suppressing criticism of the current administration and information regarding top-level management and financial backing of media outlets.

Though the 2002 elections witnessed reoccurring problems of favoritism, fraud, and violence, the elections were significant in ending complete presidential dominance of government. The success of Our Ukraine propelled a genuine and capable opposition force into a position of national prominence for the first time since independence. After five presidential vetoes, a new Election Law was finally adopted in 2001 that, according to the OSCE, significantly enhanced how democratic elections were conducted. Some confusion was created due to the proximity of the new law to the impending elections and delays in coordinating new legislation with past election related laws.<sup>93</sup> Many provisions in the Electoral Law promoted transparency and accountability in the electoral process, such as the introduction of multi-party representation on various election commissions, detailed rights of international, party, and candidate election observers, and streamlined appeal procedures for elections commissions and related courts.

At the same time, the OSCE argued that the main weakness of the resulting electoral framework was the failure to amend the Administrative Code, which deals with the imposition of penalties for violations of election legislation. Kuchma objected to a number of provisions related to campaign violations. The Rada declined to revise

contested points and instead largely acquiesced to the President's concerns. This created a situation where some electoral rights in the Electoral Law were unable to be enforced properly, undermining the overall fairness of the elections.<sup>94</sup>

The election was administered in a three tiered system that consisted of the Central Election Commission, 225 District Election Commissions, and 33, 113 Polling Stations Commissions (PSC). According to the OCSE, the CEC administered the elections in an "efficient, orderly, and timely manner."<sup>95</sup> Furthermore, the OSCE contends that most DEC's performed well, particularly in meeting deadlines. Observers did raise concerns that the DEC's applied legal provisions impartially as witnessed in 20% of the DEC's visited. Elections commissions were also hampered by a lack of experience in electoral administration and unfamiliarity with electoral law. The OSCE suggested this was primarily a training issue, considering only chairpersons of the PSC's received training.

Only political parties and blocks were able to register candidates for the proportional component of the elections and this could only occur if the organization registered with the Ministry of Justice at least one year prior to Election Day. This requirement went before the Constitutional Court on March 7, 2002, but the court declined to hear the case until after the election, fearing a judgment would be considered "political."<sup>96</sup> Independents were permitted to run for single member districts. The CEC registered party lists, while DEC's registered district candidates. In contrast to past practices, parties and candidates were no longer required to collect a minimum number of citizen signatures. Instead, parties were required to deposit the equivalent of roughly \$50,000 (U.S.) with the CEC and candidates in district races were required to deposit the

equivalent of roughly \$200 (U.S.) with DEC's. Funds deposited by parties would be reimbursed if parties received over 4% of the vote. The requirements were unsuccessfully challenged before the Constitutional Court who ruled that this portion of the Electoral Law (Article 43) was constitutional.<sup>97</sup>

33 parties and blocks, representing a total of 4,002 candidates, registered with the Central Election Commission to compete for proportionally allocated seats. Another 3,504 candidates were registered to compete for district seats. There were a total of 403 incumbents, 233 representing parties and 180 independents. 69% of registered voters took part in the election, which was monitored by 944 international observers. The fate of President Kuchma and the direction of Ukrainian foreign policy were two highly contentious issues. Both the Communist Party of Ukraine and the pro-Kuchma block, For a United Ukraine (FUU), condemned what they believed to be American led support of Our Ukraine. Critics of the president, such as Our Ukraine, appealed to concerns that Kuchma might not relinquish power, even though the President was constitutionally mandated to do so.

Our Ukraine won 112 seats, more than any other party or block. 70 seats were won through proportional representation. 42 seats were won through majority voting in single member districts. FUU finished a close second with 102 seats. 66 seats were won through majority voting, compared to only 36 in proportional representation. The Communist Party of Ukraine finished a distant third with 66 seats, 59 proportional seats and 7 majority seats. This was disappointing considering the Communists won 115 seats in the previous election. The Socialist Party of Ukraine, United Social-Democratic Party of Ukraine, and Tymoshenko's block, all finished with just over 20 seats each, nearly all

through proportional voting. Independents won 95 seats, all in single member districts.<sup>98</sup> Both Kuchma and Yushchenko quickly sought to recruit independents to support of their respective organizations. The number of women delegates fell from 35 in 1998, to 24 in 2002, just 5% of the chamber.

Analysts concluded that the 2002 election was by far the most contentious election since independence.<sup>99</sup> Less than a week after the election, the CEC received 99 complaints that requested that results in constituencies be annulled. One example includes Roman Bezsmertnyi, a representative of Our Ukraine, who alleged that the words “dropped out” were stamped on across the party’s name on ballots in constituency 95 in the Donetsk region. A second example includes incumbent deputy Mykola Kovach, who represented constituency 72 in the Zakapatska region until losing to challenger Ishtvan Haidosh. Kovach was initially declared the winner, but results at four polling stations were later cancelled, resulting in a 40-vote loss. In addition to this peculiar series of events, Kovach also encountered what analysts refer to as “twin syndrome.” This is when competitors secretly convince someone with the same name as their primary challenger to enter the case, so that votes will be split in confusion. In this case, Deputy Kovach was challenged by a farmer named Mykola Kovach, in addition to Haidosh, the main opposition candidate.<sup>100</sup>

According to the OSCE, campaigns were the most problematic aspect of the election, despite provisions in the new Electoral Law that sought to create a fair campaign environment. The abuse of state resources, a common feature in Ukrainian elections, once again distorted the campaign environment. OSCE observers witnessed improper or preferential use of state resources for campaigning purposes in a majority of



the constituencies visited. Electoral Law also prohibits the distribution of free goods and inducements to citizens in the hopes of gain electoral support. Observers witnessed this practice in 38 constituencies. In Lviv, for example, the local head of FUU distributed free coal with official vehicles during working hours. In Kharkiv, members of an apartment block were invited to receive free appliances if they would support FUU candidates.<sup>101</sup>

Several opposition parties filed complaints regarding the obstruction of election campaign. This was particularly pronounced in Eastern Ukraine and Crimea where observers received complaints of obstruction in 47 constituencies. Obstruction took several forms, including poor access to advertising resources, difficulties renting meeting space, smear campaigns, and vandalism of campaign offices.<sup>102</sup> In one third of constituencies, substantiated reports of “intimidation and undue pressure exerted on employees of local administrations, schools, hospitals, universities, and state-owned enterprises” were filed.<sup>103</sup> In Lugansk, for example, one association circulated a written pledge to support the FUU and threatened that if employees did not sign, they would lose their jobs.

Multiple acts of violence occurred during the campaign, including the murder of Mykola Shkribliak, oblast director of the Social Democratic Party in Ivano-Fankivsk who was shot nine times by an unidentified assailant outside of his apartment two days prior to the election. Local authorities claimed the incident was a “contract hit” and did not exclude the possibility of a political connection.<sup>104</sup> Shkribliak was assistant chairman of the oblast energy department. Roman Zvarych of Our Ukraine, Shkribliak’s primary opponent, contended that if the murder were politically motivated, the purpose was to invalidate the elections or cast a shadow over his name. Zvarych was born in America

and a Ukrainian citizen in 1994. Flyers that were distributed throughout the district suggested that Zvarych was a CIA spy, among other accusations, leading some local papers to speculate that the CIA had something to do with the killing.

The American embassy issued a statement that this speculation was “just plain wrong.”<sup>105</sup> Zvarych was not considered a suspect in the case. Given that Shkribliak was an important player in the oil, gas, and timber industries, Zvarych suggested that Shkribliak’s discussion of high level corruption involving regional elites may have been a factor. After extensive deliberation, local election authorities decided to go ahead with election as planned. Multiple cases of physical assault and harassment of both candidates and campaign workers were also reported. Affiliates of the Socialist Party, Our Ukraine, and Tymoshenko’s block were the primary targets. Incidents were reported in several locations, including Kiev, Odessa, Rivne, Donetsk, Kirovohard, Poltava, and Lviv.<sup>106</sup>

The recent Election Law streamlined procedures for resolving disputes, a major problem in the previous parliamentary election. The number of complaints was a concern however. There were a total of 394 election-related complaints. The courts resolved most complaints (281). The remaining 113 complaints were handled by the CEC. According to the OSCE, 70% of complaints involved “candidate registration, the composition of electoral commissions, undue influence against election subjects, obstruction of campaigns, and illegal campaigning.”<sup>107</sup> The Ministry of Interior also received 176 reports of election related violations. Criminal cases were begun in 51 of these cases, including 37 for placing campaign materials in places that violated electoral law.

The 2002 elections were a dramatic improvement for Ukrainian democracy on several levels. The power of both the Communist Party and the President was limited by

the rise of a genuine opposition group, which was pro-Western and pro-democracy. Despite these developments, violence and fraud were still pervasive components of the election process, though a new Electoral Law enhanced procedures for resolving related disputes. The stage was a set for a presidential battle between rising forces of change, led by Yushchenko, and President Kuchma's handpicked successor, Viktor Yanukovich.

Kuchma's rise to power illuminated how democratic rhetoric can be effective in democratic elections when this "democratic" candidate is pitted against a Communist. Kuchma was no democratic reformer, but he effectively portrayed himself as one just enough to capture sections of the country, such as Western Ukraine, that were most inclined to support greater democratization. Ironically, however, Kuchma moved Ukraine toward oligarchy, rather than democracy. There was no overt and widespread fear that Ukrainians would vote out democracy, but there was no genuine democratic contender either. This lack of ideological variance was a significant problem up until 2002.

A second problem was the fact that Ukraine had a democratic constitution and institutions, yet without a viable legal system, independent media outlets, and government recognized civil liberties, the formal political process was only part of the overall political landscape. Such lack of transparency allowed the Kuchma regime to manipulate and steal millions of dollars in state resources over a period of several years, with profound political implications. This illuminates a problem with transition theorists who focus on formal mechanisms, such as the establishment of elections and institutions, with little or no discussion of supporting mechanisms that help provide legitimacy and support. Ukraine had a Constitution, but these civil liberties were not regularly recognized as a true check on political power. This suggests that elections and

institutions alone do not constitute democracy. As such, definitions of democracy should incorporate government recognized civil liberties to some degree.

President Kuchma's position grew increasingly tenuous after the 2002 Rada elections. The strength of the growing opposition was evident. The opposition won 70% of the popular vote for proportional seats. The Communist threat, which helped President Kuchma get reelected, dissipated. At the same time, the opposition failed to create a cohesive ruling coalition and capitalize on their success. This was due to ideological divisions within the coalition as well as bribery and economic repression from outside groups.

Despite the electoral success of the opposition, the Rada was as oligarchic as ever as half the Rada was composed of loose oligarchic factions. Observers noted that approximately 300 of 450 MP's were millionaires (in American dollars) and compared the Rada to the American Senate of the 1880's.<sup>108</sup> Later that year, Yushchenko concluded that "Ukraine has never been so close to an oligarchic system of power," claiming that the first stage of a coup was being cemented in the Rada.<sup>109</sup> Oligarchs had become increasingly involved in political activity as members of the Rada, in contrast to their past roles as predominately private businesspeople with extraordinary informal influence on government. The prime incentives for oligarchs to pursue formal political power were legal immunity from illegal business practices, the ability to block undesirable legislation, and the extraction of state benefits via tax exemptions, subsidies, trade reform, and privatization deals.

There were three main groups of oligarchs between the 2002 and 2004 national elections. One group was led by Rinat Akmetov, who owns System Capital Management

(SCM) in the eastern oblast of Donetsk, which is by far the largest company in Ukraine. Eastern Ukraine is the most industrialized portion of the country. Nearly on third of the country's richest oligarchs conduct business in the Donbas region. SCM is a holding company that primarily produces steel, but has expanded to develop coal and mine iron ore, as well as owning a brewery and regional media outlets. According to *The Korespondent Journal*, Akemtov is the wealthiest man in Ukraine with an estimated net worth of nearly \$12 billion American and Forbes Magazine named him among the richest people in the world in 2005. Akmetov took control of regional governance after Yanukovych left to pursue national office in November of 2002.

A second dominant group of oligarchs was led by Viktor Pinchuk, whose Interpipe, is the second wealthiest company in Ukraine. Interpipe is located in Dnipropetrovsk, an oblast adjacent to Donetsk. The company produces steel pipes and rail wheels. Pinchuk's also owns Ukscotsbank and three televisions channels. Pinkchuk's net worth is estimated at \$3.7 billion U.S., though the oligarch's most notable asset is his marriage to Leonid Kuchma's only daughter. Akmetov and Pinchuk are the wealthiest men in Ukraine. The political influence of these oligarchs is immense due their extraordinary economic power and personal connections.

The holdings of the third oligarchic group, Surkis-Medvedchuk are less clear because there is no central company around which the group is built. These oligarchs are sometimes called the Dynamo group, after the soccer team controlled by Surkis. Centered in Kiev, many of the companies managed by the Surkis-Medvedchuk group are owned by others outside the group, most notably government officials. As a result, ownership is typically hidden through offshore headquarters and transactions. The group's reach spans

regional electricity distribution corporations, large real estate holdings in Kiev, and the three largest television channels in Ukraine (Inter, 1+1, First National Channel).

Medvedchuk, an experienced politician, has held prominent positions. These posts enabled Medvedchuk to wield tremendous power over many government appointments, particularly regional administrators and the Ministry of Interior. All of the three major groups supported Yanukovich openly in the 2004 election.

Kuchma's response to the 2002 elections was to appoint Medvedchuk as chief of staff. Medvedchuk sought to convince businessman in the Rada to support the oligarchs. Considering the wealth of these men, repression was a more effective tool than bribery. Typical incursions included raids from tax police and arrests of top business managers. Those who did not give in became increasingly dedicated to Yushchenko's opposition to the administration. In November of 2002, Kuchma dismissed his government and appointed Yanukovich as Prime Minister.

Yanukovich was more popular than other aspiring oligarchs. Concerns were quickly raised, however, over Yanukovich twice being jailed in his youth for violent crime. Oligarchs were limited by their inability to create consensus and act in a unified fashion. Kuchma responded to his declining public approval with increased disregard for the law and increased corruption. Both were used as a means to preserve control. The President increasingly sought to appear unpredictable to make oligarchs more insecure and foster cooperation. Though highly corrupt, it would be inaccurate to describe Kuchma as dominated by oligarchs. Rather, Kuchma's relationship with oligarchs would be more accurately described as "symbiotic."<sup>110</sup>

Unlike the Rada, Kuchma had long controlled the judicial branch. In 2003, for example, Ukraine's highest court ruled that it would be constitutional for Kuchma to retain power as Prime Minister and downgrade the office of the presidency to a largely ceremonial role. The Supreme Court typically rules with the president, so the decision was more disturbing than surprising. The opposition feared that the court's decision would potentially pave the way for a coup. This did not happen. The court did rule, however, that Kuchma could not be prosecuted for crimes committed while in office. This protected the president from countless accusations of corruption involving hundreds of millions of dollars. In addition, Kuchma could not be prosecuted in the Gongadze murder, which he denied being a part of all along. With bleak prospects of a publicly supported political future and immunity secure for the time being, Kuchma appeared content to have a handpicked successor take his place.<sup>111</sup>

The media, on the other hand, became much more difficult for Kuchma to control. Resistance to censorship was sparked by the disappearance of Georhiy Gongadze. Fellow journalists asserted their right to cover the investigation at the outset, often in direct contradiction to the wishes of managers and owners. It was very difficult to prevent journalists from covering a story so deeply connected to their everyday lives. This resistance reached a breaking point with the discovery of the aforementioned audiotapes. Though television stations largely ignored opposition rallies and the political motives surrounding Gongadze's murder, journalists began to fight, word by word, for greater control over their reporting. In the face of this resistance authorities granted journalists greater autonomy in determining the content of news reporting; however, the government

simultaneously sought to manipulate the dissemination of information to the public by countering with false commentaries and deliberately obfuscating the investigation.

After the 2002 elections, the opposition deliberately sought to weaken the government's control of media. Purchasing an established network was not an option due to cost and government obstruction. Instead, the opposition purchased NBM, a small broadcasting company that reached twelve regions, including the Kiev, the south, and east. When purchased, NBM's audience consisted of 8 million Ukrainians out of a total population of 48 million, which spanned only 30% of the country's territory. Petro Poroshenko controlled Channel 5, the Leninska Kuznia shipyard, Rosen chocolate factory, and *Pravda ukrayiny* (Truth of Ukraine) newspaper. Channel 5 quickly gained popularity and became the only station that aired content which diverged from the government line.

Many factors came together to make Channel 5 successful. Talented journalists who had resigned in the face censorship joined Channel 5. Anchors brought with them popular followings and reputations for professional integrity. To ensure the integrity of the working environment, journalists and owners publicly signed agreements that guaranteed management would not interfere with the creative process. The public nature of this process helped to gain the trust of prospective viewers. In turn, the station became the most up to date and undistorted source of opposition news.

The format, as well as the content, differed from competing networks. Censorship and fear made live television talk shows extinct. Channel 5 was the only station to stray from coverage of heavily scripted political events, which held little to no substantive information, and air live talk shows. According to a survey by the Academy of Ukrainian



Press and the Institute of Sociology at the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, news coverage in the summer prior to the 2004 presidential election was limited to a single viewpoint nearly 90% of the time or higher for all major stations. The most limited networks included the First National Channel (98%), Ukraine (96%), and 1+1 (92%).<sup>112</sup> This is not to say that Channel 5 blossomed without setbacks, such as inexperience, lack of funding, and difficulties with live reporting. Still, the support of Poroshenko, coupled with a staff of liberal minded journalists, enabled Channel 5 to successfully develop into a relatively genuine alternative to existing television stations, a small, but important step, toward reasserting an independent press.

The growth of civil society helped to offset restrictions on the media. The roots of civil society in Ukraine date back to a strong tradition of analytical centers, akin to think tanks and watchdog groups, which first emerged amidst Gorbachev's reform efforts. Organizations like the Razumkov Center helped to organize coalitions and political activities in addition to their primary duties of providing policy analysis and research. These groups were independent of government, but in contrast to Western notions of civil society, had no leverage to keep government accountable to the people. Importantly, however, analytic centers monitored political activity, such as voting records and media regulation.<sup>113</sup>

In addition to analytic centers, religious institutions have been an important component of civil society in Ukraine. Some resident scholars, such as Myroslav Maranovich, argue that religious organizations have been the primary mechanisms of collective mobilization.<sup>114</sup> 97% of Ukrainians are Christian, but the fragmented nature of the Orthodox tradition in Ukraine has made it nearly impossible for the government to

control religion as a whole. Furthermore, much of central and western Ukraine is rural. In less populated and industrial areas, churches constitute the only consistent and lasting institution. Though religious institutions are largely ignored as instruments of democracy assistance from the West, the church has a long history of promoting national heritage and liberalization in Ukraine, particularly in the west.

Differences between civil society in Ukraine and America reflect different perceptions of the State. In the American tradition, limited government is among the most important political principles. Though Americans like to complain about government intervention in people's lives and criticize how inefficient government can be, Americans have expected the State to provide some minimum quality of life for citizens since the Great Depression. Even in highly conservative areas like the Great Plains, Americans will simultaneously state strong preferences for reducing the size and spending of the national government alongside equally strong preferences for expanding social programs.<sup>115</sup> This means that Americans tend to view the State as a potentially dangerous entity whose power and scope should be limited, yet realize and appreciate that the State has the potential do good and/or act in a way that directly benefits citizens. In Ukraine, on the other hand, the State is largely viewed as a negative force that operates in currents of chaos, corruption, and nepotism, rather than binding political principles beyond a shared belief in independence.

This was immediately evident in my first political conversation with a Ukrainian who was a language professor in Lviv. I began the conversation by asking if the university was politically active. The professor questioned what I meant by political. I rephrased my inquiry to ask whether students demonstrated a strong interest in

government. The immediate response was no, students are more interested in “doing good” and “helping people,” which were understood as social activities, not political activity. By no means a comprehensive assessment of the public opinion, this was nevertheless, an insightful statement. The more people I spoke with, particularly at the middle and lower economic level in Western Ukraine, the more I realized that Ukrainians have very different conceptions of government than in America. This is particularly poignant considering that Western Ukraine is the most nationalistic part of the country. Ukrainians often laughed and described Ukrainian politics as circus-like. Ukrainians have very serious concerns about the fate of their country, but conversations such as these suggest that Ukrainians seldom believe that government has the will or the means to work toward the benefit of society.

Such attitudes began to change with the 2004 presidential elections. Kuchma’s connection to the murder of Gecorhiy Gongadze quickly propelled the unpopular leader’s fall from power. In April of 2000, Gongadze had created a web forum entitled *Ukrainska Pravda* (Ukrainian Truth), which published investigative pieces on Ukrainian politics and business. Gongadze was critical of President Kuchma on a variety of fronts, including his inability to prevent Lazerenko from fleeing the country. In June of 2000, Gongadze wrote an open letter to the prosecutor general claiming that he was forced into hiding because of harassment by the secret police. Gongadze disappeared on his way home the night of September 16<sup>th</sup>. On September 20<sup>th</sup>, the International Press Institute informed President Kuchma that they were deeply worried about the whereabouts of Gongadze. The Rada then created a special commission to investigate Gongadze’s disappearance. On November 2<sup>nd</sup> a decapitated corpse was found near Tarasheha, 75 miles north of Kiev.

Gongadze's colleagues helped identify the body by describing shrapnel wounds Gongadze received from work in his native Georgia. When preparations were being made to move the body to Kiev, the body was reported missing from the morgue. At first the prosecutor's office questioned whether the corpse was Gongadze, then acknowledged the body was in police possession.

On November 28<sup>th</sup>, Socialist leader Oleksandr Moroz played the audio tapes for Rada in which Kuchma discussed Gongadze with Interior Minister Yuri Kravchenko. Kuchma allegedly rants "Drive him out! Throw him out! Give him to the Chechens!" Mykola Melnychenko, one of Kuchma's bodyguards, recorded over 1,000 hours of tapes in all. Melnychenko's defection was monumental in turning public opinion against President Kuchma. The tapes constituted verifiable evidence of the President's role in Gongadze's death and a host of other illegal activities. The Kuchma administration claimed the insinuations surrounding the tapes were groundless and threatened to press charges on the basis of slander. Secret services members expressed doubt that one of their own would produce such tapes. Later, however, the President admitted the voice on the tape was his, but claimed the tapes were edited to rearrange the words. Demonstrations against Kuchma began in December of 2002 as prosecutors questioned the President and related officials.

Several factors led to public demonstrations against Kuchma. One factor was the increasing political instability surrounding the President's involvement in Gongadze's murder case and the resulting lack of government support. Simply having public officials question the President's legitimacy constituted a political crisis because of the vast power of presidency to that point. This led to sharp polarization between the status quo and

growing opposition in search of change. A second factor was the lack of effective institutional mechanisms to resolve the crisis. The public was informed of the Gongadze investigation, particularly in urban centers like Kiev where the Melnychenko tapes could be bought. At the same time, official press and television networks were quiet and/or controlled, the Rada was deadlocked over how to proceed, and everyone knew law enforcement was under the president's control. This left few options for increasingly discontent citizens to influence the course of government, but the streets.

Young members of the Socialist Party were the first to pitch tents in Maidan and to undertake the first mass demonstration. Other groups, like the Ukrainian National Assembly and Young Communists, quickly followed suit, coming together from opposite sides of the political spectrum. The unifying slogan of the movement became "Ukraine without Kuchma." The imprisonment of Tymoshenko in February of 2001, coupled with the dismissal of Yushchenko as Prime Minister in April of 2001, significantly accelerated organizational efforts for change.

Between April of 2001 and the Rada elections in March of 2002, civic organizations increasingly worked with the opposition. During this time, civil society organizations provided assistance in efforts to mobilize voters, monitor polling stations, and conduct exit polls that could be used to judge the legitimacy of official results. The important difference in civil society organizations before and after 2000 was their willingness to cooperate. Prior to the Kuchma/Gongadze affair civic organizations tended to be much more protective of their activities in order to preserve relationships with Western donors. After the election, civil groups grew in number and scope, particularly among young people.

Important youth groups like Pora, Cysta Ukraina (Clean Ukraine), and Znayu (I Know) were formed from young people who had previously participated in the Za Pravdu campaign or were active in similar organizations like the Ukrainian Youth Association or Plast, the Ukrainian scouting organization. The new youth groups shared the assumption that to be successful methods needed to be more innovative, active, and confrontational than in the past. Pora, for example, had two wings with different levels of intensity, though the groups often worked together during training and protests. The goal of Yellow Pora was to ensure a legitimate electoral process by training and organizing young activists. Black Pora was more intense and sought to challenge the government's authority on the frontlines through civil obedience tactics inspired by the Serbian youth group Otpar.<sup>116</sup>

There was a significant gap in age and perception between the Kuchma administration and many of those at Maidan. The older generation came from Ukraine's Communist legacy and displayed a level of ignorance, even arrogance, toward the fact that popular pressure could be powerful enough to influence important political decisions. In contrast, the younger generation was largely born in the 1980's and did not exhibit a fear of authorities like their elders did. Many traveled west as tourists, students, or workers, not east to the CIS. These experiences produced exposure to different societies and influences, foreign to the older generation.

Ironically, President Kuchma, himself, inspired many young Ukrainians to become active, rather than remain apathetic. This new attitude was enhanced by new technologies. Young activists relied on modern communication methods, like cell phones to talk, text message, even film unsuspecting members of government engaging in

questionable activities. The internet was not subjected to the same restraints as television, which enabled critical discussions of contemporary politics and the timely dissemination of information.<sup>117</sup>

Young activists were particularly talented at using humor as a tool of mobilization. In Kiev, for example, activists dressed up in prison uniforms and campaigned for Yanukovych on Khreshchatyk, the main thoroughfare that is closed to cars on weekends. Another prevalent medium was political cartoons and jokes. One common joke was: *Why have relations in prisons improved lately? Because each prisoner is concerned that his or her neighbor could be the next president.* In addition to Yanukovych's criminal past, these efforts tended to portray Yanukovych as intellectually challenged. The former Prime Minister was often chided for his use of criminal slang and alleged illiteracy, evident in the numerous grammatical mistakes discovered in his candidate registration documents and his habit of signing his name as "professor." Yanukovych's image as a physically imposing man was forever tarnished when a protester in Ivana Frankivsk threw an egg at him. The egg hit Yanukovych in the face and knocked him down and/or caused him to faint. Either way, Yanukovych's fall was videotaped. In a severe political miscalculation, Yanukovych's people claimed that it was a brick, not an egg which was thrown.

Another equally bizarre incident involved Yanukovych's wife, Lyudmila. After a visit to Kiev during the electoral dispute, Lyudmila made a speech in their home oblast of Donetsk where she explained that the Orange Revolution was a conspiracy. The United States drugged oranges so that protestors would crave oranges. As a result, she alleged the capital was full of drug crazed Ukrainians wanting more and more oranges. Like the

previous incident, the speech was filmed and clips sent throughout the country via the Internet.

Polls reflect that Ukrainians believed that Moroz and Yushchenko were the two candidates most likely to defend the country's national interests above clans, while Yanukovich placed at the bottom of the list of contenders when rating levels of morality and intellect.<sup>118</sup> In January of 2002, Prosecutor General Mykailo Potebenko asserted that DNA testing confirmed with 99% certainty that the corpse in question was Gongadze. President Kuchma expressed his "deepest condolences" to Gongadze's family in an open letter published in *Financial Times*, a London newspaper. In the letter, Kuchma explained that he did not know Gongadze, but was aware of Gongadze's criticisms of him. According to Kuchma, Gongadze was not the government's most vicious critic. In turn, Gongadze's death, though tragic, should not be grounds for political adversaries to accuse him of murder.

Studies of public opinion after the 2002 elections revealed that Ukrainians did not trust Kuchma. In fact, a study conducted by the Academy of Science's Institute of Sociology revealed that 16% of Ukrainians trusted astrologers compared to just 13% trusted the president.<sup>119</sup> Few Ukrainians trusted authorities to conduct free and fair elections (20%) and most (58%) believed future elections would in fact not be free or fair.<sup>120</sup> The electorate was mobilized by a lack of faith that existing institutions would operate legitimately. As a result, many more became politically active out of desire to prevent Yanukovich from taking office, more than belief in Yushchenko or his policies.

Prior to the 2004 election, an overwhelming amount of Ukrainians (84%) believed they had a right to protest publicly if electoral fraud occurred, while only 6% did not.



Furthermore, 67% of Ukrainians supported taking action against oligarchs.<sup>121</sup> Centrist oligarchs were aware of the growing animosity toward them and realized it was entirely possible Ukrainians could come to entertain the idea of an anti-oligarch coup. Oligarchs mostly belonged to parties that supported Yanukovich, but in private some rode the fence or favored either Moroz or Yushchenko. Divisions emerged among oligarchs, who traditionally sought to maintain tight connections with the incumbent administration. Some oligarchs preferred greater integration with the West, while other others preferred greater integration with Russia. Socially, civic nationalism became an important element of mobilization in central and western Ukraine. Civic groups rallied around the notion of rejoining Europe abroad and promoting European values at home. These underlying divisions in Ukrainian society rose to the surface in late 2004.

The 2004 election was guided by a new Presidential Election Law which came into force in April of 2004 and a new law relating to the CEC was adopted in June of 2004. In contrast to past election laws, the Presidential Election Law received widespread support in the Rada. The new law incorporated several OSCE suggestions, though several concerns remained. Positive developments included efforts toward greater transparency, such as permitting election observers to accompany the transportation of ballot boxes. Concerns ranged from limits on free expression to granting parties certain advantages self-nominated candidates did not have.<sup>122</sup>

Potential candidates were required to pay a registration fee of 500,000 UAH by August 6th, which is approximately 80,000 euro. If a candidate received more than 7% of the votes, this fee would be reimbursed. 26 candidates sought registration, but 18 were denied because required documents violated legal provisions. The remaining candidates

were then required to submit a minimum of 500,000 valid signatures in support of their nomination. Election observers in 15 out of 27 regions received complaints that public employees were pressured by their superiors to sign for particular candidates. Though the CEC was required by law to verify all signatures, no particular procedure was specified, and this requirement was largely ignored.

Yanukovich's presidential campaign emphasized his current power as Prime Minister and heavily relied on ceremony and imagery reminiscent of the Soviet past. The campaign centered upon greater integration with Russia, both economically and culturally. Ukraine had decreased trade with Russia from nearly all trade to about one-quarter, while much of eastern Ukraine is fearful of western nationalists. Much has been made of sharp division between east and west in Ukraine. Yanukovich is the epitome of a pro-Russian, pro-managed democracy, politician of the east, in contrast to Yushchenko's more nationalistic, more liberal, pro-American, politician of the west. Regardless of these divisions, support from central Ukraine, particularly the capital, is essential to political success at the national level. Contrary to traditional impressions, Yushchenko is not from western Ukraine, but a native of the Sumy region in the northeast. Early in the presidential campaign, Yushchenko adopted a pragmatic approach that was determined to build his base from the bottom up. Yushchenko's main slogan emphasized idealism ("I believe"), voter comprehension of publicly withheld information ("I know"), and confidence, despite many obstacles ("we can"). Yushchenko focused heavily on attacking a corrupt status quo, claiming that the fair distribution of recent economic growth was being impeded. Yushchenko also reminded voters that under his

tenure as prime minister higher wages and pensions were made possible through stricter government control of oil and gas barons.

The nature of the campaign raised serious questions regarding the commitment of Ukrainian authorities to hold democratic elections. According to the OSCE, “the authorities did not attempt to create conditions that ensure a free expression of opinions.”<sup>123</sup> Though the voters had a genuine choice between multiple candidates, the campaign was highly divisive with a large amount of inflammatory material and rhetoric. President Kuchma did not campaign for Yanukovich, but also did not take action to prevent or condone blatant misuse of State resources to support the incumbent Prime Minister. The OSCE concluded that even though a number of campaign events were held by a variety of candidates and their supporters, “fundamental freedoms necessary for a meaningful election process were at times infringed upon.”<sup>124</sup> In turn, the multiple acts of coercion, intimidation, and obstruction led election observers to claim that the prerequisites for free and fair elections were violated. The most memorable of these acts of violence was the attempted murder of Yushchenko, who was mysteriously administered a near lethal dose of poison, which scars his face to this day.

The election was administered through a three-tiered system. The Central Election Commission was the only permanent election administration body in the Ukraine. The president appointed the 15 members of the CEC to a 7-year term on February 7, 2004. The president chose members from a list provided by parliamentary political groups. The CEC then appointed and supervised 225 Territorial Election Committees (TECs). TECs organized the electoral process in 225 districts and appointed members to 33,000 Polling

Stations Committees. PSCs were responsible for the administration of the polls on election days.

According to the OSCE, the CEC lacked transparency and did not demonstrate a genuine desire to conduct democratic elections. This was evident in several ways: 1) the CEC did grant relief on legitimate complaints; 2) the CEC failed to effectively supervise TECs, who selectively enforced electoral laws; 3) the CEC failed to establish transparent and accountable practices for creating, distributing, and collecting absentee ballots; and 4) the CEC modified electoral data after the first round of voting. These just some of the several examples of negligence provided by the OSCE.<sup>125</sup>

The first round of voting was a dead heat between Yushchenko and Yanukovych who both received 39% of the vote. Kuchma triumphantly declared that the “authorities will never allow an aggressive minority to dictate the political logic” of Ukraine’s future.<sup>126</sup> Kuchma figured that Ukrainians would respond passively to egregious fraud as in the past. As early as 2000, however, polls demonstrated that managed democracy was at odds with Ukrainian voters, 75% of whom favored greater democratization. Just 16% of Ukrainians considered their country a democracy, while 59% did not.<sup>127</sup>

A run off election, as required in the Constitution, was to be held between the top two candidates on November 21<sup>st</sup>. The Yushchenko camp was convinced that they would win a legitimate election and anticipated clashes with authorities. Former opposition MP Taras Stetskiv, spokesperson for Yushchenko’s strategists, claimed that plans for mass demonstrations were started a year prior to the election. Opposition efforts focused on spreading their belief that government would seek to overturn a legitimate Yushchenko

victory. The opposition purchased relevant supplies, such as tents, mobile military kitchens, and old buses, to be used as barricades.

The response plan had two components: train thousands of activists to lead protests and devise ways to get concerned voters to the streets. Because media coverage of Yushchenko's campaign was practically nonexistent and tightly controlled by government, mass rallies and face-to-face meetings were commonly used to build support and create regional hubs of support. Again technology was instrumental in these efforts. During the rally on September 18, 2004, for example, satellites beamed Yushchenko's campaign speech to 25 giant screens throughout the country. These virtual rallies were instrumental in creating broad based support within the confines of a government-controlled media.<sup>128</sup>

Official results of the second round stated that Yanukovych (49.46%) defeated Yushchenko (46.61%). The following day the CEC declared Yanukovych the winner. Yushchenko refused to accept the outcome, which prompted supporters to flood Maiden despite frigid temperatures. Channel 5 was the only channel to broadcast on site when unrest and civil disobedience emerged. Commitment to coverage without interference began on November 25, 2004. Ironically, the deaf were among the first to become aware of the truth. Natalia Dmytruk, a sign language interpreter on state television, ignored the scripted text regarding the election results, instead scripting:

The official results from the Central Election Commission have been falsified. Do not trust them. Yushchenko is our president. I'm really sorry that I had to translate lies before. I will not do this again. I'm not sure if I will see you again.<sup>129</sup>

Dmytruk's statement was followed by similar declarations on other channels. For the first time, the opposition movement was shown on nation television and government-

controlled stations portrayed Yushchenko in a positive light. Maidan soon became the focus of Ukrainian television, as well as politics. Channel 5, which broadcasted directly from Maidan, rose to the 3<sup>rd</sup> most popular station in the country.<sup>130</sup>

Yanukovych pressed Kuchma to take direct action, but most elite remained risk-averse. On November 21<sup>st</sup>, for example, there was no attempt to seize control of Maidan even though Yushchenko asked the crowds to go home for the night. Instead, authorities assumed that inclement weather would reduce the number of protesters. This demonstrated “the semi-authoritarian nature of the Kuchma regime” in that “its first instinct was not to crack heads, but to consult the weather forecast.”<sup>131</sup> At the same time, there were several reports that violent measures were seriously considered. Over 10,000 troops were deployed to Maidan under Serhii Pophov, the head of internal forces, and supposedly supplied with live ammunition and tear gas. The lights were turned off on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, but the crowd of 100,000 did not disperse. The following day some 30,000 Yanukovych supporters were brought to Kiev from the Donbas.<sup>132</sup>

After reviewing an appeal by the opposition, the Supreme Court decided to suspend publication of the election results, which would have made them official, in order to allow time for an investigation. Amidst the growing turmoil, Yanukovych and Yushchenko tried, but failed, to negotiate a resolution to the electoral dispute. A major sticking point was Yushchenko’s demand for a new election. The Rada passed a non-binding vote of no-confidence in the electoral commission and symbolically declared the election invalid. Pro-Yushchenko supporters surrounded government buildings in Kiev. President Kuchma, a major supporter of Yanukovych, declared that new elections would be necessary to resolve the stand off. Ukraine was stuck in a political stalemate.

The Supreme Court broke the deadlock on December 3<sup>rd</sup> when the Court annulled the election results. The decision “dropped all pretence of equivocation, and of ‘equal fraud on all sides,’ and squarely blamed the authorities.”<sup>133</sup> The Court declared that numerous legal violations occurred. These included the unlawful formation and verification of voter lists, the unlawful intrusion of government officials into the electoral process, and the unequal access to mass media. Taken collectively, the Court decided that such violations excluded the possibility that the results were a credible and accurate reflection of the Ukrainian electorate. The decision could not be appealed and changed the dynamics of the political confrontation among major players.

Tymoshenko and other prominent supporters of Yushchenko became less inclined to accept an emerging compromise plan that sought to exchange a new election for constitutional reform with limits on presidential power after one year. Conversely, the regime did not simply cave, though their options were more limited. Yanukovych could decide not to participate in a new election, which would prevent Yushchenko from obtaining a popular mandate, or create a sufficient amount of fraud that the Supreme Court would be faced with the prospect of invalidating another election. Kuchma, however, was most concerned with ensuring his immunity and financial security. Yushchenko verbally offered both several times, but things were complicated by Kuchma’s escalating material requests and the lack of long term guarantees. All involved realized that the longer the crisis went on, the greater chance of economic fallout due to trade disruption, falling confidence in currency, and the plundering of resources by the old guard.

An agreement was reached on December 8<sup>th</sup> in the Rada. Deputies passed a “packet” of constitutional reform that included a new election law, local government reform, shifting of powers at the national level, and Kuchma’s agreement to fire the prosecutor general and chair of the Election Commission. Yaroslav Davydovych became the new chair of the CEC and on December 15<sup>th</sup> the 225 TEC’s and 33,000 Polling Station Commissions were reconstituted on a bipartisan basis with equal representation for Yushchenko and Yanukovych.<sup>134</sup> To remedy past problems with absentee voting, those eligible were limited to the disabled and immobile. Local government reform called for direct election of local leaders, rather than being appointed by the President as was the case since 1994. At the national level, MP’s would serve for five years, not four, and be elected solely via proportional representation with a reduction in the minimum threshold from 4% to 3%. Those elected had to serve an “imperative mandate,” which meant that if a newly elected representative switched parties, their party mandate would be lost. Deputies were also prohibited from holding other well-paid positions or serve in other government positions.

The most popular party or group of parties was supposed to form a “coalition of deputy factions,” in other words, a governing majority. If this did not occur, the President would be permitted to dissolve the Rada. How a majority should be formally recognized was unclear, which created problems in 2007 when the President dissolved the Rada. The Rada would propose candidates for Prime Minister, but the President ultimately selected a nominee for Rada approval. The Rada would appoint half the Constitutional Court, rather than one-third, and the President would appoint the other half. The Prime Minister would select the overall composition of the national government, including the heads of



the State Property Committee, which was responsible for privatization, and the Television and Radio board, pending Rada approval. The President, meanwhile, retained the power to propose the Minister of Defense and Minister of Foreign Affairs.<sup>135</sup>

Yushchenko had campaigned on a platform that advocated a stronger role for the Rada in the hopes this would strengthen Ukrainian democratic development. Clearly, the series of reforms did just that. Ukraine had certainly struggled, democratically speaking, under strong executives, so at the time the reforms appeared to be in the long term interests of Ukrainian democracy. Ironically, however, Yushchenko was well positioned to be elected head of the executive branch and problems of overlapping powers between the Prime Minister and President would create future conflicts between the same two men well after the election.

Yushchenko triumphed in the third and final presidential contest, with 52% of the vote compared to 44% for Yanukovych. Fraud was significantly reduced and mostly occurred in the East, which made it very difficult for Yanukovych to question the results. Yushchenko took every oblast in the west and center, whereas Yanukovych took every oblast in the east and south. Yushchenko did not win in a landslide. In fact, the results closely resembled what many observers believed were the actual results from the November 21<sup>st</sup> election.<sup>136</sup> For the first time in Ukrainian independence, the public will was genuinely reflected in a free and fair election process. Many believed with great optimism that the new government elected via the Orange Revolution would produce important and lasting change.

Looking back at Kuchma's demise, it becomes clear that "soft" authoritarianism can crumble under popular pressure if the authoritarian leader chooses not to use force to

ensure the desired outcome of an uncertain political situation. Kuchma and his supporters were more than willing to lie, cheat, and steal their way through elections and economic liberalization. Being responsible for mass bloodshed on the streets of the capital was another matter however. There was certainly a risk this would happen, and Ukraine came fairly close to such an outcome, yet Kuchma never gave the order to forcefully remove the protesters. This suggests that civic activity is a very important part of democratic development, particularly in semi-authoritarian regimes that promote an underwhelming status quo, yet do not rely on massive violence and coercion to maintain power. In Ukraine, there appeared to be a tipping point for regime that corresponded with a level of comfort regarding overt violence on the part of the State.

The legacy of Cold War geopolitics, coupled with the Communication Revolution, showered the Orange Revolution with international attention and prompted powerful States in the region and beyond to get involved in some fashion. This points to another problem with transition theorists who predominantly focus on elections and institutions. In the age of globalization, the political context is not limited to domestic influences and concerns. As a result, to best understand democratic development scholars of comparative political development should appreciate the significant influences that international forces on democratic development. In doing so, scholarship would be better served by taking into account which external actors are seriously involved in the transition process and what incentives and disincentives are available for political leaders to choose one path of development as opposed to competing visions.

The Orange government was simply unable to live up to their own expectations and the ones placed on them by their followers. As Andrew Wilson puts it, “a political

and economic was promised,” but “it seemed unlikely that Ukraine would stage some great cathartic trial, or ‘Truth and Reconciliation Process,’ like South Africa after apartheid.<sup>137</sup> The outgoing administration convinced Yanukovich to embark on a long appeals process so they could “settle last minute accounts” and “destroy as many documents as they could.”<sup>138</sup> Hundreds of printed documents, audio cassettes, and video cassettes were submitted to the CEC. Many complaints were simply duplicates of other complaints.

Yanukovich resigned as Prime Minister and was replaced with Mykola Azarov, who was largely responsible for securing Kuchma’s retirement benefits. These included a full presidential salary, the use of state *dacha* 72 and its staff, an adviser, two assistants, two cars, four drivers, free travel, free medical care for him and his wife, and half off his electric bill, all of which would be paid by the State for life.<sup>139</sup> The new government would soon seek to modify this lofty package, but they had problems of their own. The secret Force of the People Agreement signed by Yushchenko and Tymoshenko in July of 2004 was leaked to the public. The first clause stated that Tymoshenko would get the first shot at Prime Minister with the Yushchenko using “the ‘force of his personal moral authority’ to ensure that Our Ukraine deputies would join the Tymoshenko bloc to support her candidacy ‘in full.’”<sup>140</sup> The second clause stated that 55% of government positions would be filled by Our Ukraine and 23% for the Tymoshenko block. The process by which Tymoshenko assumed her new position as Prime Minister reminded many Ukrainians of past political appointments premised on secret deals that lacked transparency that did not fit well with the spirit of the Revolution, nor Tymoshenko’s corruption in past stints in public service.

The unrealistically lofty rhetoric of the new administration did not keep pace with realities on the ground. In February of 2005, for example, Yushchenko declared that he wanted the Gangadze affair to be solved within a few months. These hopes were dashed when Yuri Kravchenko, the former interior minister, shot himself hours prior to when he was supposed to provide evidence to authorities. A second example is how Yushchenko triumphantly declared that government would be separated from business, but as Andrew Wilson points out, “all of Our Ukraine’s key financiers had key jobs.”<sup>141</sup> Oligarch Petro Poroshenko became the new head of the National Security and Defense Council and Yevhen Chervonenko became the new head of the corruption-plagued transportation ministry, while he operated a transport business of his own. This led many to wonder whether new oligarchs would try to recover the losses their businesses had experienced over the past couple of year. In addition to fanciful rhetoric, several undemocratic political behaviors persisted under the new government. Yushchenko, for example, adopted Kuchma’s practice of issuing secret decrees and issued 40 of them during his first two months. Without a political agenda in place, many of the decrees were hasty and confirmed suspicions that victory came as a surprise to the new political leadership.<sup>142</sup>

Not surprisingly, tensions soon emerged within the new government over sticky issues, such as re-privatization. Yushchenko was critical of the privatization process, but not the goal, and wanted the State to purchase privatized enterprises and sell them via open competition for fair prices. The Cabinet, on the other hand, favored immediate re-privatization of particularly suspect transactions, such as the sale of the steel mill at Kryvorizhstal, which was sold to Pinchuk and Akmetov for \$800 million despite a competing bid of \$1.5 billion. Tymoshenko called for thousands of re-privatizations

whereas Yushchenko spoke of dozens. The fact of the matter was that new political leaders were not strong enough to get bogged down in a major battle over redistribution. Furthermore, the erosion of property rights in favor of retrospective justice would very likely scare away Western investors. As a result, it appears that re-privatization will be limited to a few select cases and as a result, old oligarchs will retain most of their holdings.

There is little doubt that Yushchenko's administration will better serve democratic development in Ukraine than his predecessor. At the same time, the long term sustainability and effectiveness of the Orange Coalition is far from certain. Wherever Ukraine heads from its current crossroads, the country has certainly not been a model of efficient democratic transition throughout the first fifteen years of independence. This conclusion raises the question of exactly how effective elections and institutions were during this formative period of Ukrainian development. If the core principles of transition theory are valid, one would expect that elections would play a significant role in promoting the peaceful and legitimate transfer of political power, political institutions would play a significant role in promoting stable and representative government, and economic institutions would play a significant role in promoting stable and sustained economic growth. This has not been the case.

The first six national elections fulfilled several indicators of legitimate and peaceful transitions of power. Elections were held frequently: 1994, 1998, 1999, 2002, 2004. All elections required by the Constitution were held without postponement or cancellation. The 1994 presidential election was the only instance where significant political forces openly advocated postponing pending elections, but this was a unique,

unpopular and unsuccessful effort on behalf of President Kravchuk. Electoral turnout has been consistently strong, evident in how both parliamentary and presidential elections consistently produced turnouts of well over a simple majority. The average turnout for parliamentary elections is 70% of registered voters, which is over double the turnout for a typical Congressional election in the United States.<sup>143</sup> This suggests that elections are a normal component of Ukrainian politics in which much of the public regularly participates in. Ukrainians have widely accepted the results of elections, even fraudulent ones, aside from 2004.

All candidates in post-independence national elections were also selected in processes that were open to the mass public. Though there were some restrictions on candidates, such as the collection of a certain amount of signatures, these did not significantly prevent candidates from being selected. More recent requirements of financial deposits to register candidates and parties, as witnessed in the 2002 elections, are more problematic because the requirement can effectively prevent less affluent segments of the population from registering as candidates. Financial deposits, which are reimbursed if electoral thresholds are met, do constitute a fairly significant amount of money for many Ukrainians (\$200 U.S. for district candidates). At the same time, Ukrainian politicians, like Western politicians, tend to be much wealthier than society as a whole so that candidate deposits are not beyond the reach of most aspiring candidates.

The first six national elections also failed, however, to fulfill several indicators of legitimate and peaceful transitions of power. First, electoral oversight has been inconsistent and often ineffective. Electoral commissions, the primary mechanisms of electoral oversight, exercise significant power, but do not have an independent and

constitutionally protected base of power. As a result, other components of government, such as the President and Rada, have strongly influenced and/or manipulated the composition and activities of electoral commissions to the detriment of democratic development. In the 1994 election, for example, Rada party leaders appointed electoral commissioners and the Rada leaders were Communist elites that secured power in the undemocratic elections of 1990. Meanwhile, the Rada failed to determine the selection process for the Supreme Court, which crippled the role of the judicial branch in solving constitutional and legal issues. As a result, electoral administration and oversight have largely been the responsibility of the same institution: electoral commissions.

This runs counter to American notions of popular government, such as the ideas articulated in *Federalist #51*, which contend that powers should be divided into separate branches with separate purposes and sources of power so that competition among branches will limit one branch from abusing power. In Ukraine, central and district commissioners have been incapable or unmotivated to resolve disputes in a legitimate and transparent manner for much of the fifteen years since independence. Though subsequent electoral laws have sought to reform electoral commissions, new problems emerged in the form of jurisdictional disputes between the commissions and courts, voter confusion regarding appeal processes, and a lack of standardization in dealing with electoral complaints and confirmed violations.

Second, the nature and extent of violence and fraud in Ukrainian elections have not reflected legitimate and peaceful transitions of power typically found in established democracies. Fraudulent activities included ballot stuffing, invalidation of legitimate ballots, preferential treatment for certain political groups and leaders, defamation,

intimidation, coercion, and illegal imprisonment. All elections experienced the inappropriate use of state resources toward political ends. Most elections did not accurately reflect an electoral process of one person, one vote. Without an effective legal system, political crime and violence in Ukraine was systematic in scope and shrouded in mystery. Candidates, supporters, and political figures regularly experienced physical assault and destruction of property. The most prolific case was the poisoning of Viktor Yushchenko during the 2004 presidential campaign, which according to public knowledge, was never solved.

Third, Ukraine has experienced high levels of media favoritism contrary to Ukrainian law and to the detriment of legitimate and peaceful transitions of power. Under Kuchma, the media was used as a means to preserve and expand the power of the incumbent president. This was most evident in secret government policies designed to shape the content of media coverage and the various forms of legal and financial government harassment of independent networks. After 2005, the press has regained freedoms lost throughout the post-Soviet period. In many ways, however, major media outlets exist as a tool of wealthy interests to further specific political outcomes, rather than serve as a genuinely independent collection of various viewpoints.

Fourth, candidates have not represented stable and principled political parties, nor presented a sufficient degree of ideological variance. A disproportionately powerful executive dominated the political landscape from Kravchuk to Yushchenko. Ideological variance emerged surrounding the 2002 Rada elections as Yushchenko and Tymoshenko began to establish themselves as genuinely opposed to the Kuchma regime. Ideological variance intensified prior to the 2004 presidential elections and solidified after the Orange



Revolution. Even with ideological variance, parties have a long way to go before becoming stable and principled. Unfortunately, the most apparent ways in which Ukrainian parties have adopted Western norms have not been positive.

The term “black PR” has been used to describe the ways in which Ukrainian parties have duplicated, and in some cases flat out hired, Western marketing and advertising agencies to discredit opponents via mass media. Given the large percentage of television watched by Ukrainians nationwide, competing politicians have become very image conscious at the expense of substance. When watching television in Ukraine it is very clear who the owner of each television station supports based on the frequent and monolithic support of a particular candidate in advertising spots. Though competing parties experience greater freedom to operate after 2004, many parties still operate around the will of a single candidate, typically the creator, rather than principled organizations of public will.

In considering these ten indicators as a whole, it becomes clear that elections have been highly ineffective in promoting the peaceful and legitimate transition of power in Ukraine from 1991 to 2006. Even with frequent elections that witnessed popularly selected candidates, high voter turnout, and wide acceptance of results, comprehensive empirical assessments demonstrate that competitions for power and transitions of power were neither legitimate nor particularly peaceful. This strongly suggests that the mere existence of elections do not necessarily promote the peaceful and legitimate transition of power. This raises the question of whether experiences with institutional development mirror the trajectory and results of electoral development or exhibit different patterns of behavior.

When effective, democratic institutions fundamentally promote stable and representative government in the political realm. Ukraine experienced some indicators of effective institutional operation. Ukraine adopted a democratic constitution and has experienced wide acceptance of the new political system. Though Ukraine was the last former Soviet republic to do so, the historic document was the product of intense negotiations between Rada deputies. Ukraine was officially constituted as a “sovereign and independent, democratic, social, law-based state.” The political system was a “republic” in which state power is “exercised on the principles of its division into legislative, executive, and judicial power.” The “main duty of the state” is to “affirm and ensure human rights and freedoms.” Though a large amount of significant political activity in Ukraine has taken place outside of constitutional boundaries, the existence of a democratic framework has helped to promote stable and representative government by the new structure of government it has provided.

Ukraine has also failed to experience several indicators of effective institutional operation. Under Kuchma, there was no meaningful role for the opposition throughout much of the post-Soviet period because of cooption and coercion. This changed in early part of the new century as Kuchma’s popularity plummeted and fully reversed under the post-revolution government. Ironically, the current problem is particularly divisive opposition between now Prime Minister Yankovych and President Yushchenko. High levels of corruption have not changed, however, and remain a systematic problem with no clear corrective course in sight. Even current reform leaders, such Tymoshenko, have political roots in the most dishonest corners of Ukrainian politics. Violence, like corruption, has plagued institutional operation in Ukraine. Prominent political figures

have disappeared throughout the post Soviet period. Some, like Mykhailo Boychyshyn, have never to been heard from again. Others, such as Georhiy Gongadze, were later found decapitated, apparently in fulfillment of the wishes of the chief executive.

As a whole, democratic institutions were largely ineffective in promoting stable and representative government from 1991 to 2006. Though some basic formal indicators did exist, such as the adoption of a new constitution and wide acceptance of the new political system, institutional operation in Ukraine has been unable to overcome the corruption and related problems inherited from their Soviet past and recreated during the transition process. Institutional operation in Ukraine has not been a transparent and representative process undertaken within the confines of the Ukrainian constitution and laws. Without the establishment of a genuinely independent judiciary and rule of law, this does not look to change in the near future, regardless of whether the reform forces remain in power or not. Unfortunately democratic institutions were no more helpful in promoting economic development, another very important component of the Ukrainian transition process.

Economic development in post-Soviet Ukraine could be understood in three five-year periods. The first period (1991-1995) witnessed widespread instability and economic demise. The real gross domestic product (GDP) steadily declined till finally bottoming out in 1994 with a 23% drop from the previous year. Development was severely inhibited by a lack of new elite able to manage a capitalist economy. Many political leaders in independent Ukraine were career politicians who adapted themselves to a new framework of government, but offered little in the way of innovative thinking or experience with Western business practices. The preferential treatment given to oligarchs

by the state granted drained valuable resources that could have been used to further production.

The second period (1995-1999) witnessed gradual stabilization. The GDP decreased from -10% in 1996 to -3% in 1997. Foreign direct investment (FDI) increased fivefold, growing from \$483 million in 1995 to nearly \$3 billion in 1999. Foreign investment proceeded slower in the Ukraine than central European countries such as Poland and Hungary. Ukraine experienced limited exposure to market ideas early in the transition process and tended to view Communism more favorably than other former Soviet republics. As time passed, the primary problem became a lack of interest on behalf of the ruling elite to relinquish strict control over economic and bureaucratic powers. In 2003, for example, the size of Ukraine's economy was an estimated \$50 billion American, three-quarters the size of Hungary's economy, despite having five times the population.

The third period (2000-2004) witnessed a significant economic turnaround. Real wages rose between 15 and 25% each year. FDI grew to \$16 billion at the end of 2005, an all time high. GDP rose in double digits (12.1%) in 2005, another first. Each year experienced positive growth, the lowest being 5.2%. Ukraine became a viable investment option and the West flooded the liberal-minded opposition with support as the government standoff unfolded. Many in the West believed a window of opportunity was being opened in this geo-politically important neighbor of Russia.

Clearly, the economic results of reform were mixed. When effective, democratic institutions fundamentally promote stable and sustained growth in the economic realm and Ukraine did experience some indicators of effective institutional operation in the

post-Soviet period. There were slow, but fairly steady, levels of foreign direct investment and the GDP rose since 1994, after a steep decline since 1991. In terms of raw numbers, Ukraine also privatized a large amount of formerly State-owned enterprises, though it would be disingenuous to categorize this development as a wholesale success because of the negative political, economic, legal, and social consequences that resulted from the privatization process. As the Orange government quickly realized, rectifying grossly corrupt transition practices is very difficult to do without serious political and economic repercussions. At the same time, if genuine reform is truly the goal, it is also very difficult to turn a blind eye toward such massive injustice.

Ukraine also failed to experience other indicators of effective institutional operation in the economic realm. National budgets, for example, have not been consistently balanced in Ukraine. Cutting government spending was difficult for the Kuchma regime, who used State resources to consolidate power, and the Orange Government, who early on sought to protect and extend the welfare state. Wages, on the other hand, dropped throughout much of the 1990's. With the aforementioned economic turnaround, however, the dominant trend of falling wages reversed as the economic situation improved.

Given these trends, democratic institutions were largely ineffective in promoting stable and sustained economic growth from 1991 to 2006. Though the GDP rose since 1994, growth was not positive as a percentage of the previous year until 2000. Furthermore, the budget was not balanced for most of the period as real wages fell. The most resounding "success," massive privatization of State-owned enterprises created as many problems, if not more, than it solved. Thus, like elections, democratic institutions

have been ineffective in promoting both stable and representative government as well as stable and sustained economic growth. This casts significant doubt on the ability of transition theory to accurately capture the dynamics of democratic development. Greater analysis is necessary, however, before definitive conclusions on transitions theory can be drawn. The next section examines Russian development over the same period.

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<sup>1</sup> Subtelny (2005), 3.

<sup>2</sup> Subtelny (2005), 21.

<sup>3</sup> Wilson (2005), 25-26.

<sup>4</sup> Subtelny (2005), 22.

<sup>5</sup> Subtelny (2005), 27.

<sup>6</sup> Subtelny (2005), 28.

<sup>7</sup> Subtelny (2005), 32.

<sup>8</sup> Subtelny (2005), 35.

<sup>9</sup> Subtelny (2005), 37-38.

<sup>10</sup> Subtelny (2005), 38.

<sup>11</sup> Subtelny (2005), 39.

<sup>12</sup> Wilson (2005), 26.

<sup>13</sup> Wilson (2005), 27.

<sup>14</sup> Wilson (2005), 27.

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- <sup>15</sup> Wilson (2005), 28.
- <sup>16</sup> Wilson (2005), 28.
- <sup>17</sup> Wilson (2005), 30.
- <sup>18</sup> On July 5<sup>th</sup>, the Rada passed a law creating the office of President of the Ukrainian SSR, which was changed to President of Ukraine after independence.
- <sup>19</sup> Constitution of Ukraine: Chapter 1, Article 5-6.
- <sup>20</sup> Constitution of Ukraine: Chapter 1, Article 3.
- <sup>21</sup> Constitution of Ukraine: Chapter 3, Article 69.
- <sup>22</sup> Constitution of Ukraine: Chapter 4, Article 80.
- <sup>23</sup> Constitution of Ukraine: Chapter 5, Article 102.
- <sup>24</sup> Constitution of Ukraine: Chapter 6, Article 113.
- <sup>25</sup> Constitution of Ukraine: Chapter 8, Article 124.
- <sup>26</sup> Constitution of Ukraine: Chapter 8, Article 127.
- <sup>27</sup> Constitution of Ukraine: Chapter 12, Article 147.
- <sup>28</sup> Constitution of Ukraine: Chapter 12, Article 148.
- <sup>29</sup> Constitution of Ukraine: Chapter 12, Article 150.
- <sup>30</sup> Constitution of Ukraine: Chapter 11, Article 140.
- <sup>31</sup> Constitution of Ukraine: Chapter 11, Article 142.
- <sup>32</sup> "Ukraine: At Last a New Constitution." The Ukrainian Weekly. 29 December.1996. No.52, Vol. LXIV.
- <sup>33</sup> Aslund, Anders. "Left Behind: Ukraine's Uncertain Transformation." The National Interest. Fall, 2003.
- <sup>34</sup> Bojcun (1995), 229.
- <sup>35</sup> Bojcun (1995), 232.
- <sup>36</sup> Clem (1999), 2.
- <sup>37</sup> Clem (1999), 3.
- <sup>38</sup> Clem (1999), 5.
- <sup>39</sup> Bojcun (1995), 233.
- <sup>40</sup> Bojcun (1995), 235.
- <sup>41</sup> Bojcun (1995), 236.
- <sup>42</sup> Bojcun (1995), 237.
- <sup>43</sup> Bojcun (1995), 238.
- <sup>44</sup> Kuzio (1996), 120.
- <sup>45</sup> Kuzio (1996), 120.
- <sup>46</sup> Kuzio (1996), 129.
- <sup>47</sup> Kuzio (1996), 130.
- <sup>48</sup> Kuzio (1996), 130.
- <sup>49</sup> Kuzio (1996), 131.
- <sup>50</sup> Kuzio (1996), 132.
- <sup>51</sup> Kuzio (1996), 132.
- <sup>52</sup> "Suharto Tops Corruption Rankings." BBC News Online. 25 March.2004.
- <sup>53</sup> Kuzio, Taras. "Ukraine Changes Prime Minister, Again." The Ukrainian Weekly. July 13, 1997, #28, Volume LXV.
- <sup>54</sup> Interview with Jeffrey Wills, Ukrainian Catholic University, 6/29/06.
- <sup>55</sup> Prytula, Olena. "The Ukrainian Media Rebellion." Anders Aslund and Michael McFaul eds. *Revolution In Orange*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, 2006.
- <sup>56</sup> OSCE (1998), 3.
- <sup>57</sup> OSCE (1998), 3.
- <sup>58</sup> OSCE (1998), 18.
- <sup>59</sup> OSCE (1998), 5.
- <sup>60</sup> The 1998 OSCE report mentioned in Footnote #114 states that "contradictions between the law on local elections and the Ukrainian Constitution (led) to a legal vacuum on the correct procedure to elect the highest post in the city administrations of Kiev and Sevastopol." The Constitution states that law should delineate and regulate each of the two branches of government in each city, the state administration and council. Attempts by Parliament to resolve the issue were vetoed by President Kuchma. In both cities, the head of administration ran the councils without consent of elected representatives. The dispute failed to be resolved prior to the elections.

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- <sup>61</sup> OSCE (1998), 10.
- <sup>62</sup> OSCE (1998), 11.
- <sup>63</sup> OSCE (1998), 20, 3.
- <sup>64</sup> Klobucar, Miller, and Erb (2002), 315.
- <sup>65</sup> Klobucar, Miller, and Erb (2002), 315.
- <sup>66</sup> Kuzio, Taras. "Is Ukraine's Minister of Defense in Line to Become Transitional Strongman?" *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 25 January, 2004.
- <sup>67</sup> Klobucar, Miller, and Erb (2002), 317.
- <sup>68</sup> Klobucar, Miller, and Erb (2002), 318.
- <sup>69</sup> Klobucar, Miller, and Erb (2002), 319.
- <sup>70</sup> Klobucar, Miller, and Erb (2002), 321.
- <sup>71</sup> OSCE (2000), 11.
- <sup>72</sup> OSCE (2000), 11.
- <sup>73</sup> "Eyewitness Account of Terrorist Attack Against Nataliya Vitrenko." *Ukraine Today*, 11 October, 1999.  
<http://www.ukraine.org/www.ukrainet.lviv.ua/infobank/1999/1011e.html>.
- <sup>74</sup> OSCE (2000), 12.
- <sup>75</sup> OSCE (2000), 15.
- <sup>76</sup> OSCE (2000), 16.
- <sup>77</sup> OSCE (2002), 4.
- <sup>78</sup> Haslett, Malcolm. "Analysis: Kuchma Victory Raises Questions." *BBC News Online*, 15 November, 1999.
- <sup>79</sup> Haslett, Malcolm. "Analysis: Kuchma Victory Raises Questions." *BBC News Online*, 15 November, 1999.
- <sup>80</sup> Haslett, Malcolm. "Analysis: Kuchma Victory Raises Questions." *BBC News Online*, 15 November, 1999.
- <sup>81</sup> Haslett, Malcolm. "Analysis: Kuchma Victory Raises Questions." *BBC News Online*, 15 November, 1999.
- <sup>82</sup> "IMF Tells Ukraine: 'Reforms Before Loans.'" *BBC News Online*, 16 December, 1999.
- <sup>83</sup> "'Last Chance' Warning For Ukraine." *BBC News Online*, 22 December, 1999.
- <sup>84</sup> "'Last Chance' Warning For Ukraine." *BBC News Online*, 22 December, 1999.
- <sup>85</sup> Dalziel, Stephen. "Fight Breaks Out in Ukrainian Parliament." *BBC News Online*, 8 February, 2000.
- <sup>86</sup> Kirby, Alex. "Kiev: The Grey Reality." *BBC News Online*, 10 May, 1999.
- <sup>87</sup> Furlong, Ray. "Ukraine Waivers Between East and West." *BBC News Online*, 24 August, 2001.
- <sup>88</sup> "Ukraine Protesters Launch Hunger Strike." *BBC News Online*, 24 September, 2002.
- <sup>89</sup> "Ukraine Government Falls." *BBC News Online*, 26 April, 2001.
- <sup>90</sup> "Ukraine Government Falls." *BBC News Online*, 26 April, 2001.
- <sup>91</sup> "Ukraine Government Falls." *BBC News Online*, 26 April, 2001.
- <sup>160</sup> Prytula (2006), 106.
- <sup>161</sup> Andriy Shevchenko, parliamentary statement, *Ukrainska Pravda*, December 4, 2002. Information obtained from "The Ukrainian Media Rebellion." Anders Aslund and Michael McFaul eds. *Revolution In Orange*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, 2006.
- <sup>162</sup> OSCE (2002), 15.
- <sup>163</sup> OSCE (2002), 16.
- <sup>92</sup> Prytula, Olena. "The Ukrainian Media Rebellion." Anders Aslund and Michael McFaul eds. *Revolution In Orange*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, 2006.
- <sup>93</sup> OSCE (2002), 6.
- <sup>94</sup> OSCE (2002), 7.
- <sup>95</sup> OSCE (2002), 9.
- <sup>96</sup> OSCE (2002), 9, footnote #8.
- <sup>97</sup> The case was decided on February 6, 2002.
- <sup>98</sup> Ukraine Government Portal, Historical Archive, 2002 Elections for Verkhovna Rada.  
<http://www.kmu.gov.ua/control/en>.
- <sup>99</sup> Lynch (2002), 3.
- <sup>100</sup> Lynch (2002), 4.
- <sup>101</sup> OSCE (2002), 13.



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- <sup>102</sup> OSCE (2002), 13.
- <sup>103</sup> OSCE (2002), 13.
- <sup>104</sup> Woronowycz, Roman. "Leading Candidate From Ivano-Frankivisk Fatally Shot Two Days Before Election." *The Ukrainian Weekly*. 7 April.2002.
- <sup>105</sup> Woronowycz, Roman. "Leading Candidate From Ivano-Frankivisk Fatally Shot Two Days Before Election." *The Ukrainian Weekly*. 7 April.2002.
- <sup>106</sup> OSCE (2002), 14.
- <sup>107</sup> OSCE (2002), 18.
- <sup>108</sup> Aslund, Anders. "The Ancient Regime: Kuchma and the Oligarchs." Anders Aslund and Michael McFaul eds. *Revolution In Orange*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Washington, 2006.
- <sup>109</sup> Aslund, Anders. "Left Behind: Ukraine's Uncertain Transformation." *The National Interest*. Fall, 2003.
- <sup>110</sup> Aslund, Anders. "Left Behind: Ukraine's Uncertain Transformation." *The National Interest*. Fall, 2003.
- <sup>111</sup> Karatnycky, Adrian. "The Fall and Rise of Ukraine's Political Opposition: From Kuchmagate to the Orange Revolution." Anders Aslund and Michael McFaul eds. *Revolution In Orange*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Washington, 2006.
- <sup>112</sup> Prytula (2006), 117.
- <sup>113</sup> Other examples of analytic centers include Europe XXI Foundation, the Ukrainian Center for Independent Political Research, and the Democratic Initiatives Foundation.
- <sup>114</sup> Interview with Jeffrey Wills, Senator, Ukrainian Catholic University, 6/29/06.
- <sup>115</sup> See *Conservative Inconsistencies: Source of Strength for the Republican Party?* A paper presented by Luke Perry and Corey Wasserburger at the Great Plains Political Science Association Annual Meeting in Wayne, Nebraska on April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2006.
- <sup>116</sup> See Diuk, Nadia. "The Triumph of Civil Society." Anders, Aslund and Michael McFaul eds. *Revolution In Orange*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Washington, 2006.
- <sup>117</sup> See Demes, Pavol and Joerg Forbig. "Pora- 'It's Time' For Democracy in Ukraine." Anders Aslund and Michael McFaul eds. *Revolution In Orange*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Washington, 2006.
- <sup>118</sup> See Kuzio, Taras. "Everyday Ukrainians and the Orange Revolution." Anders Aslund and Michael McFaul eds. *Revolution In Orange*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Washington, 2006.
- <sup>119</sup> Poll cited in *Suchasnit*, April 2004. Information obtained from Kuzio, Taras. "Everyday Ukrainians and the Orange Revolution." Anders Aslund and Michael McFaul eds. *Revolution In Orange*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Washington, 2006.
- <sup>120</sup> Poll cited in *Zerkalo tyzhnia*, April 27, 2004. Information obtained from Kuzio, Taras. "Everyday Ukrainians and the Orange Revolution." Anders Aslund and Michael McFaul eds. *Revolution In Orange*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Washington, 2006.
- <sup>121</sup> Ruzmkov Center Poll, June 25, 2004. Information obtained from Kuzio, Taras. "Everyday Ukrainians and the Orange Revolution." Anders Aslund and Michael McFaul eds. *Revolution In Orange*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Washington, 2006.
- <sup>122</sup> OSCE (2004), 6.
- <sup>123</sup> OSCE (2004), 15.
- <sup>124</sup> OSCE (2004), 19.
- <sup>125</sup> OSCE (2004), 9-10.
- <sup>126</sup> See Kuzio, Taras. "Everyday Ukrainians and the Orange Revolution." Anders Aslund and Michael McFaul eds. *Revolution In Orange*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Washington, 2006.
- <sup>127</sup> Poll cited in *Den*, November 3, 2000. Information obtained from Kuzio, Taras. "Everyday Ukrainians and the Orange Revolution." Anders Aslund and Michael McFaul eds. *Revolution In Orange*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Washington, 2006.
- <sup>128</sup> See Diuk, Nadia. "The Triumph of Civil Society." Anders Aslund and Michael McFaul eds. *Revolution In Orange*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Washington, 2006.
- <sup>129</sup> Prytula (2006), 119.
- <sup>130</sup> Prytula (2006), 120.
- <sup>131</sup> Wilson (2005), 134.
- <sup>132</sup> Wilson (2005), 133.
- <sup>133</sup> Wilson (2005), 147.
- <sup>134</sup> Wilson (2005), 150.

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<sup>135</sup> Wilson (2005), 151.

<sup>136</sup> Wilson (2005), 154.

<sup>137</sup> Wilson (2005), 156.

<sup>138</sup> Wilson (2005), 157.

<sup>139</sup> Wilson (2005), 159.

<sup>140</sup> Wilson (2005), 159.

<sup>141</sup> Wilson (2005), 164.

<sup>142</sup> Wilson (2005), 161.

<sup>143</sup> This includes elections in 1994 (Round 1, 75%, Round 2, 66%), 1998 (70%), 2002 (69%), and 2006 (67%).

## CHAPTER IV

### CASE STUDY OF RUSSIA

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Russian Empire was among the largest in the world. The Tsarist regime had free enterprise, but with heavy state involvement. The dominant rural institution was the village land commune, which witnessed a degree of egalitarianism, a tradition of mutual responsibility, and a process of collective decision making, but as Robert Service puts it, “life was nasty, brutish, and short for most peasants.”<sup>1</sup> Under Alexander II, peasants were freed from bondage, but on average, were actually left with 13% less land to cultivate<sup>2</sup> Alexander’s reforms did enable franker public discussion of Russia’s problems as society was rapidly changing..

Industrialization did not occur until very late in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the working class, both urban and rural, quadrupled. Industrial workers became more politically sophisticated, while the intelligentsia became more politically active.<sup>3</sup> There were no elections or representative government at the national level until 1906. In the face of widespread lawlessness and upheaval, Nicolas II had two main options to maintain order, military rule or popular concessions, and opted for an ineffective mix.

Reforms, such as freedom of the press and freedom of assembly, were limited by the imposition of martial law in turbulent provinces and bureaucratic violations when it was believed that State security was jeopardized.<sup>4</sup> A popularly elected legislature was created, the State Duma, but could be dissolved by the crown at any time and was done so to punish aggressive Duma’s. Liberals and radicals in the Duma were shielded with immunity and used this right to criticize the regime. This stripped “the aura of

omniscience and omnipotence that it had so assiduously cultivated and that the population at large regarded as the hallmark of good government.”<sup>5</sup>

From a Russian perspective, however, the Fundamental Laws of 1906 were “a giant step toward democracy.”<sup>6</sup> The crown allowed elected representatives to be actively involved in the political process, including legislation and budgeting. This did not last long however. Contested elections ended by 1921 and private enterprise ended by 1929. The new Bolshevik regime fit no previous model. As the preeminent Bolshevik leader, Lenin was both an innovative theorist, reformulating Marx to fit the Russian context, and a revolutionary activist, who replaced spontaneous mass action with the will and discipline of the Bolshevik Party.<sup>7</sup> The regime created a system of dual authority where an extreme dictatorship was run by the Party behind the façade of popular self-government embodied in the soviets.<sup>8</sup> From the outset, Russian political leaders improvised their system of governance as they went along. Though rulers never succeeded in providing a theoretical foundation for rule, as Richard Pipes observes, nor succeeded in exercising completely unrestrained authority, as Robert Service observes, the one-party state was the lasting legacy that other Communist states would come to emulate.

The introduction of the one-party state had both destructive and constructive elements. No one questioned that the Bolshevik Party was “the engine driving the Soviet government.”<sup>9</sup> The top priority of the Bolsheviks was to uproot both tsarist and democratic elements of the old regime. In building a new regime, a new authority was “designed to resemble folkish, ‘soviet’ democracy but in reality akin to Muscovite

patrimonial absolutism.”<sup>10</sup> The goal was to transform soviets from mechanisms of government accountability to tools of the Party.

Though Bolsheviks claimed public authority over all of Russia, the Party remained primarily a private body.<sup>11</sup> The 1918 constitution created a “dictatorship of the urban and rural proletariat” and granted power to “formerly oppressed classes.”<sup>12</sup> There were no protections for citizens against the actions of government and the only people who earned a living through “productive and socially useful work” were able to vote. The most powerful institution was the Central Executive Committee (CEC). Top Bolshevik leaders, such as Lenin and Trotsky, quickly freed themselves from the CEC in “the first and only constitutional clash in the history of Soviet Russia.”<sup>13</sup> Essentially, “the two Bolshevik leaders arrogated to themselves full legislative authority and transformed the CEC and the Congress of Soviets, which it represented, from legislative into consultative bodies.”<sup>14</sup> In turn, “the system of legislation the Bolsheviks set in place within two weeks of October coup, for all its revolutionary rhetoric, marked a reversion to the autocratic practices of tsarist Russia before the Manifesto of October 17, 1905.”<sup>15</sup> After just eleven years, constitutionalism was over.

The Bolsheviks became accustomed to using violence to deal with opposition, so much so, that the machine gun became the “principal instrument of political persuasion.”<sup>16</sup> By August of 1918, the autonomy of soviets, the rights of workers to represent themselves, and a fragile multiparty system was over. Russia embarked on several years of one-party dictatorship. In 1924 a federal state was created and named the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Initial members included the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Belorussia, and the Transcaucasian republics, composed of Azerbaijan, Georgia,

and Armenia.<sup>17</sup> The new federal system granted much greater power to central authorities in Moscow. A unified Communist party controlled this centralized authority and completely dominated the political processes of all republics.<sup>18</sup>

In the face of wide-spread opposition and rebellion, Lenin introduced the New Economic Policy (NEP). The NEP restored capitalism, though in a restrained form.<sup>19</sup> The NEP produced mixed economic results, yet had far reaching social consequences. +Slow industrial growth retarded the development of the proletariat in cities. In rural areas, a new class of prosperous farmers led efforts to restore agricultural production and constituted a conservative element that resisted future land reforms. The NEP helped the Party consolidate power in the short term, by deflecting strong resistance to the regime, but created the long term challenge of sustaining the public legitimacy of an elite revolutionary movement dedicated to a class that was not becoming a vital social force. As a result, the party did not have a clear sense of purpose or mission.<sup>20</sup>

Stalin created a new post-revolutionary mission for the Party that stressed development, over revolutionary goals. Stalin's power was built around a new political class of party *apparatus* (members of governing power structure) and *nomenklatura* (top governing elites). Stalin used the *apparatus* as the eyes, ears, and mouth of the party. Beginning in 1936, Stalin undertook a series of purges that sought eliminate all traces of political opposition and ensure rapid industrialization and the collectivization of agriculture. The Great Terror between 1937 and 1938 resulted in mass arrests and long prison sentences for violations of the infamous Article 58 in the Criminal Codes of the Union republics, which provided guidelines for dealing with "counterrevolutionary activities."

Collectivization targeted the Ukraine, which was known at the time as the “breadbasket of the Soviet Union.” Ukrainians, however, would not easily part with their national identity and the organization of communes at the local level. From 1932 to 1933, Stalin instigated famine in the Ukraine by massively raising grain quotas farmers were required to give to the State. This killed over six million people and is currently considered among the worst genocides of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Forced labor killed millions, predominately men, in *gulags*, which have come to refer to both the administration of labor camps and the labor camps themselves. “Corrective labor camps,” as the State called them, were originally established in remote locations, such as Siberia, but then spread and varied geographically with the economic task at hand. The experiences of prisoners included interrogations, transportation in cattle cars, inadequate food, inadequate clothing, inadequate housing, poor hygiene, and lack of medical care, throughout years of exile in concentration camps that destroyed families and often led to premature death.

Internationally, Stalin hoped that opponents of Germany would unite until the USSR signed a non-aggression pact with Germany in 1939,<sup>21</sup> This meant that the USSR needed to be accepted as an equal in a Western-led international community. In turn, the 1936 constitution declared that class warfare in the USSR was over. Russia was hence composed of two “friendly” classes, the proletariat and peasantry, as well as one “stratum,” the intelligentsia. These three groups shared power through “state guidance of society,” rather than “dictatorship of the proletariat.”<sup>22</sup> The end of class struggle enabled franchise to be extended to all adult citizens in direct and secret elections and

establishment of a bill of rights. The State established the terms of compliance, however, and many rights could only be exercised in conformity with powerful interests “in order to strengthen the socialist system.”<sup>23</sup>

Consequently, Stalinist rule was highly repressive. Formal guarantees in the constitution were regularly ignored by the party and government. The Communist Party and the police force monitored and controlled nearly all aspects of a citizen’s life. As a result, legal guarantees meant very little in the face of arbitrary government action. Stalin’s death in 1953 prompted another power struggle that lasted for several years. Soviet politics changed in two significant ways: one-man party dictatorship gradually transitioned into oligarchic rule and struggles over who would replace Stalin set the Soviet Union on a course of reform that would produce significant consequences well after Nikita Krushchev, the new Soviet leader, left office.<sup>24</sup>

Like Stalin, Krushchev extensively relied on patronage to build his power. This translated into several appointments for supporters from the Party apparatus in Moscow, and Ukraine, where Khrushchev had served as party chairman. At the same time, Khrushchev sought to reduce the size of the central bureaucracy and decentralize power at the union, republic, and local levels. Khrushchev allowed republics greater autonomy in their pursuit of Socialism and created a new doctrine of “peaceful coexistence” with the West. Ultimately, Khrushchev was unable to consolidate power to the extent Stalin did, largely because of the weakening of the secret police and the difficulties that would accompany another purge.<sup>25</sup> Instead, Khrushchev focused on transforming the Party into one that could more efficiently manage a modern economy and in doing so, brought in new faces through the “rotation rule” that limited Presidium members to three terms.



By the fall of 1964, Khrushchev faced an array of opponents, including the party *apparatus*, the military, ideologists, and conservatives.<sup>26</sup> This opposition resulted in a widespread consensus among ruling elites that Khrushchev had gone too far in pushing for reforms and thus constituted a threat to their political survival. In turn, Khrushchev became the first and last Soviet leader to step down from a vote of no confidence.<sup>27</sup> The fourth and final Soviet constitution came in 1977 under Khrushchev's replacement, Leonid Brezhnev. This Constitution adopted an optimistic tone in discussing the creation of a new Soviet community, held together by an increasingly fused set of differing nationalities. The new community would develop from further perfection of Soviet democracy and the increased involvement of everyday citizens in governance.

When Gorbachev came to power in 1986, only someone very old could remember contested elections or private enterprise. At the expense of constitutions, which had limited significance, one thing the Soviet Union did do, was emphasize voting as a moral, civic responsibility, even when it was meaningless. Competitive elections were extended to all levels of government and a new legislature was established in 1988. Richard Kelly contends that Gorbachev's strategy was embodied in three concepts: *glasnost* (openness), *perestroika* (restructuring), and *demokratizatsiia* (democratization) and argues that each was purposely utilized as a political weapon. These weapons "were intended to mobilize the intelligentsia that had given up hope of reform or meaningful involvement in public life, to reassure the dissident community that had been pushed aside or worse in the Brezhnev years, and to win the support of the general public that had soured on the fiction of soviet democracy and the promise of a better life."<sup>28</sup>

*Glasnost* sought to accomplish three goals: 1) make information more available throughout the society in the belief that censorship had inhibited modernization; 2) garner support of the intelligentsia and dissident community who were skeptical of official versions of truth; 3) spotlight to highlight the current political problems or opponents.<sup>29</sup> Soon, however, newspapers acquired a new level of independence in an increasingly pluralistic media environment and Gorbachev's opponents of all stripes took advantage of the opportunity to publicize their versions of truth as well. *Perestroika*, meanwhile, became increasingly radicalized over Gorbachev's six years of rule. *Perestroika* originally represented "tinkering with the existing institutions," then became "a commitment to across-the-board structural reforms."<sup>30</sup> In turn, *Demokratizatsiia* occurred both within the Communist Party and throughout different levels of government. In the party, the power of the *appatchiki* was diminished as the power of rank-and-file members was enhanced, while in government, soviets were permitted to become more involved in governance.

1989 was a watershed year in Russian development. While Gorbachev promised material improvement, there was a reversion to food rationing. As Robert Service observes, "Soviet queues, already legendary for their length, became longer and angrier in the course of 1989."<sup>31</sup> Technological divisions between the Soviet Union and industrial capitalist countries had widened in all sectors but weapons procurement. The state budget would have been massively insolvent under Brezhnev if not for domestic revenues derived from vodka sales. Agriculture was so inefficient that food imports constituted 40% of hard currency expenditures. These and other social ills precipitated a state of economic emergency.

Gorbachev suddenly faced “two life-or-death alternatives: either abandon the reforms or make them more radical.”<sup>32</sup> Abandoning reforms was never seriously considered. According to Archie Brown, Gorbachev, more than any other political actor, was responsible for the pluralization of the Soviet political system, specifically “the creation of institutions that put an end to the command polity,” including the Communist Party’s monopoly of power.<sup>33</sup> The first televised session of Congress enthralled the public. People were fascinated to hear open debate of public questions. The group was generally supportive of Gorbachev, but no longer demonstrated pure obedience to the General Secretary. As Robert Service puts it, “what once had been said privately in living-rooms was given full-throated public utterance.”<sup>34</sup>

Gorbachev wanted the Congress to become the primary mechanism of ratification for political and economic reforms, rather than a verbal battleground between conservatives and radicals. Boris Yeltsin put a crimp in these plans. Yeltsin ran for a representative position in Moscow as a strong critic of the *nomenklatura* and won 90% of the vote. Yeltsin led more radical elements of the Congress who were determined to use the institution as a foundation of formal opposition to the communist regime, even though many were still party members.<sup>35</sup> In doing so, the so called Inter-Regional Group sought to pressure Gorbachev into further action against conservative party comrades.<sup>36</sup>

At the same time, reformers only numbered a few thousand and were unable to stimulate genuinely popular resistance. As a result, Gorbachev remained the country’s most popular politician until the mid-1980’s when Yeltsin overtook him. Robert Service explains:

Youth did not revolt against authority; it despised and ignored it. Indeed citizens, both young and old, treated politics as a spectator sport but not a process deserving their

participation. The quest for private pleasure outdid the zeal for public service . . . After years of being bored by stuffy Marxism-Leninism, their ideal of freedom was not the freedom to join a political party and attend open meetings on city squares. They wanted to stay at home and enjoy the freedom to be frivolous, apolitical, immobilized.<sup>37</sup>

Things were different outside of Russia. Nationalist dissent rose throughout Soviet Republics. Various leaders convinced their citizens that respective national problems could not be effectively addressed without greater economic and administrative reforms. Meanwhile, the KGB no longer arrested citizens for unlawful dissent, which allowed for a moderately independent press to emerge slowly. The farther west a nation was from Moscow, the bolder the resistance. Many republics created democratically elected presidencies and legislatures, though the degree of democracy varied from region to region. Every country east of the River Elbe was Communist at the beginning of 1989. By the end of the year, just one country, Albania, was still Communist.

By 1990 it was clear that “*perestroika* was no longer a project for partial alterations, but for total transformation.”<sup>38</sup> In February of 1990, Gorbachev sought approval from the Congress of People’s Deputies for multi-party politics. When ratified in April of that year, “the one-party state defended by communist apologists since the Civil War was relegating itself to oblivion.”<sup>39</sup> Yeltsin was the most outspoken proponent of faster and deeper reform.

In January of 1991, 15 people were killed when Soviet Special Forces in Lithuania overtook the Vilnius television tower in an attempt to deter separatist ambitions throughout the Soviet Union. Gorbachev, however, denied prior knowledge regarding the use of force and blamed local officials.<sup>40</sup> Determined to preserve territorial integrity in the USSR, Gorbachev organized a public referendum in March that asked: *Do you*

*consider necessary the preservation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as a renewed federation of equal sovereign republics in which the rights and freedom of the individual of any nationality will be guaranteed?*

The phrasing of the referendum “made it difficult for reform-minded citizens to vote against sanctioning the Union.”<sup>41</sup> Attached to the referendum on the preservation of the Soviet Union was a referendum on the creation of a presidency for the Russian Republic, not the Soviet Union. Creating a post of president was even more popular than preserving the Union. On June 12, 1991, Boris Yeltsin became the first publicly elected president in Russia. Yeltsin earned 57% of the vote and in doing so prevented a second round run off. Yeltsin was concerned that if the Community Party did not adapt to changing political attitudes, they would be dealt a “total historical defeat.”<sup>42</sup> The concern was prophetic.

Gorbachev and Yeltsin reconciled their differences in April, but Gorbachev had other problems. Gorbachev orchestrated a new Union treaty that would grant greater autonomy to regional governments. The treaty was accepted in principle by the Central Committee, but led to significant political divisions among top Soviet leaders in Russia. The date for signature was August 20, 1991. The agreement was not signed, however, because of an attempted coup by prominent Soviet leaders, such as Valentin Pavlov (Prime Minister), Vladimir Kryuchkov (Head of the K.G.B.), Dmitri Yazov (Minister of Defense), and Gennadi Yanaev (Vice-President). The coup sought to obstruct the treaty, which would significantly reshape the nature of the Soviet Union. Gorbachev was held in isolation as coup leaders declared he was incapable of fulfilling his executive duties and implemented a state of emergency.

A major failure of the coup was their failure to test the loyalty of Pavel Grachev, the chief of military operations, prior to the assault. When put to the test, Grachev refused to abandon Gorbachev and Yeltsin. This enabled Yeltsin to organize an impromptu rally at the White House, where tens of thousands of Russians gathered. Yeltsin famously climbed on to one of the tanks and from an exposed position declared his opposition to the coup. Coup leaders were not willing to be responsible for significant casualties.<sup>43</sup> Demonstrations against the coup broke out in other major cities, it collapsed days later.<sup>44</sup>

When Gorbachev returned to Moscow, the attempted coup had seriously discredited his personal political influence as well as the overall prestige of the regime. Gorbachev refused, however, to blame the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. At the same time, Gorbachev reluctantly agreed to dissolve the Communist Party under pressure from Yelstin. The coup had fundamentally changed the USSR and Yeltsin, not Gorbachev, emerged atop the political hierarchy.

That fall, Gorbachev sought to retain a role for the presidency by redrafting the Union treaty, but these efforts unraveled when Ukraine supported a referendum for independence on December 1. On December 7, the Commonwealth of Independent States was formed as a loose association of states who shared a commitment to economic coordination. Gorbachev resigned as president on December 25 and at midnight, December 31, 1991, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics came to an end.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union was “a transformation for which Gorbachev bears a large measure of responsibility even though it was an outcome he struggled desperately to avoid.”<sup>45</sup> By embracing democratization, Gorbachev permitted the articulation and defense of dissent, which forever altered the centralized nature of the

self-described Soviet democracy. Clearly, the Soviet political process was not in line with Western conceptions of democracy. At the same time, both the Soviet Union, and the Russian Federation which emerged afterward, shared formal elements of democracy, such as constitutions, institutions, and elections. These things meant very little in terms of a competitive political system with representative government. The key question after 1991 was if and how this would change.

The Soviet Union ended abruptly. The implementation of reform was of paramount concern. Yeltsin had proven to be a decisive leader. A central figure in the collapse of the old order, Yeltsin set out to create a better government and economy while his popularity was still extraordinarily high. In early 1992, two main courses of actions were seriously debated by Yeltsin and his advisers. The first option was to hold new elections that would provide a popular mandate for economic reform. The second option was to proceed with reform in anticipation of later electoral approval. Yeltsin chose the later option.

Yeltsin allowed Gaidar to replace fixed prices with free-market prices. Price liberalization would be one of several steps toward comprehensive reform. Other steps would include a balanced budget and the elimination of state subsidies. David Lipton described the road to freedom and prosperity in Russia as long and narrow.<sup>46</sup> Yeltsin's decision to avoid the electoral process and instead rely heavily on executive decrees caused more problems than it solved.<sup>47</sup> Yeltsin adopted political practices he once strongly attacked and in doing so set a precedent that was later used under Vladimir Putin to consolidate political power and undermine the democratic process.

At the same time, such practices enabled Yeltsin to pursue a reform agenda alongside a Russian Supreme Soviet whose majority did not share his conviction to create a market economy. The industrial *nomenklatura* demonstrated a high level of anxiety and uncertainty regarding the consequences of economic reform. These industrial leaders and managers were accustomed to an endless supply of resources to support their “enterprise empires” and felt threatened by changes in government involvement with economic activity. The *nomenklatura* pushed to slow and soften the reforms, which produced a struggle for economic control of Russian enterprises. Lipton described the relationship between reformers and the *nomenklatura* as a marriage, in which Yeltsin sought to ensure that reformers maintained the upper hand.<sup>48</sup>

Yeltsin and Gaidar mistakenly neglected to publicly justify new political programs, instead assuming people were tired of hearing about economic programs. The Communist Party was gone and Marxism-Leninism discredited, but much of the old order still remained. Local political and economic elites operated largely separate of Moscow and began to work closely with criminal groups toward promotion of common interests in a new era of market economy.

Yeltsin rarely met with or sought approval from the Supreme Soviet. Yeltsin “confined deliberations on policy to a small circle of associates” and “sacked personnel whenever and wherever his policies were not being obeyed.”<sup>49</sup> Where local opposition existed, Yeltsin introduced his own appointees who under a variety of titles, such as “plenipotentiaries,” “representatives,” “prefects,” and eventually “governors,” enforced his political will. Service claims that “in the guise of a President, Yeltsin was ruling like a General Secretary” and doing so “with less deference to ‘collective leadership.’”<sup>50</sup>



Yeltsin built a reform team of relatively unknown men who were predominately in their thirties and forties.<sup>51</sup> Most had little intention of staying in power long. Yeltsin saw himself as a modern Peter the Great. "Having seized the reins of Great Russia's coach and horses," Service explains, Yeltsin was determined "to drive headlong along a bumpy path." Those familiar with 18th century Russian history, however, "trembled at the comparison."<sup>52</sup>

After price liberalization, Yeltsin's reform agenda soon expanded to include privatization. This process was overseen by Anatoli Chubais, the Chairman of the State Committee for the Management of State Property. The overriding question in transferring state property to the private sector was who exactly should own previously state-owned companies. Chubais created a voucher system. Vouchers were available at 10,000 rubles per citizen and could be invested in companies when formed. Employees and managers were permitted to purchase up to 25% of the shares in their respective company once put on the market and further privileges were available should someone desire a majority stake. Results were mixed at best. Given the high rate of inflation, 10,000 rubles was a very small grant for individual citizens, and the internal enterprise buy-outs practically guaranteed that former Soviet managers could retain total control over their respective companies.<sup>53</sup>

Lobbying organizations became highly effective in pressuring Yeltsin during this period of economic transformation and uncertainty. These efforts were led by directors of energy, manufacturing, and agriculture, such as Arkadi Volsky and Viktor Chernomyrdin, who had been politically powerful under the Soviet system as well. Such

men suggested that economic collapse was on the horizon, but were willing to negotiate with Chubais. Robert Service explains:

Their basic demand was that if the government was going to insist on the denationalization of companies, this should be done without ending state subsidies and without threatening the immediate interests of the directors and workers. It was only when Chubais gave way on this that the Supreme Soviet ratified his program of privatization on 11 June (1992). This was the last success of the radical economic reformers for a year. They knew that they had compromised. But their rationale was that they had introduced enough capitalism to ensure that the members of the old Soviet nomenklatura would not permanently be able to shield themselves from the pressures of economic competition.<sup>54</sup>

Popular discontent was not limited to portions of the ruling elite. Social dissatisfaction and unrest became widespread throughout 1992. Food and industrial production fell. Many "simply cut out a patch of land on the outskirts of towns to cultivate produce or keep rabbits, pigs, or even cows," while others "moonlighted from their jobs, selling cigarettes at Metro stations."<sup>55</sup> Factories lacked discipline and funds to pay workers. Unable to maintain consistent production, hours were restricted and workers were laid off. Barter became more prevalent. Petty theft was widespread under Communism and persisted during the transition capitalism. For example, grocery clerks kept the best sausages, factory workers swiped screwdrivers, and acquisitions like these were traded among friends. The government no longer harassed people who legally or illegally sought to gain a bit of luxury in an economic environment where luxury was predominantly out of the reach of all but top elites. Poverty was widespread. People formed tent settlements, even in Moscow. Most of the poor were pensioners, orphans, and military invalids.<sup>56</sup>

All Russians, not just the poor, suffered from vast environmental degradation before and after the fall of the Soviet Union. There were significant increases in

respiratory and dermatological illness in heavy industrial areas, such as Chelyabinsk. Spent nuclear fuel was discarded in the White Sea without sufficient caution or oversight. Not since World War II, "had so many citizens of Russia felt so lacking in care by the authorities."<sup>57</sup> Alcohol abuse increased, while life expectancy fell. Most of the social problems facing common Russians were out of their control. These included deteriorating healthcare, lack of pollution standards, lack of industrial safety standards, and the fall in average family income.

The legal order was fragmented and ineffective. Everything was in flux, which made a law-based state elusive. As Robert Service puts it, "a world of experience was being turned upside-down."<sup>58</sup> Under these conditions, "criminality was pervasive in the development of the Russian market economy."<sup>59</sup> Bribery of government officials was commonplace. Generals regularly sold military equipment to the highest bidders, even Chechen terrorists. Wealthy Russian capitalists were not eager to invest their profits in their own country. These and other factors kept Russian development from proceeding at the same pace as neighboring countries such as Poland and Czechoslovakia.

In November of 1992, a Constitutional Court decision enabled Communist conservatives to reconstitute themselves as the Communist Party of the Russian Federation. The party was led by Gennadi Zyuganov and dedicated to the memory of Lenin and even Stalin. Yeltsin claimed to be above party politics, but backed Gaider, though not the extent of creating a party together. Critics of authoritarian government came under fire, most notably Gavriil Popov, who resigned as the mayor of Moscow in 1992 after being accused of fraud. This was indicative of a larger trend: wholehearted advocacy of liberalism became less common.

A party system had yet to develop in Russia. In contrast to the Soviet tradition “the problem was no longer the existence of a single party but of too many parties.”

Robert Service explains:

The problem was no longer the existence of a single party but of too many parties. The distinctions between one party and another were not very clear; their programs were wordy and obscure and the parties tended to be dominated by single leaders. The far-right Liberal-Democratic Party was described in its official handouts as 'the Party of Zhirinovski.' Russia had not yet acquired a stable multiple-party system, and this circumstance increased Yeltsin's freedom of maneuver.<sup>60</sup>

Regional assertiveness was also a problem, particularly in areas predominantly inhabited by Russians. In Sverdlovsk, for example, Yeltsin had to deal with his home territory which declared in 1993 that it was the heart of a so-called Urals Republic. Yeltsin used to encourage such behavior under Gorbachev. Once in power, Yeltsin asserted the prerogatives of centralized power, enacted taxes, and clearly stated that separatist tendencies would not be tolerated.

After the Russian Supreme Soviet sought to impeach Yeltsin in March of 1993, Yeltsin held a referendum on his policies. 59% of those who participated voted in support of the President. 53% approved of Yeltsin's economic policies. This was a victory for Yeltsin, but Yeltsin still had to rely on executive decrees, given the slim nature of his popular majority. Yeltsin also plotted to disband the Supreme Soviet by decree and hold new elections. When the executive decree was issued, however, deputies of the Supreme Soviet were informed and prepared. Hundreds barricaded themselves in the White House and declared control of government.

Yeltsin stressed his recent popular mandate, in contrast to the Supreme Soviet, which was elected in 1990. Neither side was particularly prone to compromise, though

that was what the public preferred.<sup>61</sup> Yeltsin eventually ordered the White House to be retaken by force. On October 4, military forces shelled the building, captured the coup leaders and detained them in the same prison that several of the August 1991 coup plotters were still being held.<sup>62</sup> This violent episode secured the future of economic reform and enabled Yeltsin to use his new power position to shape a new constitution which Yeltsin and the Supreme Soviet had been working on for some time.

Dating back to the spring of 1992, constitutional alternatives were entertained by a constitutional revision committee in the Supreme Soviet. Some advocated a system based on division of powers, which feared if either the executive or legislature became too powerful totalitarianism would reemerge. Other alternatives called for a strong executive modeled around the Fifth Republic in France and divided the legislatures into upper and lower chambers. Growing tension surrounding the creation process was temporarily diffused with a compromise in December of 1992 that called for a referendum on the draft constitution.<sup>63</sup>

Months later, however, Yeltsin produced another constitutional draft, with a stronger presidency, and formed a Constitutional Conference composed of delegates from different regions in the federation. The conference created a moderate draft that incorporated demands from both the president and parliament. Constitutional negotiations descended into crisis along with the "October Events" of 1993. In December, an amended version of the constitution was ratified via public referendum with 58% of the popular vote.<sup>64</sup> The Constitution was divided into two sections. The first section, which compromises nearly the entire document, is divided into nine chapters, each with a separate focus. The second section consists of concluding and transitional provisions.

The Russian Federation was constituted as a “democratic, federal, rule-of-law state with republican form of governance.”<sup>65</sup> Power was separated into separate legislative, executive, and judicial components. The adoption of a state ideology or religion was forbid. Individual rights and liberties are a “supreme value” and the recognition, observance, and protection of these rights are the obligation of the State. There are 47 articles in Chapter 2 that list the rights and liberties of Russian citizens.

These include:

- equality before the law the courts regardless of gender, race, language, origin, property, associations, etc. (Article 19)
- freedom from torture and violence (Article 21)
- right to a timely judicial process (Article 22)
- right to define one’s own ethnicity (Article 26)
- right to move (Article 27)
- freedom of religion (Article 28)
- freedom of thought and speech (Article 29)
- freedom of association (Article 30)
- right to petition government (Article 33)
- right of private ownership (Article 35)
- freedom from forced labor, right to vacation (Article 37)
- right to social security (Article 39)
- right to housing (Article 40)
- right to medical care (Article 41)
- right to a favorable environment (Article 42)
- right to education (Article 43)
- freedom of expression (Article 44)
- right to an attorney (Article 48)
- right be considered innocent until proven guilty (Article 49)
- freedom from double jeopardy (Article 50)
- freedom from self-incrimination (Article 51)

The constitution created a strong presidency where the executive is designed to be a source of stability in a contentious political environment. The President is head of state, guarantor of Constitutional rights, commander and chief of the armed forces, and top policy leader, both foreign and domestic. The president is elected to four-year terms via

secret ballot. The President must be at least 35 years old and may not serve more than two consecutive terms. The President has several enumerated powers which include selecting the Prime Minister, the ability to dissolve parliament, the ability to schedule referenda without legislative permission, the ability to veto legislation, and the ability to issue decrees. The President has legal immunity, but may be impeached through a long and difficult process.

The Russian court system operates from Constitution provisions and federal law. Federal judges must be at least 25 years old and have attained at least 5 years of professional legal experience. Similar to the U.S. Constitution, little is said about the Judiciary aside from specific types of courts and perimeters of jurisdiction. There are three major types of federal courts: Constitutional, Arbitration, and Supreme. As the name implies, Constitutional Court deals with constitutional issues and federal laws, the Supreme Arbitration Courts deal with economic disputes and the Supreme Court is the supreme judicial body.

The parliament, called the Federal Assembly, is a bicameral legislature. The State Council is the upper chamber, which consists of 178 directly-elected delegates, two deputies elected at large from eighty-nine districts throughout the Federation. The State Duma is the lower chamber, which consists of 450 directly-elected delegates, elected via secret ballot for four year terms. Representatives must be at least 21 years old. While in office, Duma members may not engage in paid activity except for teaching, research, or other creative activity. Half of the Duma seats are filled based on proportional representation. Parties receive seats based on the percentage of the vote received. The minimum threshold a party must obtain to qualify for seats is 5%. Half of the seats are

filled based on single member districts, which are very similar to the U.S. House of Representatives.

New elections for the State Duma were a clear defeat for Yeltsin and pro-reform forces.<sup>66</sup> Yeltsin had to once again deal with a lower house primarily composed of opponents to economic reform and negotiate with provincial elites from less than a position of strength.<sup>67</sup> Peter Ordeshook observed that “the marvel of the December 1993 elections (were) not that democratic reformers did so badly while Vladimir Zhirinovskiy did so well, but that the fascists, ultranationalists, and hardcore anti-reformists somehow failed to secure outright control of the new legislature.”<sup>68</sup>

Russia’s Choice, led by Gaidar, won the largest number of seats (96), but this was far short of majority control. When combined with other reform organizations, such as Yabloko (33 seats), the Party of Russian Unity and Accord (27 seats), and the Democratic Reform Movement (8 seats), pro-reform parties only totaled 36% of the seats.<sup>69</sup> At the same time, the elections were not an unqualified victory for major reform rival Vladimir Zhirinovskiy. Zhirinovskiy was ultra-nationalist, but an economically liberal and anti-Communist. Zhirinovskiy’s LDPR gained 59 seats and outperformed all other parties competing for proportional representation with over 23% of the vote. In single member districts, however, LDPR only gained 11 seats and in turn, the LDPR finished as the third largest faction behind Russia’s Choice and the New Regional Policy.<sup>70</sup>

Clark contends that the real winners in the 1993 elections were the Communists. There were two major Communist parties: the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF) and the Agrarian Party of Russia (APR). CPRF received over 13% of the vote, while APR won over 8% of the vote. The two parties combined held 112 seats,



which constituted the largest bloc.<sup>71</sup> Though public support of the Communists vindicated their struggles with Yeltsin, control of the Duma did not translate to Communist control of the national political agenda. The new constitution, ratified along with the elections, expanded presidential power at the expense of the most popular part of Russian government. Legislation requires a simply majority in the Duma and State Council prior to being sent to the President for signature. Presidential vetoes can be overridden with a two-thirds majority in each chamber. Communists, however, were not close to a two-thirds majority, evident in the fact that pro-reform factions were able to prevent the override of a presidential veto, often with Zhirinovsky's help.

The Duma was limited "in its ability to affect government" because "the president hold the trump card of dissolution in any case in which the Duma might attempt to exercise authority vis-à-vis either the president or the bureaucracy."<sup>72</sup> This was roughly similar to the tsarist Duma between 1906 and 1917 in its relationship to the executive and led to criticism among Russian scholars. Peter Ordeshook concluded after the 1993 elections that "instead of building a sensible incentive structure to support stable democratic institutions, Russia's democrats have opted for a naïve, populist version of democracy featuring crude demarcations of power between Moscow and federal subjects, a simplistic view of presidential leadership, and parliamentary-election procedures that try to be all things to all people."<sup>73</sup>

With the ratification of the new Constitution and corresponding elections, Russia had embarked on an uncertain path toward democracy. Though democratic institutions are designed to promote peaceful transition of power and representative government, the early years of the Russian transition depended on violence and extraordinary use of

presidential power to resolve institutional conflict and implement reform. When questions were put to the public, narrow support existed for reform, but Communists were granted a majority in the most popular branch of government. Themes such as violence, vast presidential power, and mixed public sentiment toward reform would come to characterize Russian development in ways that significantly inhibited the country's ability to develop fully-functioning democracy well after the fall of the Soviet Union.

Looking back on Russian history, one is struck by the fact that Russia experienced "democratic" elections, institutions, and constitutions in the Soviet period, yet these meant very little because of disproportionate power vested in the Communist Party and the State. This illuminates how any history of democratic procedures is not necessarily a helpful history in terms of democratic development. Past legacies with democratic structures will very likely influence present conceptions toward these structures and related systems of governance. In Russia, few citizens were excited about the prospect of elections and institutions as something of value in themselves because they meant so little for so long. This suggests that transition theorists would be better served to incorporate greater discussion of institutional legacies in particular parts of the world, rather than making universal generalizations regarding the effectiveness of, and corresponding popularity toward, democratic structures.

Similar to dominant scholars of democratic transitions, dominant scholars of capitalist transitions present a fairly monolithic model for best promoting capitalism throughout the former Soviet Union: the faster the better. Jeffrey Sachs is among the most notable economists focused on transitions to capitalism in the former Soviet Union. Sachs was an adviser to the Russian government as the notion of shock therapy was

developed and implemented. According to Sachs, the fall of the Soviet Union created an “unprecedented opportunity to create a law-bound and prosperous international system.”<sup>74</sup>

Sachs claims that developing countries have a “relatively straight forward set of guideposts for most fundamental reforms” because “all developed countries have openness, private ownership, and corporate governance.”<sup>75</sup> In turn, Sachs believes these guideposts constitute a basic three-prong model for capitalist development around the world. According to Sachs, capitalism is the best economic system because “one overriding lesson from the comparative growth experience of the last 50 years . . . is that capitalism ‘pays.’” More specifically, Sachs contends that all countries which maintained the main tenets of capitalism between 1970 and 1990 (open trade, currency convertibility, private sector as engine of growth) experienced increases in per capita income.

Unfortunately, “many countries have behaved badly until recently” and “are stuck in a transition crisis” because they took too long to adopt “the core capitalist institutions.”<sup>76</sup>

Sachs argues that the benefits of capitalist transitions are not just limited to the economic sphere. The expansion of capitalism promotes global security. Sachs claims that “the market revolution has gone hand in hand with a democratic revolution” in “virtually all of Latin America, Central Europe, and the former Soviet Union.” This is an important relationship for Sachs because the spread of democracy “almost surely reduces the risks of war, as do the increased economic links among countries.”<sup>77</sup> Thus, capitalism is the best economic system because capitalism is not just the most lucrative, but capable of enhancing world democracy and peace as well.

Considering these benefits, Sachs claims the most perplexing aspect of capitalist development is figuring out why it has taken so long for capitalism to triumph. According to Sachs, the modern capitalist system emerged in the early 1800's "with the development of the factory system, the modern corporate form of company organization, central banking, and the elimination of servile obligation in Western Europe, and the easing or elimination of mercantilist trade practices."<sup>78</sup> This movement began in England and its colonies, and then spread to Western Europe and beyond.

By the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century, the "profound economic superiority of capitalist institutions was apparent to keen observers no less than Karl Marx and Fredrich Engels, who rightly predicted in *The Communist Manifesto* that capitalism would undermine traditional societies."<sup>79</sup> Sachs cites a passage from *The Communist Manifesto* that states capitalist development draws "even the most barbarian nations into civilization." Throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century, countries across the globe, such as China and Japan, and powerful empires, like the Russian and Ottoman empires, all embarked on "modernizing" reforms.

Sachs observes that the "financial turmoil of the 1920s, and the collapse of the international economy in the Great Depression of the 1930's" prevented "successful transition" in Russia, China, the Ottoman Empire, and elsewhere.<sup>80</sup> Leading economic theorists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, such as John Maynard Keynes acknowledged that capitalism was unstable and "the state became the great stabilizer."<sup>81</sup> "By the time World War II ended in 1945," Sachs explains, "there was no international trading system; no convertible currencies except the American dollar' and no moral attraction in the

developing world to a capitalist system that had led to imperialist plunder, depression, and two world wars in 30 years.”<sup>82</sup>

After the war, “the world divided into the proverbial First, Second, and Third Worlds and the division remained in tact until the 1980’s.”<sup>83</sup> Sachs claims that “the Capitalist Revolution of the 1990s” unraveled the tripartite world system.” The “overriding reason for the revolution” was that 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> world alternatives “did not work.” In contrast, First World countries “experienced an economic boom of unprecedented magnitude.”<sup>84</sup> Sachs explains the consequences of this boom:

As a result of developments of the past decade, a global capitalist economy is within view for the first time, though it has not yet arrived. Countries with a combined population of roughly 3.5 billion people have undertaken radical economic reforms to adopt the institutions of the capitalist system. These core reforms include six common points:

- (1) open international trade;
- (2) currency convertibility;
- (3) private ownership as the main engine of economic growth;
- (4) corporate ownership as the dominant organizational form for large enterprises;
- (5) openness to foreign investment;
- (6) membership in key international economic institutions, including the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the GATT, which is now superseded by the new World Trade Organization (WTO).<sup>85</sup>

Sachs fears that this unprecedented window of opportunity may close and concludes that “the world has much to gain from the spread of capitalism, and much to lose, if the West fails to act decisively.”<sup>86</sup> Despite this vast record of success, Sachs does acknowledge that early efforts toward economic reform in Eastern Europe faced significant challenges. Sachs claims “most of these problems (could) be ameliorated by rapid privatization.”<sup>87</sup>

The major failure of Eastern European governments has been the inability to “devise privatization strategies that adequately address the systematic crisis of the state

enterprise sector.” Sachs argues that Eastern European countries “have tended to view privatization as an exercise to be carried forward one enterprise at a time and on a ‘voluntary basis,’ in which various stakeholders in the enterprise are given a veto over the process.”<sup>88</sup> As a result, most large enterprises from the Soviet era failed to escape heavy state control years after reforms were initiated, plagued by the lack of a clear path to future privatization.

Sachs calls for “across-the board mechanisms of privatization in which thousands of industrial enterprises are moved along the privatization process simultaneously.”<sup>89</sup> Sachs claims “the key initial step” is the “mass commercialization of enterprises, in which thousands of enterprises are transformed into joint-stock companies, with the initial claims over the shares reflecting the balance of interests in the enterprises.”<sup>90</sup> This commercial transformation would “provide a system of enterprise governance.”<sup>91</sup> Once enterprise governance was established, “a supervisory board would be appointed for each enterprise, bound by the standard responsibilities defined in European and American corporate law.”<sup>92</sup>

Like Sachs, Anders Aslund was an adviser to the Russian government during the conception and implementation of shock therapy. Aslund claims that Western politicians and media misunderstand Russian corruption and deteriorating infrastructure. These were not the products of poorly designed reforms, but the remnants of Soviet mismanagement, which have taken many years to be corrected. In turn, Aslund argues that Russia’s transformation has developed a unique mythology that does not accurately reflect the development process.<sup>93</sup>

Like Sachs, Aslund was a leading proponent of shock therapy. Aslund contends that one popular myth surrounding Russian economic reform is that “shock therapy was a failure.”<sup>94</sup> Conventional wisdom, according to Aslund, states that radical economic reforms, like price liberalization and privatization, were implemented too fast and too soon. In response, Aslund claims that Boris Yeltsin faced little choice but to reform rapidly in the wake of several gradual and ineffective reforms. Furthermore, the most successful transformations in Eastern Europe, such as Poland and Estonia, implemented reforms far more radical than Russia. As a result, Aslund considers most problems facing Russia at the turn of the century to be indicators of insufficient reforms: excessive state intervention, corruption, high tax rates, lingering inflation, and limited rule of law. In turn, “Russia’s real problem was too little shock and too much corrupt state therapy in the form of subsidies to the country’s elite.”<sup>95</sup>

A second myth Aslund seeks to debunk is that privatization has only generated corruption. Aslund claims “it would be more accurate to say that it has generated national wealth.” Aslund points out that the private sector generated no less than 70% of Russia’s GDP from 1997 to 2001. Whereas corruption is typically understood as the misuse of public power for private gain, privatization “permanently deprives public servants of public property.”<sup>96</sup>

Thus, privatization is one of Russia’s most successful reforms, though commonly blamed for all economic shortfalls. Aslund claims it would be more logical to criticize less successful reforms, like price liberalization.

Aslund is a supporter of shock therapy and mass privatization, but acknowledges serious failures in Russian attempts to implement radical economic reform. In 1999, for

example, Aslund states that “radical economic reform largely failed because of extraordinary rent-seeking by old enterprise managers.”<sup>97</sup> Rent-seeking managers are “virtually unconstrained economic elite” who seek to strengthen their position by maintaining state subsidies and corruption, rather than furthering capitalist transformation.

Other economic problems that hampered Russia in the 1990’s were a 40% drop in GDP, a significant rise in poverty, and high unemployment. Aslund argues that “reforms could have been reinforced if democratic institutions had been developed faster if the West had provided financial support for the reforms in early 1992.” Given these outstanding problems, Aslund concludes that shock-therapy was “neither radical, nor fast, but slow and partial.”<sup>98</sup>

Sachs and Aslund are two leading economic scholars of transitions to capitalism. These proponents of shock therapy argue that the urgency of the model emerges from the overall profitability of the system over time. To end the perpetuation of inefficient state control of the economy, which severely inhibits economic growth, rapid liberalization is the quickest path to economic efficiency. The pace of reform must be as immediate as possible because societal openings for capitalist reform are historically limited and capitalism is universally desirable. Any short-term costs are nothing compared to the long-term advantages.

The arguments of Sachs and Aslund exhibit parallels between economic scholars of transition and aforementioned political scholars of transitions, such as Huntington, O’Donnell, Schmitter, Karl, Linz and Stepan. Both understand capitalist-democracy to be universal components of social progress. Both understand capitalist-democracy as the



victorious ideology in the wake of World War II, which defeated Fascism, and the Cold War, which defeated Communism. Both provide understandings of the transition processes that can effectively fit in any social context as long as the proper model is followed.

Transition to democracy scholars, such as Huntington and O'Donnell, claim that founding elections instigate a transition and democratic institutions inevitably consolidate transitions, whereas transition to capitalism scholars, Aslund and Sachs, claim that fully-functioning capitalism best results from rapid economic liberalization. These understandings predominately reflect a Western perspective that does not necessarily fit with an array of powerful social perspectives and values abroad, such as theocracy, socialism, tribalism, national pride, anti-Semitism, and anti-Americanism. Furthermore, both approaches provide an excessive focus on the end result of transitions, while overlooking many important complexities of the development process itself, such as popular attitudes toward reform, the implementation challenges that face specific countries, and expectations based on experience, which might be called "culture" or "tradition."

As a result, I question these major assumptions made by predominant scholars of both economic and political transitions, particularly as these assumption fit in the relatively unique context of the former Soviet Union. Given Russia's size, culture, and history, a rapid transition to capitalism was bound to have varied and profound effects on Russian society for years to come. The turbulent years of rapid reform produced many different viewpoints on the nature and impact of shock therapy in Russia, most of which were predominately negative throughout the first decade of reform.

The implementation process of Shock Therapy generated a significant debate on the effectiveness of the model. David Lipton contends that “in the midst of political and economic turmoil in Russia, it is easy to lose sight of the fact that economic reforms launched in the beginning of 1992 brought about significant improvements” in a relatively short period of time.<sup>99</sup> This turmoil most notably took the form of inflation which reached 250% in January of 1992. When Gaidar removed official price restraints, in line with policies of price liberalization, demand pushed prices upward. “Even though markets will not function well until stabilization and privatization are accomplished,” Lipton observes, “the Russian economy has been transformed to a market economy.”<sup>100</sup>

According to Lipton, the Russian economy of 1993 barely resembled that of the economic situation in 1991, “let alone that of the past seven decades.”<sup>101</sup> The remnants of central planning were removed by liberalization of prices and economic activity, while enterprises were granted the freedom to determine what goods to produce and how to produce them. Government and industry associations stopped issuing directives to enterprise managers. New commercial ventures and activities quickly developed, such as the kiosk business in Moscow and St. Petersburg. Internationally, trade barriers were lifted and a floating exchange rate was developed that helped to enhance access to world markets.

Though liberalization efforts were far from complete by the end of 1993, Lipton concludes that new commercial relations were “emerging everywhere” and most importantly, these relations were “based on market conditions, rather than on directives.”<sup>102</sup> Lipton argues Russia’s great natural resources and human resources provide for tremendous economic potential. To implement fully functioning capitalism,

however, Russia will have to shift resources out of heavy industry and into consumer orientated manufacturing services. The dominance of military production has created vast inefficiencies within the economic system that need to be corrected if capitalism is going to take hold.

Abram Bergson views the “big bang” reforms under Yeltsin as the successor to Gorbachev’s reforms. Bergson claims that Yeltsin inherited “fiscal and market disarray” upon taking office and points to Gorbachev’s acknowledgement in 1990 that the “most serious mistake in the years of perestroika” was that “we lost control of the financial situation in the country.” Responding to this grave situation “was a cardinal matter with which Yeltsin would have to deal urgently.”

Bergson states that to Yeltsin’s credit he did so, “though with mixed results.” Bergson points to privatization as a major component of the “big bang” development. “Under the Big Bang,” Bergson explains, “property is supposed to be privatized in a wholesale way,” but “how that is accomplished and how rapidly are knotty questions on which the ‘standard prescription’ itself understandably allows a degree of discretion.”<sup>103</sup> In Russia, privatization occurred quickly. By July of 1994, for example, 43% of all Russian enterprises were privatized. Bergson claims this exhibits the sense of commitment by Yeltsin and his associates to an unprecedented pace of transformation.

Bergson states that legally speaking “there has been a veritable revolution in agricultural ownership, paralleling that in industry.”<sup>104</sup> The land no longer belongs to the State, but those who work the land. Land can be bought and sold. Ownership can be individual or collective. Given how quickly the market was initiated, however, “a farmer must be bold to strike out on his own in Russian circumstances.”<sup>105</sup> If in a cooperative

farm, one likely faced resistance from other members. Local political authorities developed binding policies that posed bureaucratic obstacles for farmers. The availability of needed supplies and equipment was limited. For these and other reasons, there were only 277,300 private family farms in April of 1995, just over 5% of Russia's arable land.<sup>106</sup>

Despite progress, Bergson discusses several areas of concern surrounding "big bang" development in Russia. One area of concern is the monopolization of formerly State controlled industries. According to Bergson, the government response to this development was "rather ineffective" and by 1995, when the piece was written, the problem was not adequately resolved.<sup>107</sup> A second area of concern was the high inflation of the early 1990's. Though a price surge was expected under Gorbachev, as Lipton acknowledges, "the nearly fourfold jump in 1992, however, was even greater than anticipated."<sup>108</sup> The Russian inflation rate was 2318% in 1992, 841% in 1993, 205%, and 131% in 1995.<sup>109</sup> Whereas inflation was repressed under Gorbachev, it became a significant and overt problem under Yeltsin. Inflation was the main the reason for the resurgence of the Community Party in 1993, especially among older people who saw their life savings made worthless by inflation.

A third area of concern was a steep decline of Russian output. Bergson points to official data that revealed the GDP in 1994 was just 62% of the GDP in 1990. The accumulated drop in GDP between 1992 and 1994 was nearly 40%, compared to just a 30% loss in GDP between 1929 and 1993 in America during the Great Depression<sup>110</sup> Bergson concludes that the collapse was due, at least in part, to the Big Bang and the "confusion" and "disorganization" surrounding the transformation. Furthermore, Bergson

contends that Russia absorbed a multitude of simultaneous shocks, which negatively impacted economic growth. These shocks included the end of the Cold War, a shrinking defense sector, the dissolution of Comecon, the Communist trading bloc, and the breakup of an economically integrated USSR.<sup>111</sup>

Given these trends and concerns, Bergson concludes that Russia experienced a severe inflationary depression, just three years after independence. Inflationary depression was a typical phenomenon in post-Communist transitions, but the severity in Russia was unique. This development was not favorable to the introduction of markets and entrepreneurship, but many Russians fared well and not just the economic elites. This was evident in the continuation of a social safety net that took a more liberal form.

Padma Desai is more critical of the ways in which shock therapy shaped the development process in Russia. As Russia entered its fourth year of economic reform in 1995, Desai claims that doubts centered around three issues: 1) the pace of reform; 2) the prospects for success; 3) the role of outside influences in the transition process. According to Desai, the rapid economic reform undertaken in Russia simply could not be achieved within a democratic political setting, “where consensus building is a slow but necessary process.”<sup>112</sup>

The size of the task created concern for scholars, such as Desai, who questioned whether public attitudes necessary for free markets could rapidly take root in a country that was used to central planning.<sup>113</sup> Desai states that:

Decisions that are routine in market economies- what to produce, which technologies to adopt, where to set up a factory, how much to borrow from a bank- turned out to be daunting for those who had never been faced with such choices. Household decisions about which job to select, or whether to borrow money to start a small business, proved no less formidable. The interaction among countless choices like these generates market efficiency. Few reforming economies were ready to leap from centralized

planning to a market in which innumerable decision makers had to play by an unfamiliar set of rules.<sup>114</sup>

Unfamiliarity was a problem in terms of foreign aid as well. “Russian policymakers,” Desai explains, “unfamiliar with the complexities of aid diplomacy, nursed hopes for aid and credits bilateral and multilateral sources that ran far ahead of any potential flow.” These policymakers were joined by Harvard professors Jeffrey Sachs and Graham Allison, who had “unrealistic expectations” and “floated a megabuck aid plan designed to initiate rapid economic reforms in Russia.” The problem was that Russian policymakers and the aforementioned Western advisers failed to recognize that “foreign investors would not send capital to Russia without sound opportunities to turn a profit” and a stable, dependable economic system that makes risks more bearable.<sup>115</sup>

Desai argues that the transition would have been more successful if Congress and the Reagan administration had not insisted on democratization including the liberation of the Baltic Republics and that aid, trade, and credits, would be delivered “only if the USSR embraced a full package of market-based reforms in the areas of financial discipline, price decontrol, and privatization of factories.”<sup>116</sup> This “all-or-nothing approach” was designed to prevent a sequencing of reforms that would undertake one type of transition, political or economic, prior to the other. The Russian reform process soon demonstrated that “economic reforms cannot be swiftly initiated and carried out if political arrangements include checks and balances between the executive authority that proposes reforms and the legislature that must accept them.”<sup>117</sup>

Shock therapists, such as Sachs, did not realize this at the time and instead believed that time and compromises were “like a ditch that could be leapt in a single

bound.” More specifically, the period of “extraordinary politics” was understood as a unique situation in which “the public would be willing to endure the pain of high prices and joblessness.” In contrast, a more gradual approach “would drag things out intolerably, making such costs felt long after politics had turned ‘ordinary’ again and giving opponents of reform a chance to regroup and counterattack.”<sup>118</sup>

Desai, on the other hand, was clearly a proponent of a more gradual approach in both the political and economic realms because such an approach would have been more effective in producing lasting democratic norms, such as a peaceful process of consensus building. Instead, Russian policymakers and Western advisers sought to push a set of reforms in 1992 through a “window of opportunity” that were not supported by the popular branch of government. This reduced the reform process to a “disappointing routine” by the end of 1994.

The amount of aid was far short of promises and what aid was granted was not being absorbed quickly enough. For example, \$43.4 billion was promised to Russia from abroad in 1993, but only a little more than half that amount actually allocated. In addition to aforementioned criticisms of shock therapists, Desai blames Russian authorities for not coming up with appropriate project proposals to utilize available funding. The World Bank, for example, approved nearly \$3 billion in loans in June of 1994, but at the time, only \$587 million from the first World Bank loan in August of 1992 was used. Similarly, Congress approved nearly \$2 billion in aid between 1992 and 1994, but less than \$500 million was spent by December of 1994.<sup>119</sup>

Still, the heated confrontations between reformers and the *nomenklatura* did subside in favor of greater pragmatism. Unlike 1992 and 1993, the Chernomyrdin

government prepared to compromise with various Duma factions in 1994 when it came to limiting the budget. At the time, Desai concluded that “the sensible option for Russia (was) a steady transition defined by a more manageable inflation rate” because “how inflation control is handled will influence political outcomes, which in turn will help to structure economic choices in the next round of Russia’s transition.”<sup>120</sup>

According to Hedlund and Sundstrom, the next round of reform was a bit more successful than the period described by Lipton, Bergson, and Desai, though significant problems and obstacles remained. The summer of 1995 produced the first signs of potential recovery. This was evident in falling inflation, which reached a low of 3.2% in December of 1995, and a decrease in the rate of GDP decline, which fell from double digits between 1992 and 1994 to a 4% decline in 1995. The OECD released a study in October of 1996 that claimed inflation and the budget deficit were under control.<sup>121</sup>

Hedlund and Sundstrom argue that “the debate on Russian economic reform has been marked by two characteristics which have combined in a rather unfortunate manner to block traditional economic analysis.”<sup>122</sup> The first characteristic was a strong focus on policy, which led to a debate between rapid and gradual approaches to reform. The second characteristic was “the sense of being involved in something exceptional” which “led to the application of a variety of miracle cures at the expense of sound existing knowledge.”<sup>123</sup>

Hedlund and Sundstrom contend that the exceptional nature of shock therapy was unfortunate because the institutional realities of Russian society were pushed to the background by assuming that Russia did not significantly differ from Western market-oriented economies. Five years into the transition, Hedlund and Sundstrom conclude that



this assumption was wrong because “Russian society was seriously lacking in terms of such institutions- formal and informal- that combine to make a functioning market economy possible.” Rather, a shared belief in the exceptional nature of the Russian transition “provided legitimacy for miracle cures, which often had little or no foundation in economic theory.” Hedlund and Sundstrom explain:

With more than four years of accumulated experience of attempted systematic change, we can hardly avoid concluding that many of even the most pessimistic expectations have been met and exceeded. This applies not only to shortcomings in the design of reform- the really crucial issues relate to the ability of the Russian economy to undertake institutional change, and the ability of Russian society to transform such fundamental social and legal norms as they combine to draw the line between the jungle and the market economy.<sup>124</sup>

The poor state of the Russian economy between 1992 and 1994 of economic transition was evident in a 40% drop in GDP, a 45% drop in industrial output, a 60% drop in investment, and a 25% drop in real wages.<sup>125</sup> Hedlund and Sundstrom adopt Steven Rosefielde’s characterization of the situation as one of “hyper-depression.”<sup>126</sup> Furthermore, Hedlund and Sundstrom point to other scholars, such as Vincent Coen and Michael Marrese, who provide several reasons as to why Russia should have outperformed its neighbors, both in and out of the former Soviet Union. Russia had several advantages over other transition economies, such as “vast deposits of natural resources, a huge domestic market, a potential for substantial gains in terms of trade, lagging sectors with a great potential for efficiency improvement, a total absence of restitution problems and- perhaps most important- overwhelming interest and support from the West.”

Other scholars, however, emphasize continuity, rather than variance, in understanding the post-Soviet transition. Stanley Fischer, for example, points out that all

former Soviet republics experienced shocks, the most important being the collapse of Comecon and Soviet trade. At the same time, Fischer argues that cross-country data fails to support the idea that shock therapy produced a decline in output that would have been greater than no reform or a gradualist approach.

Countries that decided not undertake rapid reform programs, such as Ukraine and Hungary, have output declines as large as declines in countries with radical reform programs, such as Russia and Poland. In turn, Fischer concludes that the debate between big bang approaches and gradual approaches oversimplifies debates over the pace of reform. In contrast to Desai, Fischer argues that conditions in the former Soviet Union are very different than in China, the predominant model for gradual transition. Fischer explains:

The economies are more heavily industrialized, and their agricultural sectors are too small to be the driving force of reform. Their state-owned industrial sectors are too large and inefficient to be ignored, as they were in China, and the restructuring is certain to cause more unemployment. While China has succeeded in maintaining macroeconomic control, both Poland and Russia had to start their reform programs in conditions of extreme macroeconomic instability.<sup>127</sup>

In addition to significant drop-offs in output, however, Hedlund and Sundstrom contend that the distributional consequences of inflation in Russia were “dramatic.” “All those with minor savings in the bank saw their capital being wiped out,” Hedlund and Sundstrom explain, while “all those who lived on fixed incomes- state wages, pensions or other transfers- experienced a sharp reduction in their real incomes.” Like Bergson, Hedlund and Sundstrom claim that the impact of inflation was much more severe than anticipated. In 1991, for example, money expansion was “clearly out of hand,” as “Moscow printed more money than had been created during the previous 30 years!”<sup>128</sup>

Though inflation in Russia was much less in 1994, “an annual inflation rate of more than 200% must nevertheless be considered a very serious problem.”<sup>129</sup>

Hedlund and Sundstrom also discuss other indicators aside from the commonly discussed macroeconomic indicators. They claim there is also cause for concern from a regional perspective, where the dynamics of redistribution are more astounding. Between 1992 and 1994, the gap between per capita real incomes of the poorest oblast compared to the richest oblast, increased from eight times more, to 42 times more. This indicates that some of regions now suffer from very severe poverty. Equally troubling, is the fact that 75% to 80% of all financial transactions just take place in Moscow.<sup>130</sup>

These developments lead Hedlund and Sundstrom to conclude that the Russian economy was significantly restructured, true to the intention of reformers, but the direction of change “has hardly been that which is normally associated with modernization within the framework of a modern economy.”<sup>131</sup> A significant problem was how “shock therapy was implemented as a military offensive- there would either be a quick breakthrough or the whole war would be lost.”<sup>132</sup> The shock was artificial because it failed to adequately consider the specific institutions of the Russian economy, suggesting that Russian transition policy was more driven from expediency, than comprehensive strategies rooted in economic theory and development experiences.

Politically, voting in way that actually meant something was still quite new in 1995, the year of the Duma election. Voting occurred frequently under the Soviet system, but only since independence did Russians had the opportunity to choose between candidates, parties, or between voting and not voting. The Duma was elected to a two year term, in contrast to the typical four year term. Shortly after the success of

ultranationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy and the Communists, Yegor Gaidar, leader of pro-reform Russia's Choice, acknowledged that reformers were dealt a "bitter defeat" and resigned from government. The 1995 Duma elections were positioned to shape parliamentary politics for rest of the decade.

Electoral law in 1995 was very similar to the 1993 election. The controversial dual system of party lists and individual constituencies remained in place. The political environment was quite different however. Aforementioned economic turmoil promoted significant economic inequality. Many Russians were living below basic subsistence, as high as one-third by some estimates. 8% of Russians were officially out of work, while another 20% not being paid on a regular basis. Meanwhile, the wealthy were getting wealthier in both absolute and relative terms. In 1995, the wealthiest 10% were earning 25 times more than the poorest 10%.<sup>133</sup> Life expectancies were falling and crime was increasing. The number of murders had doubled in just three years and three Duma members were among the victims.

The Central Election Commission reported that 273 organizations were entitled to nominate candidates for the Duma and 69 organizations declared their intention to do so. To compete, electoral law required that electoral associations gather at least 200,000 signatures of electors and no greater than 7% of these signatures could come from one republic or region. Candidates running for single member districts were required to gather at least 1% support from the respective constituency. In these 225 districts, the candidate who secured the most votes won the respective seat. The remaining 225 seats allocated by proportional representation required that electoral associations secure at least 5% of the vote and at least 25% of the electorate turn out to vote.

2,627 individual candidates were nominated, 1,055 independents. 43 parties were registered. 5,675 total candidates filled out party lists. Parties could be divided into four groupings: 1) reform; 2) pro-government; 3) national-patriotic; 4) Communist. The reform group was dedicated to further democratic and capitalist reform. Reformist parties included Russia's Choice, under Gaider, the Peasant Party, under Yuri Chernichenko, the Social Democratic Party, under Alexander Yakolev, and Yabloko, under Grigorii Yavlinsky. The pro-government group was a coalition of power-holding elites dedicated to maintaining Chernomyrdin's governance. The group represented two major interests: the energy complex, in which Chernomyrdin was a central figure, and the metallurgical complex, in which Oleg Soskovets was a central figure.

The national-patriotic group was centered on organizations such as the Congress of Russian Communities, which was led by representatives of important constituencies. This included Yuri Skokov, a former chairman of the Security Council, Sergei Galz'ev, a former minister of foreign trade, and Alexander Lebed, a very popular military general. The Congress sought the gradual and peaceful reconstruction of the Soviet Union, the restoration of Russia as a great power, tougher action against crime, the promotion of an effective and socially oriented market economy, and greater support of traditional Russian institutions such as the church and family.<sup>134</sup> The Communist group centered on the Communist Party of Russian Federation led by Zyuganov. The mass membership of over a half million and relatively well developed networks of local activism was unique compared to other parties. In turn, the Communist Party was the only organization that was truly larger than its key leader. This was evident in how Zyuganov was less popular than the party he led.<sup>135</sup>

White, Wyman, and Oates contend that the single most important document that dictated the nature of the 1995 campaigns was adopted by the Central Electoral Commission on September 20.<sup>136</sup> Regulations stated that the media must refrain from any bias in news coverage and required the allotment of free air time to all registered parties and candidates. One hour of each day between November 15 and December 15 was shared by registered parties, while individual candidates made arrangements with regional electoral commissions. Individual candidates were granted up to 20 minutes of radio or television coverage as well free advertising in local press. The European Institute of the Media, who monitored the campaign on behalf of the European Union, reported that free time was distributed with compliance to regulations aside from a few minor complaints. Given tremendous size of the country and the weak development of membership structures and winter conditions, parties put a lot of effort into television commercials. Both television and printed media focused more on individual leaders than party platforms.

The Central Electoral Commission also limited campaign expenditures. Campaign funds were processed through special temporary accounts in the national bank. Campaign spending for political associations was capped at \$2.4 million and \$95,000 for individual candidates. Donations were regulated as well. Individuals could contribute up to \$284 to a party and no more than \$190 to a candidate's election fund. Private firms could contribute up to \$1,900 to candidate's election fund and \$19,000 to a party. Contributions from foreigners, international organizations, and Russian firms with over 30% foreign ownership were prohibited.<sup>137</sup>

According to survey evidence, Russians had mixed feelings about the electoral process. 90% believed the results would be manipulated, while 57% thought they would have little to no effect on government policy. At the same time, over half of those polled believed that it was the duty of citizens in a democratic society to participate in elections, two-thirds of whom completely supported this view. In October of 1995, 70% claimed they intended to vote, which was up from 60% in April. Three quarters of Russians believed that Russia was headed in the wrong direction. Only 16% expressed confidence in Yeltsin and just 11% in the Duma. Discontent could be explained by the fact that 56% of Russians stated their standard of living had declined in the previous year.<sup>138</sup>

64% of the electorate turned out to vote. 993 registered election observers from 61 countries were distributed throughout the country. The consensus of international observers was that the will of the populace was accurately reflected. A delegation from the European Parliament declared the elections were “100% free and democratic.” The International Foundation for Electoral Systems claimed that the high turnout was an “important indicator of the confidence of electors,” while America’s Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe concluded that popular sovereignty had finally taken roots.

Some observers asserted that most problems that were observed, such as obstructed ballot boxes, open voting, family voting and insufficient verification of results, were more the product of exhaustion and democratic inexperience, rather than fraudulent intent. Other observers were less complacent and raised concerns about how the Central Electoral Commission allowed parties to fill in all the information of members on their party lists aside from their signatures and pointed to evidence of falsification of electoral

results. The OSCE parliamentary delegation commented that the large number of parties permitted to participate in the election created confusion among voters and the ballot was so large that it could not be spread out in the voting booth.<sup>139</sup>

Four parties surpassed the 5% barrier in the proportional representation portion of the election. Not surprisingly, the left did very well at the polls, particularly the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF). Electoral support of the CPRF rose 10% from 1993. The CPRF won double the vote totals of any other party and gained control of over one-third of the Duma. The Liberal Democrats under Zhirinovskiy was the second most successful party in terms of party lists, but the 11% vote share was half their total in 1993. Yabloko emerged as the central party within the democratic opposition to Yeltsin. The party captured five single-member constituencies in St. Petersburg, which made it the best positioned party in the city. Our Home is Russia, the final party to surpass 5%, was down a bit from the major pro-government party in 1993, Russia's Choice.

The Duma that took office in January of 1996 was "an imperfect reflection of the parties and individual candidates that had been successful in the elections."<sup>140</sup> Hundreds of candidates withdrew from party lists, dozens became independents or switched party affiliation, and "many of the leading figures on party lists decided not to take their seats."<sup>141</sup> As a result, the election was more of a referendum on Yeltsin, than an organized choice on political alternatives. Given the power granted to the president in the constitution, the Duma election was little more than a dress rehearsal for the upcoming presidential election.



Other scholars understood the consequences of the 1995 elections to be more profound. Steven Fish, for example, emphasized the paradoxical nature of the elections. Though the elections were free and fair, the results revealed “a portentous popular nostalgia for a radiant communist past.”<sup>142</sup> Fish argues that “the elections both refuted a clutch of assumptions that have informed the pessimistic conventional wisdom on the Russian electorate and revealed the decrepitude of present-day Russian liberalism.”

Fish argues that many assumptions about the Russian electorate were overturned as a result of the 1995 elections. First, the election demonstrated that Russians were not politically passive. Nearly two-thirds of all Russian adults voted. Less than 3% of Russian voters voted against all parties. Second, the election demonstrated that Russians were not easily manipulated even though voters were unaccustomed to democratic participation. The most successful party, the CPRF, did very little advertising and spent just \$250,000 on the campaign. In contrast, Our Home is Russia spent ten times more and won just half the votes. Third, the election demonstrated that Russians do not just vote for personalities. Parties that were led by engaging personalities, such as Boris Fedorov’s Forward Russia and Svyatoslav Fedorov’s Party of Workers’ Self-Management, were outperformed by parties led by “colorless bureaucrats,” such as Zyuganov’s CPRF and Chernomydin’s Our Home is Russia. Given these developments, Fish views the Russian electorate as a threat. The aftermath of the election “raised an extremely unpleasant issue: What if the Russian people vote democracy into oblivion?”<sup>143</sup> The problem, as Fish sees it, is that Liberalism in Russia as of yet had not “offered an effective solution to the crucial matter of reconciling private interests and the public good.”

In transitions theory, the second election typically is a significant milestone on the path to democratic consolidation. Significant political actors are supposed to have accepted the political and economic rules of the game which have been stabilized.

Russia's 1995 election, on the other hand, did not bring these signs of consolidation.

Michael McFaul explains:

The 1995 parliamentary elections served to divide Russian political forces more sharply into supporters and opponents of the new political and economic order. Most strikingly, and in contrast to East European transformations, Russia's main opposition party still accepts neither the political nor the economic institutions of the new status quo: Communist leaders have called the dissolution of the Soviet Union a criminal act that must be reversed. The fusion of nationalism and communism in the CPRF makes it more dangerous than communist-successor parties in Hungary, Poland, or the Baltic states. While Russian Communist leaders now affirm that private property can coexist with state and collective property (but deserves no special privilege), they have also vowed to undo "illegal" privatizations. In sum, Russia's Communists have not "reformed" in the way that their Polish or Hungarian counterparts have. Russian Communist leaders, far from disavowing the heritage of the CPSU (the same party that squeaked democracy, eliminated private property, and killed millions of its own citizens), proudly flaunt it.

These deep divisions persisted in the 1996 presidential election, which many political observers expected Yeltsin to lose. As a commentator from *Pravda* put it: "logically, he should have lost, since he was unable to fully solve any of the problems that have piled up: the stagnation of production, the impoverishment of a majority of the people, growing unemployment, the chronic nonpayment of wages, the decline in science, culture and education, the continuing conflict in Chechnya, etc. Nevertheless, Yeltsin receive a majority of the electorate's votes."<sup>144</sup> In of January of 1996 Yeltsin was only at 8% in the polls. Other major candidates, such as Gennadi Zyuganov, Grigori Iavlinski, Aleksandr Lebed, and Vladimir Zhirinovski, were more popular.<sup>145</sup> The election was held in two rounds of voting, the first on June 17, and the second on July 3.

Yeltsin used the media to his advantage throughout the campaign. Observers from the OSCE reported that relevant electoral law on the allotment of free television and radio time for candidates was generally respected, but news coverage and political commentary was significantly imbalanced in Yeltsin's favor, both in terms of the amount of coverage and how positively Yeltsin was portrayed compared to other candidates. OSCE spokesperson Michael Meadowcroft stated that "from a very early time the contest came to be regarded as virtually a two horse race and the media reflected and accelerated this perception with the result that there was hardly any coverage of the remaining candidates." Yeltsin (35%) and Communist candidate Gennadi Zyuganov (32%) emerged as the top two contenders after the first round of voting.

Electoral law stated that incumbent Presidents pursuing reelection "may not take advantage of his official standing for the term election." Yeltsin, however, made highly publicized visits to various regions and promised large sums of state funds for local projects. On Election Day, multiple infringements of electoral law were observed in varying degrees of seriousness. The most widely shared concern of international observers was the lack of secrecy during the voting process. Greater instruction was needed to ensure that voters voted in the voting booths. Several presidential candidates voted in public, which many observers believed this set a bad example. The most egregious cases were in Tatarstan where Yeltsin supporters solicited votes in front of voting booths. In some cases, individuals were seen coming out of the voting booths with several ballots.<sup>146</sup>

Many of the same problems persisted in the second round of voting. The OSCE observed that "the continued provision of desks, together with pens, in the open area of a

number of polling stations suggests that the vital concept and purpose of secret voting have not yet been appreciated.” Yeltsin’s disproportionate media coverage persisted as well. The OSCE mission concluded that “the impotence of the Central Electoral Commission in enforcing its own resolutions showed both a lack of will on its members’ part and also a need to strengthen the CEC’s powers in relation to media regulation during the period of the election campaign.”<sup>147</sup>

When the votes were tallied, Yeltsin won nearly 54% of the vote, compared to 40% for Zyuganov. In contrast to many postcommunist states, the sitting government in Russia was not punished for poor economic performance as had been the case in Lithuania, Poland, Hungary, and Bulgaria. Yeltsin’s success was the product of several factors, such as the manipulation of the media, widespread promises of federal funding, the announcement of Chechen peace talks, and a widely shared belief in the electorate a capitalist market was inevitable.<sup>148</sup> Despite electoral transgressions, the European Institute for the Media and the OSCE declared the elections were well managed and accurately reflected the will of the electorate, despite the imbalance of media coverage, disproportionate resources available to candidates, and inappropriate activities from within the administration during the campaign period.<sup>149</sup>

Yeltsin narrowly, but successfully, navigated himself through very difficult political terrain. This enabled economic reform to continue, albeit uncertain, inequitable, and unpopular. The first chapter of the post-Soviet era closed with democratic elections being secured as a commonly accepted part of the political system. At the same time, deep political divisions, economic woes, and institutional uncertainty loomed as serious and constant threats to the sustainability of a transition to popular government and a

market economy. Though most advocates of greater reform did not realize it at the time, Russia was fast approaching a deep and profound crisis.

Russia faced several obstacles to reform prior to the 1998 economic collapse. One problem was tax collection. Lawrence Summers observed that “despite some of the highest tax rates in the world, Russia has one of the lowest rates of overall tax collections” because approximately “17% of firms pay taxes regularly and in full, while at least a third publish no accounts and make no tax payments at all.”<sup>150</sup> Clifford Gaddy explains:

New taxes are introduced and others abolished, rates are raised or lowered, exemptions are granted and withdrawn at a dizzying pace. This unpredictability has been detrimental to economic development, especially new business creation. But an important element of predictability in tax policy is the seriousness with which it is being enforced. The collectability of a tax is as much a part of who or what is being taxed as how much. A sudden crackdown in enforcement, though laudable on paper, is in fact a major unanticipated increase in the real tax burden.<sup>151</sup>

Organized crime has also had a devastating impact on Russia’s economy because “it discourages foreign investment, deprives the country of its tax base, dominates the banking sector and financial markets, and exacerbates the already widespread problem of corruption.”<sup>152</sup> In contrast to Columbian and Italian organized crime, most profits from Russian organized crime are deposited and invested abroad, rather than domestically. An estimated \$50 to \$150 billion was exported from Russia between 1991 and 1997. At minimum, 40% of the approximately \$2 billion in capital flight each month was attributable to organized crime.<sup>153</sup>

In addition to not paying taxes, organized crime deprived the state of needed resources. Regional crime bosses controlled customs warehouses throughout the country and many customs officials were on the payroll of crime groups to divert revenues from

the state to organized crime. Organized crime infiltrated the domestic banking sector as well, which caused millions of citizens to lose their limited savings in pyramid schemes and collapsed banking institutions. Hundreds of banks were run by organized crime and launder money abroad. Other banks, who did not launder money, cannot compete. In turn, “this criminalization of the banking sector and financial institutions has boosted capital flight.”<sup>154</sup>

Atop Russian society, a wealthy group of individuals exercised a disproportionate amount of power and influence. In 1996, Boris Berezovsky, a business mogul in automobile manufacturing, oil, and the media, claimed that a “magnificent seven” group of wealthy individuals control half of the Russian economy.<sup>155</sup> The remaining six men include Vladimir Goussinsky, Mikhail Kodorkovsky, Valdimir Potanin, Alexander Smolensky, V. Vinogradov, and Rem Vyakihirev. Akin to Berezovsky, these men are powerful figures in industry, banking, and the news media.

During the first several years of the Russian transition, the government struck deals with tax debtors of insolvent companies out of fear for the social consequences of enforcing financial discipline. Only a quarter of Russian companies were financially sound firms as of 1996, with well-established domestic or export markets. As Blasi, Kroumova, and Kruse observe, “three quarters of Russian corporations (were) in need of radical and far-reaching restructuring” and “at least a quarter of those firms should be bankrupt.”<sup>156</sup>

Blasi, Kroumova, and Kruse argue that the government would soon face a huge budget crisis and not be able to simultaneously fund social programs for the needy and grant tax breaks for corporations and cronies. In turn, “the government must start to

extend aid to weak citizens directly through health, welfare, unemployment, and training programs and let firms stand or fall on their own.”<sup>157</sup> By March of 1997, Russia owed more than \$8.8 million in back wages to more than a million of government workers and pensioners. Budget revenues were only 55% of the anticipated amounts in January and February of 1997. As a result, spending was only half as much as anticipated.<sup>158</sup>

The first six years of economic transition undoubtedly produced profound change. Though government ownership of the economy was significantly reduced, the consequences of rapid reform led to significant debate over the effectiveness of shock therapy as a model of transition. The first period of reform (1991-1994) was highly unstable and produced little economic benefit aside from massive privatization. Significant problems included the persistent influence of the *nomenklatura*, monopolization of former state industries, extraordinarily high inflation, shrinking economic production, decreased investment, and falling real wages. The second period of reform (1995-1998) witnessed stabilization of earlier chaos and disruption, but failed to establish a solid economic foundation for sustained economic development. Many analysts feared that economic crisis was imminent if the government remained unable to effectively raise and distribute revenues.

The emphasis of economic transition scholars, such as Jeffrey Sachs and Anders Aslund, who served as Western advisers to Russia, clearly prioritized privatization over the creation of transparent, legitimate, and sustainable market environment, which would take much longer. Such policymakers deserve credit for removing State ownership from much of the economy; however, an inadequate focus on the processes of institutional reform produced economic, social, and political consequences that generated widespread

hardship for many Russians and severely limited the development of an effective capitalist economy. Shock therapy, therefore, can only be said to have produced mixed results at best.

Gregory Glazkov's critique of calls for radical reform under Gorbachev provides a useful metaphor in understanding the process of shock therapy. "There is a transition problem," Glazkov explained prior to the fall of the Soviet Union, "if you want to get down from a tree, you have to climb. What you are offering us is to jump. We will break our legs and neck!"<sup>159</sup> As I see it, Russian policymakers and Western advisers opted to jump. At this point, it would be difficult and of limited usefulness to speculate whether a more gradual approach would have fit better in Russia. Clearly, however, the Russian experience is not an empirically sound validation for the shock therapy model being similarly applied to other nations. At the very least, Russian shock therapy would have significantly benefited from greater recognition of how the process of transition was as important as the desired results, if not more so. Doing so would have helped to establish a solid foundation for a competitive, efficient, and legitimate privately-owned market economy. Instead, shock therapy created widespread chaos and uncertainty which served as a foundation for the rise of a strong political leader more concerned with stability than fully functioning capitalism or democracy.

Investor panic was the proximate cause of economic crisis in 1998. Foreign investors were shaken by the Asian financial crisis and feared that short term treasury bills, known as GKO's, would lose value because of the ruble exchange rate. Loss of revenue created significant problems for Russian authorities who faced large budget



deficits, persistent capital flight, and falling world oil prices.<sup>160</sup> As a result, the “fragile turnaround of GDP growth visible toward the end of 1997 came to a halt.”<sup>161</sup>

In May of 1998, President Yeltsin, and his new Prime Minister Sergei Kiriyenko, worked to pass an austerity package that would cut the budget deficit. Success was limited however. Soon, the Moscow stock market was less than half the starting level of the beginning of the year. The yield (monthly average of trading GKO's) dropped below 20% in the summer of 1997, 40% in May of 1998, and 60% in June.<sup>162</sup>

In June of 1998, Russia's international finance negotiator, Anthony Chubias campaigned abroad for \$10 to \$15 billion to help stabilize financial markets. According to Chubias, funding would help Russia stabilize the ruble and pay off mounting debt. Kiriyenko set forth plans to cut government spending by 42 billion rubles (\$6.8 billion) and increase tax revenues by 20 billion rubles (\$3.2 billion). The proposed reforms were designed to address concerns of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) who criticized Russia for not restructuring quickly enough. President Yeltsin gave parliament a deadline for supporting the measures or they would be pursued “by other means.”<sup>163</sup>

A Western financial assistance package was reached in July. The package was composed of \$22.6 billion from the IMF, World Bank, and Japanese government credits<sup>164</sup> \$14.8 billion was loaned immediately and another \$7.8 billion loaned in 1999.<sup>165</sup> The assistance package did not immediately restore market confidence and yields continued to rise. Yeltsin continued to resist devaluing the ruble. Days later, however, the Central Bank announced that the ruble would be allowed to fluctuate (up to 9.5 to one dollar), after much effort to keep it pegged at 6.3 rubles per dollar, halted interest payments on foreign debt for 90 days, and converted GKO's into long-term bills.

Sergei Dubinin, governor of the Central Bank, claimed the moves were designed to help Russian citizens and hurt “financial speculators” taking advantage of the Russian market for months.<sup>166</sup> The changes created problems for Russian banks, however, many of whom held GKO’s and borrowed large sums from abroad. As the ruble fell below the new exchange rate, banks started to reject attempts by Russian citizens to convert rubles to dollars.<sup>167</sup> Analysts warned that a weaker ruble could increase inflation, the lowering of which, was a major economic achievement under Yeltsin’s government. Yeltsin had more immediate problems.

In a special emergency session, the Duma called for President Yeltsin to “stop fulfilling his presidential power before the end of this term.”<sup>168</sup> The Duma declared that Russia was in a “deep crisis” and the President was not taking the necessary steps to protect citizens. Kiriyenko defended the government’s record, claimed this was only the beginning of financial crisis, and urged the Duma to drop its opposition to economic reform measures advocated by the President. Yeltsin sacked the entire Kiriyenko government and sought to replace Kiriyenko with Victor Chernomydrin. The Duma rejected the appointment eight days later. A deal was discussed to keep Chernomydrin as Prime Minister in exchange for granting the Duma more power in Russian governance, but this was abandoned just prior to the vote.<sup>169</sup>

As acting Prime Minister, Chernomydrin asked the Russian people not to withdraw their money from private banks. The currency fell to 13 rubles per dollar, which was a 50% drop in just two weeks. A few days later, the Duma rejected a second vote on Chernomydrin as Prime Minister. This prompted President Yeltsin to nominate

Yevgeny Primakov for the post, a decision welcomed by the Duma and one that enabled decision enabled Yeltsin to avoid potential impeachment hearings.

Primakov was a career diplomat, primarily in foreign affairs, and had no experience in economic affairs. The new Prime Minister appointed Yuri Masalyukov, a Communist, to the post of Deputy Prime Minister. Though Primakov denied that the appointment constituted a return to Soviet ideology, the Prime Minister did claim that a “socially orientated economy” was best for Russia.<sup>170</sup> A new government was formed again in May of 1999, which dropped Masalyukov, but “failed to install a strong, united economic policy team.”<sup>171</sup>

Economic and political instability surrounding the 1998 crisis significantly impacted every day citizens. Allan Little explains:

I did not realize it in that instant, but when I caught her eye she was just going into the first phase of a profound emotional trauma, this quiet, patient middle-aged lady at whom I was pointing a television camera and asking for her views on the latest twist in Russia's agonizing descent into economic collapse. And in the few minutes that followed she visibly fell apart, weeping, inconsolable, unable finally even to speak.

She and her husband had been queuing since 8:00 in the morning - it was now about 3:30 in the afternoon - at a bank kiosk near Red Square. All day they had persevered, watching with each hour that passed the value of the rubles they were waiting to withdraw drop further and further against the dollar on the electronic price board by the kiosk window.

And when finally their turn came, suddenly and cruelly the attendant behind the bullet-proof glass slammed the hatch shut in their tired anxious faces, declaring that the kiosk had run out of cash and was ceasing trading for the day.

That was when I caught her eye. Her husband spoke because she could not. They had worked for 20 years at a military base in the frozen north of Russia, and saved all that they had earned and had returned to Moscow at the end of the 1980s. In the hyper-inflation that attended the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 they had lost everything.

They had picked themselves up and started again, saving enough in the 90s to put them back on their feet and allow them to think, cautiously, about retiring. And now they could see it all beginning to happen again. And there was one theme he kept returning to

again and again: we are honest people, he kept saying, we have worked honestly and earned honest money and this is our reward.<sup>172</sup>

Little observed in 1999 that “if you are honest in Russia the chances are that your family will go hungry” or “your children will not be educated,” whereas the dishonest thrive.<sup>173</sup> According to Little, this was a form of humiliation, rather than just economic hardship. Consequently, many Russians failed to understand how the West viewed Yeltsin as a “progressive liberal reformer taking on the twin evils of reactionary communism and criminal mafia business tycoons.”<sup>174</sup> President Bill Clinton, meanwhile, described Western support as a process of “helping Yeltsin’s overcome the worst of the past, including his own past,” in which progress occurs incrementally with “two-steps forward, one-step backward.”<sup>175</sup>

Strobe Talbott argues that the loans-for-shares program belongs among the worst of President Yeltsin’s past. Prospects for reelection in 1996 were so dismal that Yeltsin and his advisers concluded that the campaign needed to rely on oligarch wealth and control of media outlets to enhance public relations. In turn, “the Kremlin paid oligarchs back with vast opportunities for insider trading.”<sup>176</sup>

By decree, Yeltsin implemented the loans for shares program which claimed to sell state assets to “citizen investors.” In reality, auctions were “rigged in favor of large banks that then made massive loans to government.”<sup>177</sup> Consequently, some of the world’s largest energy and metals companies were hence controlled by a small number of financial groups. Talbott claims that “loans for shares introduced a new and distorting factor in Russia’s evolution, since it substantially increased the power of oligarchs as a force in Russian economic and political life, making a mockery of Russia’s incipient

regulatory structures, like its new Securities and Exchange Commission.”<sup>178</sup> Media outlets were liberated from state control, but many of these and other enterprises were placed under the control of oligarchs such as Berezovsky.

Yeltsin’s erratic behavior in 1997 and 1998 was particularly troubling to Russian oligarchs. The President looked sickly and made several public blunders while recovering from heart surgery.<sup>179</sup> Many Russians felt that a strong leader was necessary. Berezovsky and other oligarchs began to seriously entertain the idea of creating a “corporate government.”<sup>180</sup> This government would operate as “a shadow board of directors” who would appoint ministers and “informally run the country.”

The State was feeble, but big capital was strong. David Hoffman explains:

The tycoons gathered quietly at the headquarters of Yukos, Russia’s second-largest oil company, which was run by one of the oligarchs, Mikhail Khodorkovsky. The shadow board of directors decided it was time for Chernomydrin to go, and they discussed who would replace him. Berezovsky also met with Yeltsin’s chief of staff, Valentin Yumashev, and the president’s influential younger daughter, Tatyana Dyachenko.

On Saturday, March 21, 1998, at this country house outside of Moscow, Berezovsky gave a long, taped interview to *Itogi*, a television news program popular among the political elite. The program was carried on Russia’s largest and most successful private television channel, NTV, founded by another of the oligarchs, Vladimir Gusinsky.

In the interview, Berezovsky declared pointedly that the campaign to succeed Yeltsin was already under way and that none of the leading candidates were ‘electable.’ He spoke vaguely about ‘immense opportunities to bring forward new people.’ The interview was broadcast on Sunday evening. The next morning, Yeltsin fired Chernomydrin.<sup>181</sup>

The 1998 crisis, however, was a significant turning point in Russian economic development. Joseph Stiglitz emphasizes how devaluation led to a significant excess supply of goods and decrease in imports. As a result, many Russians went from buying

imported foreign goods to domestically produced goods.<sup>182</sup> Anders Aslund emphasizes how the impact of the crash forced the government to cut public expenditures, particularly subsidies of large industries, while the practice of barter was reduced by requiring payments in hard currency.<sup>183</sup> Though both distinguished economists agree that the 1998 crisis provided a foundation for real economic change in Russia, Stiglitz and Aslund disagree over the role of the International Monetary Fund in the recovery process. Aslund claims that “the IMF action appears as a remarkable success in hindsight.”<sup>184</sup> Stiglitz, a well noted critic of the IMF, acknowledges that “Russia’s performance since the crisis has been impressive,” but points out that “the IMF did not want Russia to devalue” and Russia’s GDP as of 1999 was still nearly 30% below its level at the beginning of the decade.<sup>185</sup>

Public contempt for government was strong. According to Rob Parsons, rarely has an electorate become so disillusioned with the promises of liberal reform so quickly. Millions were forced into destitution, while the Duma extended their parliamentary privileges, stalled on important legislation, and remained saturated in corruption. Parson describes the state of affairs leading up to the 1999 Duma elections:

The electoral debate has insulted the intelligence of ordinary Russians. In truth, there has been no debate - not because there is no freedom of expression - there is - but because television and the press have become the tools of the Kremlin and its rivals. Truth has been the first victim of a relentless campaign of mud-slinging.

And all around there is chaos. There is no strategy for economic recovery, corruption cats into the heart of the state apparatus, wages are miserly if they are paid at all, crime goes unsolved, mobsters operate with impunity, billions of dollars leave the country every month, and a human rights' report says torture has become routine in police stations.<sup>186</sup>

Some institutional progress was made however. Duma election law was upgraded with each successive election. Updated laws incorporated recommendations of the international observers. For example, the election law was amended in June of 1999 to clarify the supervisory role of the Central Election Commission and enhance transparency mechanisms, particularly for domestic observers.<sup>187</sup> One significant revision was replacing the rigid 5% barrier to elect party list candidates with a floating threshold. Smaller parties who attain a 3% barrier were hence included if the total votes of parties receiving at least 5% of vote was less than 50% of the participating voters. A second revision created an alternative method to get on the ballot. Rather than gathering the required signatures, candidates could “pay an electoral deposit of 2,000 times the minimum wage (approximately \$7,000) for a single mandate candidate and 50,000 times the minimum wage (approximately \$170,000) for a party list.”<sup>188</sup> The amounts were approximately 10% of permitted campaign spending and had to be paid out the electoral fund. The financial option was chosen by several individuals and organizations as their method of registration. The limit on electoral expenses was \$65,000 for single mandate candidates and \$1,700,000 for party lists. Still, most of the new electoral laws repeated exact language of previous laws, which created confusion as to which law prevailed and legal loopholes for candidates to undermine the intent of the law.

In contrast to the 1995 election, there was a movement toward broader alliances, which cut the number of parties from 43 participating organizations to 26. Economic recession, terrorist bombings, the conflict in Chechnya, and attempts to impeach the President, all contributed to a turbulent political environment. Unlike past contests, “the

campaign was not a clear reflection of an ‘opposition vs. incumbent’ contest in the usual sense.”<sup>189</sup> Furthermore, “the 1999 election was not a struggle of political leaders teamed against the ‘Communist threat’ which characterized the 1996 elections, but rather a struggle of personalities to guarantee their own presence on the political summit during the next four years.” Former Prime Ministers dominated the political landscape. Examples include Yablako, who enticed Stepashin into the party leadership, and the Union of Just Forces, who convinced Kirienko to head its party list. From the beginning, many observers viewed the election as a primary for the presidential election scheduled for the following spring.

Two new groups emerged as major contenders: the Fatherland-All Russia Bloc and the Interregional Unity Movement otherwise known as Unity or *Medved*, which is Russian for “the bear.” Competition emerged between these two groups within the Kremlin base. The Unity Bloc was led by Minister of Emergency Situations Sergei Shoigu, and the Fatherland-All Russia alliance was led by Luzkov, the powerful mayor of Moscow, and Primakov, the former Prime Minister. This division among powerful political elite was a sharp contrast to the alliance between Yeltsin and Mayor Luzkov, which helped ensure the President’s success in the 1996 elections.

The campaign process was characterized by several features that led the OSCE to conclude that “party politics in the traditional sense, has yet to fully mature.” First, party politics continue to center on individual personalities, not platforms. Second, “the most powerful players remain those that come together, not as real political parties founded on common ideologies, but as strategic alliances often looking no farther ahead than the specific election in which they want to compete.”<sup>190</sup> Third, campaign rhetoric was largely



devoid of issues. A new phenomenon of “black” campaigning developed in Russia during the 1999 campaign. This was the use of slanderous attacks on opponents in lieu of promoting programs or ideologies.

According to Robert Parsons, the parliamentary elections felt like “a sideshow to two more important developments- the war in Chechnya and the rise of opinion polls of the Prime Minister Vladimir Putin.” For Parsons, the two developments are inextricably linked because “the prime minister owes his popularity in large part to the success of the Russian armed forces.”<sup>191</sup> Lilia Shevtsova describes Putin’s rise to power:

Vladimir Valdimirovich Putin appeared on the national stage unexpectedly. The political class as well as the public was surprised to see him, but everyone was so exhausted by the moves leading up to this that the new holder of the prime minister’s office roused no opposition. He was seen as just one more premier in a long line, most likely an accidental figure. No one realized that this was the true heir. The unlikely choice and Putin’s personality lulled suspicions. Many people simply paid no attention to him or considered his appointment something of a joke.<sup>192</sup>

Putin quickly became an important political figure as the Kremlin’s favored choice for the presidential elections scheduled for June of 2000. As Prime Minister, Putin promised to restore Russian pride and enhance stability in a nation “tired of politics” and “crying out for order again.”<sup>193</sup> In turn, Putin’s youth, toughness, and hawkish approach to Chechnya resonated with voters. Support from various factions of the intelligentsia gradually fell into line as Putin solidified his position as presidential frontrunner. If successful, no political figure wanted to be on the wrong side of the most powerful political figure in the country. Both Yeltsin and Putin supported the Unity Bloc in the parliamentary elections to create a political foundation in the Duma upon which a successful presidential transition could be built.

The impact of the media on the electorate was unprecedented. This was due, in part, to the consolidation of ownership after the presidential elections. After 1996, many of the independent media outlets and major shares of state-controlled media were purchased by “a few successful and politically connected businessmen who understood the role and importance of the media in forming public opinion.”<sup>194</sup> Effective media regulation was particularly vulnerable because of “inadequate Federal laws capable of restricting the influence of media owners and the underdevelopment of civil society capable of exerting market leverage to control media behavior.”

Russian law that governs the television industry is particularly weak, even though television is the most important form of media. As of 1999, 98% of Russian households had a television set. Three stations were available throughout Russia: ORT, RTR, and NTV, the main independent channel. In many parts of Russia, viewers could only access two of the state-controlled stations, ORT and RTR. Three other major channels reach one-third to one-half of the populace. This medium was most abused during the 1999 electoral process.

The European Institute of Media (EOM) concluded that all television channels were biased to some extent.<sup>195</sup> State-controlled stations were the worst offenders, particularly ORT. The State owned just 51% of ORT, however, the rest was owned by private shareholders, the most prominent of which was oligarch Boris Beresovsky. The EOM claimed that “the smear campaign by media supported by Berezovsky and the government on one hand, and Luzkov and NTV’s director Gusinsky on the other, had featured prominently in the information sphere for the past year, but that it had intensified during the campaign.”<sup>196</sup>

There were 93,000 polling stations created to cater the 107 million voters in Russia. International observers widely agreed that Precinct Election Commissions performed well and rated their compliance with relevant procedures at over 98%.<sup>197</sup> The most common concern of OSCE observers was how often voters scored their ballots in the public. At the same time, party and candidate representatives were stationed as observers at 98% of voting sites, which the OSCE considered a very positive development.

Voter turnout was 61% of the electorate. There were six parties that passed the 5% threshold. This meant that over 22% of the eligible parties earned the right to participate in the Duma, which was up from 9.3% in 1995. In turn, just 15% of votes went toward parties that did not make the threshold, down from 45% in 1995. Once again, the Communist Party (24%) received the most proportional votes, narrowly edging Unity (23%), which did not compete in 1995. Fatherland-All Russia (13%) and Union of Right Forces (9%) both performed well, while the Zhirinovski Bloc (6%) and Yabloko (6%) barely made the cut.<sup>198</sup> The number of independents was up significantly from 77 in 1995 to 120 in 1999. Even though the Communist Party won the most total seats, their numbers dropped to 113 from 157 in 1995. Seats for the Zhirinovski Bloc (LDPR) and Yabloko dropped significantly, 51 to 17 and 45 to 20 respectively. Meanwhile, two new parties earned over 100 seats: Unity (73 seats) and Union of Right Forces (29 seats).<sup>199</sup>

Though the OSCE concluded the polling was conducted in an orderly manner and accurately tallied the votes, there were areas for improvement. Electoral law allowed individuals to run for office in single member districts “even if they have no ties to the community whatsoever.” Campaign spending limits were easily circumnavigated and

over half of polling sites observed did not adhere to relevant electoral law which required each ballot be displayed and announced as counted. Finally, many journalists and editors at state-run media lost their jobs after criticizing political figures.<sup>200</sup> For the second time in as many independent elections, the Communist Party was the most popular party in the Duma. At the same time, Unity was established as a new and influential political force.

The presidential election was held three months earlier than anticipated because of President Yeltsin's unexpected resignation on December 31, 1999. As stated in the Constitution, the Prime Minister assumed the Presidency until a formal election. This solidified Putin's electoral prospects because he would now enter the presidential contest as an incumbent. In turn, the pluralism characteristic of the Duma elections was short-lived. The OSCE concluded that "several factors contributed to what was to become a race dominated by a single, seemingly undefeatable candidate, in a campaign short on issues and a political environment in which the pluralism achieved in the Duma elections seemed to erode in a matter of weeks."<sup>201</sup>

Shortly after the Duma elections, many political blocs disbanded as quickly as they had formed. The Fatherland-All Russia Bloc, for example, split apart after a disappointing performance, which resulted in nearly 40% of their followers joining other Duma factions. A second problem was the inability of blocs and parties to incorporate single member deputies into their ranks. This was part of a larger trend where "beginning in the early weeks of the presidential campaign and throughout the lead-up to the election day, even the strongest opponents of pro-Kremlin forces and the administration during the Duma elections began to capitulate in favor of the Acting President's candidacy."<sup>202</sup>

Political shifts, such as these, are emblematic of a weak party system, where most organizations are formed around strategic considerations specific to a certain election. Even Unity had a far way to go if the bloc was to consolidate into a formal political party. Unity was created “to provide a new name and identity to the existing Kremlin power structure wanting to secure its position through the Duma elections.”<sup>203</sup> The bloc represented an incumbent regime and did not emerge as a grass roots force based on ideological themes. The impact of such political shifts is described by the OSCE:

The embryonic state of party politics in Russia exacerbates a tendency to fall back on traditional practice whereby demonstrations of loyalty to the ‘party of power’ is deemed necessary to political and administrative survival. This reluctance to ‘get on the wrong side’ of existing power structures was equally evident among the regional heads as the inevitability of a Putin victory became obvious.<sup>204</sup>

Public opinion leading up to the 2000 presidential election reflected dissatisfaction with political weakness and deep cynicism toward the legitimacy of democratic institutions and elections in Russia. When Russians were asked what the country needed, 71% of those polled replied “a strong leader,” 59% replied “a strong state;” just 13% replied “democratic institutions.” 54% believed that Putin’s campaign was dishonest. 72% thought that there would be chicanery in tallying the votes of the election. 58% believed Putin was connected with oligarchs. Still, only 25% were concerned about Putin’s KGB past and 63% claimed to trust the President. Russians were more interested in a new personal savior, rather than lasting democratic institutions, and despite reservations toward Putin, few conceived of any other serious option.<sup>205</sup>

Over 94,000 polling stations were created throughout the country and over 1,000,000 election officials were trained to operate these stations. Polls were open in all 89 units of the Federation, including 2/3’s of the districts in Chechnya, as well as 130

countries for citizens living abroad.<sup>206</sup> There was a three step process to register as a candidate. First, candidates had to be nominated by parties, blocs, or citizens who formed a special nominating group of at least 100 voters called initiative voter groups. Second, a candidate had to gather at least 1,000,000 million signatures in support of the candidacy with no more than 70,000 from the home province of the candidate. An estimated 20% of collected signatures underwent a verification review based on random sampling.<sup>207</sup> Third, the nominating group had to submit a financial disclosure statement regarding the finances of the candidate. The impetus of this regulation was to discourage criminal elements from entering the political arena. If the statement misrepresents assets or provides false information, the candidate had to be rejected.

33 candidates were nominated for the 2000 election, but only 15 gathered the required signatures by the February 15 deadline. Originally 11 candidates were formally registered, until a 12<sup>th</sup> candidate was added after a successful court challenge. The OSCE concluded that “the process was subject to controversy as the applications of some candidates underwent investigations for omissions of property details on their financial disclosure statements, while others became subject to an intense review when allegations emerged regarding the potential falsification of signatures in their supporter lists.”<sup>208</sup>

A major problem was the subjectivity permitted in interpreting important components of relevant laws. In the case of Vladimir Zhirinovsky (LDPR), for example, the crux of the dispute rested on what constituted an “essential inaccuracy” in information submitted by a candidate. Even Putin was not exempt from the speculation of disclosure irregularities as debate ensued over a country house owned by his wife. The OSCE concluded that electoral law should be amended “to remove such critical

ambiguities that place the Central Election Commission in the undesirable position having to make subjective decisions without sufficient legal guidance.”<sup>209</sup>

The media environment surrounding the presidential election was much different than the Duma election. Presidential campaigns were “subdued” in comparison to the “vitriolic media wars and a battering of blocs and candidates with often irresponsibly slanderous reporting.”<sup>210</sup> Enforcement agencies took a more active role in curbing inappropriate campaign activity during the presidential election. In contrast to the hands-off role adopted by the administration in the face of black campaigning for the Duma. The persistent problem faced by the media in the 1990’s was funding. Though post-Soviet Russia witnessed greater freedom of speech, economic hardship threatened to close many new outlets, particularly print, which led to 80% of regional media being financed by local authorities in the absence of independent businesses able to fund such efforts. This development became known as “municipalization.”<sup>211</sup> As print outlets faded, television became the dominant medium, evident in the fact that 98% of households owned and watched television.

The most common problem on Election Day was family voting, which was noted in 82% of polling stations. A second problem was proxy voting (voting on behalf of someone else) which was witnessed at 34% of polling stations. A third problem was inadequate compliance with rules governing the counting of ballots. For example, in 57% of election officials failed to announce the preference of the ballot as they were sorted by candidate. On the plus side, voter turnout was strong once again, evident in the 69% of the electorate who turned out to vote. Despite aforementioned problems, the OSCE concluded that “the presidential election was conducted under a constitutional and

legislative framework that is consistent with internationally recognized democratic standards.” In turn, “the competence and expertise of election administrators to carry out well-organized and accountable elections is fully institutionalized.”<sup>212</sup>

Given the numerous advantages Putin had as an incumbent hand-picked by Yeltsin, the unresolved issue was when Putin would win, rather than if. Putin cleared the 50% threshold with 52.94% to win the election in the first round. As expected, Zyuganov, the Communist candidate, once again finished as runner up, with just under 30% of the vote. Grigory Yavlinsky, the most prominent liberal candidate, finished third with just 5.8% of the vote. Putin and Zyuganov received approximately 82% of the vote, which was up from the 67% received by Yeltsin and Zyuganov in 1996. Despite Zyuganov’s loss, the Communist leader was able to maintain a relatively consistent share of support across the Russian electorate. Ironically, the most developed and stable party in during the first ten years of post-Soviet Russia was the Communist Party. By the end of the decade, Communists had accepted the new electoral system and reformulated their platform toward the adoption of social democracy, rather than Communism per say.

Uncertainty, destitution, and manipulation characterized the first ten years of the Russian transition experience. The 1991 presidential election was an election for radical change. The 1996 presidential election was a vote to end Communism as a governing system, once and for all. The 2000 presidential election was a vote for stability.<sup>213</sup>

Under the leadership of Vladimir Putin, Russians found the strong leadership and social stability they desperately craved; however, many in the West would find that Putin had a very different conception of democracy and began to wonder if Putin’s style of governance could be called democratic at all.



This points to the significance of public opinion in the transition process. Many transition theorists simply assume that democracy is the best form of government and capitalism is the best form of economic system. Given the massive uncertainty involved in a simultaneous political and economic transition, it would be foolish to expect monolithic public attitudes toward governing and economic systems. Clearly, Russians did not want the terror that characterized the Stalin era, yet they did want a minimum quality of life and an acceptable level of national prestige. If a less than democratic Putin government could fulfill such expectations, there is little need for Western conceptions of freedom and democracy. In turn, transition scholars would be better served by greater appreciation of variance in public attitudes towards democracy around the world and important role that various cultures can play in shaping or disfiguring democratic transitions.

Vladimir Putin was a little known figure until his appointment as Prime Minister in August of 1999. At the age of 23, Putin graduated law school in 1975 and embarked on a career in the KGB, serving as a spy in East Germany. After retiring with the rank of Colonel, Putin began his political career in local government, quickly rising to the position of Vice-Mayor in St. Petersburg. In 1996, Yeltsin's inner circle appointed Putin deputy chief administrator at the Kremlin. The following year Putin became head of the Federal Service and secretary of the Presidential Security Council.

Far from charismatic, Putin kept a low profile and quickly gained a reputation for rarely smiling and speaking softly. The way in which he wielded power out of the public spotlight earned him the nickname of "grey cardinal." After becoming Prime Minister, Putin was immediately regarded as a man of action, particularly in dealing with Chechen

uprisings. Putin ordered the Russian army to expel Chechen Islamic militants from neighboring Dagestan in response to violent incursions throughout the region. Putin then blamed Chechens for a number of mysterious apartment bombings in Russian cities. Troops were ordered in Chechnya to root out and destroy the rebels. This hard line position significantly increased Putin's popularity.

Despite his hard line image, Putin was endorsed by some of Russia's best known liberals prior to being elected President. Sergey Stepashin, Putin's predecessor as premier, described him as a "decent and honest man," while Putin worked closely with liberal Anatoli Sobchak, the mayor of St. Petersburg. Putin's lack of record as a public leader allowed voters to project on him their desires for the future. Putin's inauguration ceremony "reflected the hybrid style and substance of the new ruling group, which embraced seemingly incompatible features- the KGB past of the new Kremlin boss, his liberal activity, and his nearly monarchical ascendancy to power orchestrated by anticommunists and revolutionaries!"<sup>214</sup> Putin claimed that Russia depended on a strong, paternalistic state and viewed this as a reality of social policy that Russian leaders must address. Consequently, Russia was not ready for classical liberalism and would not soon resemble the United States or United Kingdom, if ever.

The Russian economy, on the other hand, was in relatively good shape in early 2000. Though Russia still lacked a comprehensive vision of economic development, some important reforms were developed under Putin. Most importantly, a new law created a flat income tax of 13%. The GDP rose 10% in 2000. By the middle of 2001, high oil and gas prices produced a \$28 billion trade surplus and reserves at the Central Bank increased from \$7 to \$35 billion. The GDP grew by 5.2% in 2001, which brought

the cumulative growth since August 1998 to over 20%. Real disposable household income increased by 5.9% in 2001, while real wages grew 19.8% between 2000 and 2001.<sup>215</sup>

At the same time, Putin faced a serious problem in the merger of “power and capital, politics and economics, the public and the private- a Soviet tradition Yeltsin had not only failed to break but in some areas had even reinforced.”<sup>216</sup> A large amount of goods and services were produced and sold in a gray zone that existed beyond the scope of formal regulation and taxation. Millions of Russians operated in this shadowy space which constituted an estimated 30% of Russia’s GDP. The system benefited criminals to the detriment of state revenues. Influential oligarchs under Yeltsin still held significant influence and resisted any change in the status quo under Putin.

Upon being elected, Putin’s approach to the press quickly caused consternation. Putin considered “every criticism of his policies as a challenge to the state” and took advantage of every opportunity to retaliate against his critics.<sup>217</sup> One early and prominent example was Andrei Babitsky of Radio Liberty who criticized Russian policy toward Chechnya in 1999 and 2000. Babitsky was charged with being a Chechen spy, held in isolation, interrogated, and turned over to armed Chechen authorities, like a terrorist, in exchange for Russian soldiers. A group of journalists protested in a letter, a portion of which stated:

Not once since the start of perestroika have the authorities permitted themselves such blatant lawlessness and cynicism toward representatives of the mass media. If the journalist Babitsky has committed an illegal act from the point of view of the authorities, then the question of his guilt or innocence must be decided in an open judicial trial. If the actions against Babitsky are a reaction to the contents of his reporters from Chechnya, this is a direct violation of the principle of freedom of the press guaranteed by the Constitution.<sup>218</sup>

Babitsky was later released and the charges dropped. The message to journalists was clear however. Russia was not a friendly place for independent journalism. Persecution was back after a reprieve under Yeltsin and Gorbachev.

In addition restricting individual liberties, Putin also sought to limit the independence of regional governance throughout Russia. This was a sharp contrast to the Yeltsin era where various territorial entities of the Russian federation were commonly allowed dissimilar rights and obligations. From the outset, Putin worked toward reestablishing Moscow's supremacy and weaken regional barons who profited from the policies of the previous administration. Shortly after taking office, Putin created seven *okrugs* (federal regions) which coincided with military *okrugs*. The new *okrugs* essentially divided the 89 republics of the Federation into spheres of federal control headed by newly appointed representatives of the President. Five of the seven representatives were from *siloviki* (power structures) close to Putin.

The President then sent a trio of laws to the Duma which sought to weaken the role of regional leaders, as well as the Federation Council, the upper chamber of parliament and legislative body for top regional politicians. With an estimated 30% of local laws violating the Russian constitution, greater regional subordination was clearly was Putin's goal.<sup>219</sup> The Federation Council was contrary to the principles of divided government because executive representatives convened *ex officio* and functioned as a legislative body. Still, the Council was the only barrier on the path to strengthening authoritarianism tendencies of the President. Regional elites were unable to organize unified resistance to the move.

Regional government was not the only target in Putin's political restructuring efforts. In 2000, Putin issued a decree that stripped the Central Bank of independence and ordered the CEC to streamline the party system. Parties were required to have at least 10,000 members with organizations in at least 45 regions and no less than 100 members in each. Every two years parties were forced to re-register and if the party failed to participate in an election over a five year span, they would be denied registration. The goal was limit the amount parties in Russia from nearly 200 to fewer than 20.<sup>220</sup>

In 2003, Putin used decrees to extend the powers of the Federal Security Service (FSB), the replacement of the KGB, and eliminate rival bureaucratic structures, such as the Federal Border Guard Service, Federal Tax Police Service, and Federal Agency for Government Communications and Information (FAPSI). Putin claimed the moves were a response to the fact that fighting drugs and terrorism was "getting tougher." Post-Soviet reform, however, had gradually stripped the secret police of control over border guards. Liberal opposition in Parliament expressed concern. According to MP Boris Nadezhdin, "an initial analysis of this would lead you to believe that the FSB has virtually taken on the form what used to be the KGB."<sup>221</sup> The abolition of these three agencies removed three remaining members of Yeltsin's elite: Mikhail Fradkov from the tax police, Konstantin Totsky from the border guards, and Viktor Matyukim of FAPSI.

Putin's top-down approach concentrated power in his hands, which "gave the democrats reason to suspect him of acting more harshly in the interests of the narrow groups of influence- old and new- that occupied the Kremlin."<sup>222</sup> Putin was neither a democrat, nor a dictator, and society was largely indifferent. Shevtosova explains:

There was no mass resistance to Putin's initiatives, nor could such resistance appear. There were several reasons for that: media controlled by the central authorities;

the lack of a strong opposition; society's passivity and fatalism; the hope that Putin would pursue honest politics; and a reluctance to criticize him. The president continued to be above criticism in Russia. Russians behaved as if they could not afford to lose hope in their new leader. Therefore, the Kremlin could disregard the scattered hotbeds of dissatisfaction among intellectuals and a few stubborn liberals.<sup>223</sup>

How to deal with Russia's small circle of multi-billionaires was another realm of reform for Putin. Their combined wealth and connections rivaled the power of the State, which was particularly disconcerting when significant resources were directed against the Kremlin. Yeltsin had an informal agreement with the Russian economic elite. If oligarchs supported his administration and stayed out of the day to day political process, they would be rewarded with political patronage. Putin, on the other hand, quickly went on the offensive, albeit in a highly selective manner.

The first target was Boris Berezovsky, a former Yeltsin insider and prominent beneficiary of shock therapy. Putin quickly sought to curb Berezovsky's political ambitions despite the fact the Berezovsky was the one who introduced Putin to Yeltsin's inner circle called "the family." In March of 2000 Berezovsky stated that "Putin cannot decide there will be no oligarchs in Russia . . . if anything, their role will increase."<sup>224</sup> In October, however, the Kremlin stripped Berezovsky of the major television station Russia First, which had been so instrumental in Yeltsin's victory in 1996 and was used more recently to discredit Putin's presidential opponents. The shares were sold to the State. By year's end Berezovsky settled in the United Kingdom after self-imposed exile. Berezovsky was charged with fraud and corruption in 2001 and hence became a wanted man in Russia. After surviving several attempts on his life, the former oligarch is open about his commitment to bring down Putin by force or through bloodless revolution, neither of which has materialized.

In contrast to Berezovsky, Vladimir Gusinsky directly challenged Putin back in 1999. Four days after Putin's inauguration, the government seized NTV, the second largest television channel in Russia, and other major assets. Gusinsky had amassed the largest media empire in Russia, which criticized Putin and supported Putin's political rivals. Like Berezovsky, Gusinsky left Russia in 2000 and his empire was since dismantled. Russian authorities charged Gusinsky with money laundering and fraud. In 2001, Gusinsky described the charges as "a joke" and claimed that "if I were to go to Russia, it's a one way ticket."<sup>225</sup> According to Gusinsky the real problem is that Putin craves absolute power, which threatens Europe. This is evident in how the regime only destroyed media and left alone other industries, such as steel and oil. Things would soon change however.

Mikhail Khodorkovsky, the top boss of Yukos Oil, was arrested in 2003 and detained on charges of fraud and tax evasion. Much of Khodorkovsky's estimated \$15 billion was attained through the highly suspect privatization process of shock therapy. His arrest came after several moves in the political arena, which included the acquisition of the prestigious *Moskovskiye Novosti* newspaper, the hiring of a leading investigative journalist who was very critical of the Putin, and contributions to political parties opposed to the President. Khodorkovsky was convicted of tax evasion and sentenced to nine years in prison. Meanwhile, Yukos was bankrupted, auctioned, and purchased by state owned oil firms such as Rosneft and Gazprom.

Putin angrily rejected the notion that Khodorkovsky's fate was retribution for his political activities. In contrast, Putin coined the phrase "dictatorship of the law" to supposedly describe the strict adherence to law. Still, the process by which Putin attacked

oligarchs was highly selective, which left many to conclude it was more about eliminating personal rivals than justice. Gusinsky, for example, was originally imprisoned, then released, after agreeing to give all his property to the state “at gunpoint” in exchange for his freedom.<sup>226</sup> After Gusinsky went public and rescinded on the deal, he once again became a wanted man.

Russians hardly felt compassion for Gusinsky or any of the elite group of oligarchs who profited royally from a privatization system which left many Russians in grave conditions. In turn, the political dynamic situation could be described as little else than dysfunctional from a Western perspective of democratic development. The most powerful opposition to Putin’s regime, which had moved away from rudimentary democratic practices of the Yeltsin era, were former oligarchs who amassed their extraordinary wealth from stealing billions of the dollars from the State under Yeltsin. As long as political and economic stability persisted, the public appeared content. In July of 2000, for example, 73% of Russians approved of Putin, even though 59% of Russians admitted they knew very little about him. 60% endorsed concentrating all power in one person’s hands to solve the problems facing Russia, while just 27% supported the independence of branches of government.<sup>227</sup> Most Russians (52%) supported state owned property, while just 15% favored an unfettered free market.<sup>228</sup>

Russian oil production and rising global oil prices generated popular and scholarly attention as Russia stood down OPEC’s production and export cuts in 2001 and briefly surpassed Saudi Arabia in 2002 as the world’s largest oil producer.<sup>229</sup> Moscow was touted as “the new Houston” with Putin crowned as “the world’s new oil czar.” Others claimed that Russia’s growth was premised on a “virtual economy” propped up by



high oil prices, rather than genuine and sustainable economic growth.<sup>230</sup> Russia was one of the top producing and exporting countries in the world, but ranked “much lower in proven oil reserves, with only 5% of world supply.”<sup>231</sup> Though Russian oil production increased from 6 million to 7 million barrels per day between 1999 and 2001, it was highly unlikely that Russia would regain the peak production of 1980’s at 12 million barrels per day. LUKoil, for example, held the largest reserves in Russia, yet only increased output by approximately 1% between 2000 and 2001. In turn, the oil boom in Russia was “the result of high oil prices, not increases in production, as world oil prices soared from around \$10 a barrel in December 1998 to a peak of around \$33 a barrel in September 2000.”<sup>232</sup>

The economy benefited from several years of rapid growth and oil prices that were coupled with increased political stability. This combination enabled much of the economy to operate at full capacity. At the same time, structural imbalances were still a serious concern. The public sector remained inefficient, which led to mismanagement of public resources and services. Private sector ownership remained centralized in a few major conglomerates. New firms, an important component of economic growth in transition economies, were slow to develop in an enterprise structure that still resembled the Soviet model.<sup>233</sup> Despite high consumer confidence, the growth rate of the GDP and fix capital investment began to slow.<sup>234</sup> Given the inherently unpredictable nature of the world oil market, uncertainty surrounded the sustainability of Russia’s economic recovery. A 2002 World Bank report explains:

This period may well turn out to be decisive in determining the path of economic development in Russia. In a period of high oil prices and political stability, reforms have been carried out at unprecedented depth and speed. But these favorable external

conditions are unlikely to last forever. Only then will it be clear whether the economy has changed enough to adapt to adverse circumstances.<sup>235</sup>

In 2003, the first elections to the Duma under President Putin were held. With the presidential election just months away, the elections were viewed as a significant indicator of future democratic development under Putin. The political environment was much different than 1999. In 2001, the merger of Unity and Fatherland All Russia resulted in the creation of a new pro-presidential party United Russia. This enabled United Russia to surpass the Communist Party (CPRF) as the largest party in the Duma. Consequently, the CPRF became the main opposition party.

Two new pro-presidential parties and blocs emerged. The People's Party was formed by MP's elected as independents in single member district races back in 1999. The Rodina (Homeland) Bloc was formed by high-profile deputies in 2003 in an effort to weaken support for CPRF. Yabloko and Union of Right Forces lost support in the run up to the election, which made the 5% particularly important for each. As a whole, there were several new political organizations in 2003, evident in the fact that over half had not participated in the previous Duma elections.

Though most electoral law was very similar to the 1999 Duma election, there were some changes. For example, political organizations were required to register as "all-Russia" electoral associations to compete in federal or regional elections. The OSCE expressed concern that "this new requirement may seriously inhibit the development of local or regional political activism and effectively block the establishment of new political parties by any groups that seek to represent local, regional or minority interests."<sup>236</sup> 44 associations were eligible to compete in 2003 under this title. 18 parties

and five electoral blocs registered. In another new legal change, parties that reach the 5% barrier no longer had to collect signatures or pay a deposit to nominate candidates for the next Duma election.

The major problem of the electoral process was an unfair campaign environment that disproportionately favored the interests and affiliations of President Putin. Most complaints centered upon the use of administrative resources by the State to further the candidates of United Russia. This included violations of the requirement that official functions are suspended while they are candidates and local government support of some certain candidates. Other problems included denial of equal conditions for campaign activities, such meeting space and advertising, and direct pressure on voters, such police detention of campaign workers and seizing campaign materials. Such activities “blurred the distinction between the party and the executive administration.”<sup>237</sup>

A second significant problem with the campaign centered upon the media. The majority of media coverage was biased in both degree and content toward pro-presidential parties. State controlled television channels adhered to electoral law that required allocation of free air time for all candidates. At the same time, remaining airtime openly promoted United Russia. 19% of news coverage at *First Channel*, for example, covered United Russia, all of which was positive or neutral. CPRF, on the other hand, received 13% of coverage, most of which was negative. *TV Russia*, a second example, granted 16% of its coverage to United Russia, overwhelmingly positive, compared to CPRF, which received comparable time, but was predominantly negative.<sup>238</sup>

Print media represented multiple views, but outlets supported specific parties of blocs. Voters were able to form an objective view, but it required consuming several

publications. Like television outlets, state-funded newspapers fulfilled legal expectations for allotting free time, but were biased in favor of United Russia and against the CPRF.<sup>239</sup> After the election, an unlikely coalition, Communists and liberals filed a legal suit which claimed there was serious bias in state run media and Russia's electoral commission fixed the vote count to reduce opposition in parliament. The case was eventually dismissed by the Supreme Court.<sup>240</sup>

On Election Day, turnout dropped fell to 55% as compared to 61% in 1999. This corresponded with the generally low level of public interest that characterized the campaign.<sup>241</sup> On the plus side, the electronic processing of preliminary results allowed the result to be posted within 24 hours of the polls closing. The voting process was largely peaceful, though there were isolated acts of violence, including the death of an electoral commission member in Chechnya. The election proceeded fairly for the most part, but significant problems existed. Top concerns were the lack of secrecy during the voting process, an insufficient number of polling booths in many stations, and failures to follow proper procedure in recording results.

The results were a resounding success for United Russia, which won 37% of the vote. The Communists finished second with 12% of the vote. LDPR and Rodina were the only other two groups to surpass the 5% threshold for proportional representation. LDPR's 11% was a surprise in light of their steady decline since 1995. The liberal Yablako (4%) and Union of Right Forces (4%) both fell short, which collectively constituted a major failure for the liberal opposition.

The "against all" vote in the proportional part of the election was up to 4.72% from 3.36%, while their remained a relatively low level of women in federal politics. Just

21 women were elected in proportional lists, 20 in single member districts, which constituted 9% of the Duma. Parties and blocs that supported the administration became an overwhelming majority in the Duma. United Russia controlled 224 total seats, which was close to majority. When the new Duma convened, four factions registered: United Russia (300 deputies), CPRF (52 deputies), LDPR (36 deputies), and Rodina (36 deputies).

Similar electoral problems resurfaced in the 2004 presidential election three months later. Once again, the advantages of incumbency were extended beyond appropriate norms, particularly with the media, and there were serious concerns surrounding open voting and vote tabulation despite a litany of voter rights. Efforts toward what the West would consider worthwhile goals created unintended consequences. “Get out the vote” campaigns undertaken by government were broadcast throughout the country with imagery and themes that appeared to favor the incumbent. Desires to expand franchise in remote locations raised doubts of whether satisfactory precautions were taken to prevent multiple voting.<sup>242</sup>

The Duma election was a major reorganization of parliamentary politics. This left many parties without representation in the Duma and a weakened party machinery. Consequently, most presidential candidates joined the race lacking substantial party support. With Putin’s party in control of the Duma, the president refrained from most aspects of conventional campaigning, such as participating in public debates. Regardless, Putin remained highly popular and faced a group of opponents with little public support.<sup>243</sup>

The campaign was described by the OSCE as “very low key.” Aside from a few visits of candidates to certain regions, “there was almost no visible campaign activity beyond what was present in the media.” Putin was understood to be “in an unassailable position as frontrunner” and as a result, competing candidates were unmotivated and unable to gather resources and investment in effective campaigns.<sup>244</sup> Once again, the operation of polling stations was generally considered legitimate, with the majority of complaints surrounding the role of the media. Putin easily defeated the other six candidates with 71% of the vote, up significantly from 52% in 2000. Turnout, meanwhile, dropped to 63% from 68% in 2000. As had become the norm for several elections, the Communists, under candidate Nikolay Kharitonov, came in second with 13% of the vote. None of the remaining candidates topped 5%.

In just over one term as president, Putin had effectively consolidated public and institutional support even though his conception and approach to democratic governance did not fit with Western norms, which became more and more apparent the longer he was in office. Economic development, meanwhile, exceeded expectations in 2003 and into 2004 with high growth, and advances in household incomes, industrial production, and investment. Once again, however, many equated this with equally impressive increases in the price of hydrocarbons. The average price of oil in the first half of 2003 rose from \$18.5 per barrel to \$23.7, due to the American-led invasion of Iraq, a 28% increase compared to the previous year.<sup>245</sup> The World Bank estimated that approximately 3% of the 7.2% economic growth in 2003 was the result of rising oil prices.<sup>246</sup> Still, Russia’s macroeconomic position in 2003 and 2004 was very strong. In the five years after the 1998 crisis, the economy grew by a cumulative total of 38%, while inflation gradually

declined to 12% in 2003. The federal budget ran a surplus for the fourth straight year and federal reserves hit a record high of \$86 billion in February of 2004.

Brisk economic growth continued throughout 2004 as the price of Russian oil increased by 20% between January and May compared to the same period the previous year. As a result, the average cost of oil was \$28 per barrel. GDP growth remained above 7%. "As a simple rule of thumb," the World Bank reported in 2004, "growth above 5% in Russia has always come with an increase in oil prices."<sup>247</sup> "The best news," the report states, "is that this is not news anymore as growth rates in excess of 7% acquire an air of normality."<sup>248</sup> By mid-decade it was clear that "Russia proved an exception to the rule that financial crashes and defaults leave a measurable dent in output growth during subsequent years."<sup>249</sup>

Other macroeconomic indicators, in addition to GDP and inflation, witnessed steady and positive change from 2000 to 2005 as well.<sup>250</sup> The average wage in Russia grew from \$80.2 in 2000 to \$179.4 in 2003, \$237.2 in 2004, and \$301.6 in 2005. Real disposable income steadily rose to 185% of 1999 levels in 2005. Unemployment, on the other hand, fell from 10.4% in 2000 to 7.6% in 2005 as 15.8% of people lived below substance level in 2005 compared to 30.2% in 2000. Gross FDI in 2004 was double 2001 levels and in 2005 it was triple 2001 levels. By 2006, it was safe to say that Russia had fully stabilized politically and economically after nearly a decade of turbulent transformation. Though stable, it remains very difficult to label the Russian regime in conventional Western terms. Under Putin, Russia has simultaneously become a major player among G-8 nations, yet faced harsh criticisms for the decline of Russian democracy.

This work evaluates the role of elections and institutions in Russia's transition from Communism from 1991 to 2006. Experiences of post-Soviet Russia have produced several indicators that elections have effectively promoted the peaceful and legitimate transition of power. Elections were held frequently in Russia: 1993, 1995, 1996, 1999, 2000, 2003, and 2004. All elections required by the Constitution were held without postponement or cancellation. The frequency of elections suggests that elections are a normal component of Russian politics. Elections became fully institutionalized in the Russian system with the 1996 presidential election which was the final clash between liberals and communists over the systematic nature of the regime. There is no evidence of any intention to suspend constitutional government, but given Putin's willingness to re-conceptualize and reformulate Russian governance away from previously established democratic norms, it is possible Putin may not give up power in 2008 as required by the Constitution or more likely, distort the transition process. This remains to be seen however.

Turnout for national elections in Russia was consistent with norms in other democratic countries. More than 50% of registered voters turned out to the polls for each national election in post-Soviet Russia. The average turnout was 66% for Duma elections and 67% for presidential elections. Polls in 1997 revealed that two-thirds of Russians believed that it was the duty of citizens in a democratic society to participate in elections. These trends and attitudes suggest that strong voter participating is an important part of national elections in Russia.

All candidates in post-Soviet elections were selected in processes that were open to the public. There were some restrictions, such as the collection of signatures, but these



did not disproportionately prevent candidates from being selected. In each parliamentary election, for example, there were several thousand individual candidates, many of whom ran as independents. The more pressing issue was figuring out an effective way to verify that information provided by candidates complied with relevant electoral law. This was complicated by the large numbers of candidates participating in each election.

Electoral oversight procedures are adequate, but not optimal. The Central Election performed well in some areas, such as enhancing transparency of the electoral process, and not as well in other areas, such as enforcing violations regarding the use of State resources for campaigning. A major problem was the substantial and widespread lack of secrecy during the voting process, evident in consistent trends of public voting and family voting.

Since 1996, State resources have been used by incumbent Presidents to further their electoral interests in violation of electoral law. This, coupled with the inappropriate cooperation of government officials and media oligarchs in violation, suggests that fraud is a significant problem that taints Russian elections. At the same time, there have been relatively low levels of violence surrounding national elections, with some isolated incidents, and international observers concluded that the will of the populace was reflected in every election. Still, Russians have not expressed faith in the electoral process. Public opinion polls in 1997 revealed that 90% of Russians believed that electoral results would be manipulated, while over half thought they would have little to no effect on policy. This in part reflects the long history of inconsequential elections throughout the Soviet Era and the massive instability of Russian society throughout the 1990's. In turn, Russians have widely accepted election results since the fall of the Soviet

Union. There have been no popular movements in Russia against either the electoral process or creeping dictatorship as witnessed in the Rose Revolution in Georgia or Orange Revolution in Ukraine. Manipulation in Russia was pervasive, but occurred in the less blatant realm of communication, rather than electoral administration.

In 1995, new campaign regulations required the media to refrain from bias news coverage and required the allotment of free air time to all registered parties and candidates. The regulation was abused by media controlling oligarchs, often in cahoots with political leaders. As economic liberalization put many legitimate print media outlets out of business, television became the dominant medium of communication. Yeltsin's improbable bid for reelection in 1996 was secured through a regular bombardment of pro-administration propaganda by major networks controlled by Yeltsin-friendly oligarchs, such as Boris Berezovsky.

Under Putin, the dynamic changed, yet the result remained the same. Putin selectively targeted media moguls critical of the administration, such as Vladimir Gusinsky, and used unrelated criminal charges to destroy media empires by cutting off the head. This possibly would have been done literally, if oligarchs had not escaped multiple attempts on their lives and rendition after fleeing Russia. Throughout the process, targeted elites were portrayed as enemies of the State because of their political and economic activities since the fall of the Soviet Union. Over time, independent media in Russia was gradually destroyed.

At the same time, there was significant ideological variance among candidates in national elections. Thousands of candidates competed in each national election, a significant portion of whom were independents, and represented various political

persuasions. Four major party groupings emerged in 1993: reform, pro-government, national-patriotic, and Communist. Though parties came and went, the general groupings persisted in subsequent Duma elections. Hence, the average number of parties officially registered in parliamentary elections was 37.<sup>251</sup> In 1995 four parties passed the 5% threshold for proportional seats, while 6 parties made it in the 1999 and 2003 elections. Presidential elections have been consistently centered on two dominant party groupings, pro-government and Communist, though several other candidates from various political backgrounds have run. As Putin consolidated power through United Russia, ideological variance among candidates in national elections has significantly decreased. The upcoming elections in 2007 and 2008 will likely determine whether this trend will continue downward, stabilize, or reverse.

Ideological variance has not been institutionalized in stable and principled parties however. Most parties have been unable to organize and sustain meaningful national party structures, let alone determining principles for which the party will stand. Instead, most parties in Russia have revolved around personalities of the party leader or leaders. Ironically, the most organized and durable party in post Soviet Russia has been the Communist Party. Though Communists advocated the resurrection of Communism in the early 1990's, this changed after the 1996 presidential election, when the party no longer sought regime change and instead focused on promoting more generous social policies. Presently, United Russia appears to have an infrastructure that very well may endure under the next administration, though to date, Putin's dominance of the organization has earned United Russia the reputation of little more than a rubber stamp for the Kremlin.

As a whole, elections in Russia have produced mixed results in terms of promoting the legitimate and peaceful transition of power. Elections premised on popular selection of candidates from across the political spectrum have occurred frequently with high voter turnout. The administration of elections has experienced relatively low levels of violence with adequate electoral oversight and wide acceptance of results. At the same time, elections in Russia have been de-legitimized by uncharacteristically high levels of fraud undertaken by the State to further the electoral interests of people in power. This includes the inappropriate use of State resources and the elimination of independent media. These fraudulent activities are particularly problematic considering there has been few, if any candidates that represented stable and principled parties that genuinely offered a serious and more accountable alternative.

Even though elections have been moderately effective in promoting the peaceful and legitimate exchange of political power in Russia, the illegal use of State resources under Yeltsin and Putin has cast an increasingly ominous shadow over the entire electoral process. Whether this cloud will lift or settle is unclear. There is not a strong affinity for democratic governance within the Russian elite or populace, which puzzles and unsettles many in the West. Russians understand themselves to be different than the United States and expect these differences to manifest themselves politically. Perhaps the development of institutions served as important and necessary corollary to the shortcomings of a democratic electoral process.

Unfortunately, however, experiences with democratic institutions in Russia have demonstrated few indicators of stable and representative government. Russia established a democratic constitution in 1993. The constitution divided political power among

legislative, executive, and judicial branches. Several dozen liberties and rights are listed in the constitution, some of which are included in the U.S. Bill of Rights, such as freedom of religion, freedom of speech and freedom of association. Many of the liberties are commonly associated with social democracies, such as a right to medical care, a right to education, a right to housing, and a right to social security. Problematically, however, the constitution was the product of a tense negotiation process that disintegrated into a violent contest for political power.

In March of 1993, the Supreme Soviet sought to impeach Yeltsin, who responded with a public referendum on his policies that was narrowly supported by a majority of Russians. When Yeltsin issued a decree to disband the Supreme Soviet and hold new elections, hundreds of deputies barricaded themselves in the White House and declared control of government. Though most Russians wanted compromise, the conflict was resolved by force. On Yeltsin's orders, military forces shelled the building, captured coup leaders. This enabled Yeltsin to use his new power position to shape the 1993 constitution.

Unfortunately, violence was common beyond major institutional disputes. For example, several Duma members were murdered in office. Victims have come from different parties, including Communists, liberals, liberal democrats, and pro-government forces, but generally shared business backgrounds. The murders appear to be contract killings and typically go unsolved. Such violence is emblematic of society as a whole. At the turn of the century, official statistics of violent crimes in Russia and the prison population were comparable to the world's most criminalized countries.

In addition to violence, corruption has been another significant problem before and after the fall of the Soviet Union. Criminality was central in the development of a market economy. Bribery of government officials was commonplace. Economic elites stole millions of dollars from the State and invested the capital abroad to avoid the scope of Russian law. Throughout the 1990's, the legal order was fragmented and ineffective, which made a law-based state elusive. Putin's reforms provided much greater stability, but law enforcement is now used selectively as a tool to promote the personal and political ambitions of the Kremlin.

Despite violence and corruption, there has been a gradual acceptance of the political system adopted since the fall of the Soviet Union. It is difficult to celebrate this development, however, given the current system is so far from Western democratic standards. Over a dozen journalists critical of the current regime have been mysteriously murdered since 2000. A lack of public criticism and government transparency has compromised the development of a democratic political process. There is no meaningful role for the opposition as the fall of the Soviet Union and subsequent political system failed to displace the Kremlin as the nerve center of Russian politics, which even today continues to be abused by political elite

To detriment of Russian democratic development, political conflict exceeded the peaceful confines of formal institutions early in the post Soviet era. The violent resolution of this conflict established a skewed institutional dynamic where henceforth the Duma was subservient to the executive, rather than an independently powerful component of government in its own right. By constitutional and unconstitutional means, Yeltsin battled the Communists by deliberately seeking to isolate himself personally and

politically from threats of impeachment and prosecution. In promoting and protecting economic reform Yeltsin began issuing decrees, which both Yeltsin and Putin have used frequently used to circumvent traditional checks on executive power and avoid institutionalized political opposition. Putin and his creation, United Russia, currently exercise so much control over Russian politics that meaningful political opposition is practically extinct.

Akin to the development of stable and representative government in Russia, formal institutions have not been highly effective in producing a stable and capitalist economy. The implementation of Shock Therapy generated significant debate on the effectiveness of the model. Few scholars, if any, understand economic transformation in Russia to be a highly effective and well orchestrated process, though few deny that some very important changes transpired. Shortly after the fall of the Soviet Union, the Yeltsin administration undertook vast economic reform, beginning with price liberalization and privatization. Central planning was moved aside in favor granting enterprises freedom to determine what goods to produce and how to produce them.

In January of 1992 reforms immediately freed 90% of retail prices and most of the remaining prices followed in the subsequent months. Prices increased over 1,000% and inflation rose to over 2,000%.<sup>252</sup> Under a voucher system introduced in October of 1992, privatization of industry proceeded quickly as well, though a substantial portion of private companies remained under direct or indirect control of the same managers who were appointed under the Soviet era.<sup>253</sup> Agriculture proceeded much slower than industry as just 5% of arable land in Russia was owned by family farms in April of 1995.<sup>254</sup>

As a whole, a significant number of enterprises were privatized under the Yeltsin administration. The raw number, however, does not sufficiently reflect the negative consequences of the process by which this occurred. The most significant long-term problem was how most of the newly freed property ultimately ended up in the hands of a select few economic elites that invested the bulk of their profits abroad. Other significant problems included: the persistence of the *nomenklatura*, corrupt bargaining between politicians and economic elites, the development of a concurrent shadow economy beyond the scope of formal regulation, high levels of poverty and economic inequality, and a collective failure to address serious structural problems prior full economic collapse.

High global oil and gas prices remain an important, but inevitably fragile, part of increased economic growth because of the substantial increase in State revenues these prices produce. Most economic activity also remains confined to the region surrounding Moscow, which continues to be a problem. Rising GDP has helped alleviate Russia's budget deficit, a significant problem throughout the first decade of economic reform. The Yeltsin administration sought to solve budget problems by changing the main source of borrowing from the Central Bank to the IMF, state bonds, Eurobonds, and the World Bank. Two significant obstacles to raising revenues was an inability on behalf of the State to effectively collect taxes and cut subsidies. With the implementation of a 13% flat tax, high global oil prices, and the rise in GDP, Russia's debt is now on pace to become the lowest in the Federation's history.

In contrast to GDP, foreign direct investment (FDI) steadily grew from 1994 to 1997 and then plummeted because of the economic collapse. After a slight rise between



1998 and 1999, FDI gradually fell until 2002 when the downward trend sharply reversed. In 2001, for example, outflow exceeded inflows, which meant that resources were sparse when they were most needed. Through the post Soviet period, several obstacles have hampered FDI in Russia. Obstacles include concerns surrounding tax laws, property rights, creditor rights, macroeconomic stability, political stability, banking, accounting, and corruption. Though FDI doubled between 2002 and 2004, Russia was still much less successful in attracting foreign investment than other Central European countries.<sup>255</sup>

As a whole, formal institutions have been limited in terms of fostering political and economic development. Russia established a democratic constitution, but without a strong legal system. As a result, many of these provisions continue to be severely limited in terms of practical application. Furthermore, Russia has demonstrated wide acceptance of the political system, but the highly popular President Putin has centralized formal and informal power in such a way that the system lacks many of the institutional processes of fully functioning Western democracies, such as a meaningful role for the opposition, low levels of fraud, and low levels of violence. In turn, formal institutions have been largely ineffective in promoting stable and representative government.

Formal institutions have been ineffective in promoting a stable and capitalist economy. After nearly a decade of falling GDP, falling wages, and increasing budget deficit, the new millennium witnessed reversing trends in all of these macroeconomic indicators. While such trends are promising, the net gain has been limited. After nearly two decades the GDP has just begun to match levels that predate the beginning of Shock Therapy. This is not to suggest that capitalism will not “pay” as transition scholars have argued, but that payment is not guaranteed given Russia’s dependence on global oil

exports and greater attention to the process by which institutional reform was undertaken most likely would have produced a more equitable, efficient, legal, stable, and prosperous economy. Today, Russia still struggles with creating the necessary formal and informal institutions of a fully functioning market economy, which limits its competitiveness abroad, evident in a rising, but inadequate FDI.

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<sup>1</sup> Service (1997), 6.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Kelley (1999), 2.

<sup>4</sup> Pipes (1995), 45.

<sup>5</sup> Pipes (1995), 46.

<sup>6</sup> Pipes (1995), 46.

<sup>7</sup> Kelley (1999), 108.

<sup>8</sup> Pipes (1995), 150.

<sup>9</sup> Pipes (1995), 152.

<sup>10</sup> Pipes (1995), 152.

<sup>11</sup> For example, both the 1918 constitution and 1924 constitution failed to refer to the Party.

<sup>12</sup> Kelley (1999), 17.

<sup>13</sup> Pipes (1995), 154.

<sup>14</sup> Pipes (1995), 156.

<sup>15</sup> Pipes (1995), 156.

<sup>16</sup> Pipes (1995), 165.

<sup>17</sup> Uzbekistan (1925), Turkmenistan (1925), and Tadjikistan (1929) were added later.

<sup>18</sup> Kelley (1999), 18.

<sup>19</sup> Peasants, for example, were permitted to sell food in open markets as they had done in the past, rather than having sell goods strictly as government-set prices.

<sup>20</sup> Kelley (1999), 116.

<sup>21</sup> Kelley (1999), 19.

<sup>22</sup> Kelley (1999), 20.

<sup>23</sup> Kelley (1999), 20.

<sup>24</sup> Kelley (1999), 124.

<sup>25</sup> Kelley (1999), 130.

<sup>26</sup> Kelley (1999), 134.

<sup>27</sup> Kelley (1999), 135.

<sup>28</sup> Kelley (1999), 154.

<sup>29</sup> Kelley (1999), 154.

<sup>30</sup> Kelley (1999), 155.

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- <sup>31</sup> Service (1997), 470.
- <sup>32</sup> Service (1997), 470.
- <sup>33</sup> Brown (2001), 12.
- <sup>34</sup> Service (1997), 474.
- <sup>35</sup> Yeltsin was originally rejected in his bid to enter the Supreme Soviet, until an elected member voluntarily yielded his seat to him.
- <sup>36</sup> Service (1997), 475.
- <sup>37</sup> Service (1997), 477.
- <sup>38</sup> Service (1997), 485.
- <sup>39</sup> Service (1997), 488.
- <sup>40</sup> Service (1997), 494.
- <sup>41</sup> Service (1997), 494.
- <sup>42</sup> Zlotnik (2003), 147-148.
- <sup>43</sup> A plan to storm the White House was developed, but never implemented
- <sup>44</sup> Kelley (1999), 161.
- <sup>45</sup> Brown (2001), 22.
- <sup>46</sup> Lipton (1993), 57.
- <sup>47</sup> Service (1997), 510.
- <sup>48</sup> Lipton (1993), 58.
- <sup>49</sup> Service (1997), 513.
- <sup>50</sup> Service (1997), 513.
- <sup>51</sup> Examples include Gennadi Burbulis, Anatoli Chubais, Andrei Kozyrev, Oleg Lobov, Alexander Shokhin, Sergei Shakhrai, and Yuri Skokov.
- <sup>52</sup> Service (1997), 512.
- <sup>53</sup> Service (1997), 514.
- <sup>54</sup> Service (1997), 515.
- <sup>55</sup> Service (1997), 516.
- <sup>56</sup> Service (1997), 518.
- <sup>57</sup> Service (1997), 518.
- <sup>58</sup> Service (1997), 519.
- <sup>59</sup> Service (1997), 519.
- <sup>60</sup> Service (1997), 522.
- <sup>61</sup> Service (1997), 524.
- <sup>62</sup> Service (1997), 525.
- <sup>63</sup> Kelley (1999), 25.
- <sup>64</sup> Kelley (1999), 26.
- <sup>65</sup> Section 1, Article 1.
- <sup>66</sup> These were held along with the constitutional referendum.
- <sup>67</sup> Clark (1994), 520.
- <sup>68</sup> Ordeshook (1995), 47.
- <sup>69</sup> Clark (1994), 520-521.
- <sup>70</sup> Clark (1994), 521.
- <sup>71</sup> Clark (1994), 521.
- <sup>72</sup> Clark (1994), 523.
- <sup>73</sup> Ordeshook (1995), 48.
- <sup>74</sup> Sachs (1995), 52.
- <sup>75</sup> Sachs (1995), 52.
- <sup>76</sup> Sachs (1995), 53.
- <sup>77</sup> Sachs (1995), 50.
- <sup>78</sup> Sachs (1995), 54.
- <sup>79</sup> Sachs (1995), 55.
- <sup>80</sup> Sachs (1995), 56.
- <sup>81</sup> Sachs (1995), 57.
- <sup>82</sup> Sachs (1995), 56.
- <sup>83</sup> Sachs (1995), 56.

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- <sup>84</sup> Sachs (1995), 57.  
<sup>85</sup> Sachs (1995), 51.  
<sup>86</sup> Sachs (1995), 51.  
<sup>87</sup> Sachs (1992), 43.  
<sup>88</sup> Sachs (1992), 43.  
<sup>89</sup> Sachs (1992), 46.  
<sup>90</sup> Sachs (1992), 46.  
<sup>91</sup> Sachs (1995), 47.  
<sup>92</sup> Sachs (1995), 47.  
<sup>93</sup> Aslund (2001), 20.  
<sup>94</sup> Aslund (2001), 21.  
<sup>95</sup> Aslund (2001), 21.  
<sup>96</sup> Aslund (2001), 21.  
<sup>97</sup> Aslund (2001), 1.  
<sup>98</sup> Aslund (2001), 1.  
<sup>99</sup> Lipton (1993), 58.  
<sup>100</sup> Lipton (1993), 61.  
<sup>101</sup> Lipton (1993), 58.  
<sup>102</sup> Lipton (1993), 60.  
<sup>103</sup> Bergson (1995), 341.  
<sup>104</sup> Bergson (1995), 343.  
<sup>105</sup> Bergson (1995), 343.  
<sup>106</sup> Bergson (1995), 343.  
<sup>107</sup> Bergson (1995), 338.  
<sup>108</sup> Bergson (1995), 339.  
<sup>109</sup> Hedlund and Sundstrom (1996), 893.  
<sup>110</sup> Hedlund and Sundstrom (1996), 889.  
<sup>111</sup> Bergson (1995), 344.  
<sup>112</sup> Desai (1995), 102.  
<sup>113</sup> Mature capitalism, however, is much more than free enterprise. Capitalism is a system, like Communism, that depends on contracts, loans, mortgages, laws, and courts to make it work.  
<sup>114</sup> Desai (1995), 102.  
<sup>115</sup> Desai (1995), 103.  
<sup>116</sup> Desai (1995), 104.  
<sup>117</sup> Desai (1995), 104.  
<sup>118</sup> Desai (1995), 105.  
<sup>119</sup> Desai (1995), 109.  
<sup>120</sup> Desai (1995), 111.  
<sup>121</sup> Hedlund and Sundstrom (1996), 887.  
<sup>122</sup> Hedlund and Sundstrom (1996), 887.  
<sup>123</sup> Hedlund and Sundstrom (1996), 887.  
<sup>124</sup> Hedlund and Sundstrom (1996), 887.  
<sup>125</sup> Hedlund and Sundstrom (1996), 888, 889, and 897.  
<sup>126</sup> Hedlund and Sundstrom (1996), 890.  
<sup>127</sup> Fischer (1993), 392-393.  
<sup>128</sup> Hedlund and Sundstrom (1996), 893.  
<sup>129</sup> Hedlund and Sundstrom (1996), 895.  
<sup>130</sup> This is measured by volume.  
<sup>131</sup> Hedlund and Sundstrom (1996), 900.  
<sup>132</sup> Hedlund and Sundstrom (1996), 906.  
<sup>133</sup> White, Wyman, and Oates (1997), 768.  
<sup>134</sup> White, Wyman, and Oates (1997), 774.  
<sup>135</sup> White, Wyman, and Oates (1997), 775.  
<sup>136</sup> White, Wyman, and Oates (1997), 776.  
<sup>137</sup> White, Wyman, and Oates (1997), 776.

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- <sup>138</sup> White, Wyman, and Oates (1997), 782.
- <sup>139</sup> White, Wyman, and Oates (1997), 793.
- <sup>140</sup> White, Wyman, and Oates (1997), 794.
- <sup>141</sup> White, Wyman, and Oates (1997), 794.
- <sup>142</sup> Fish (1996), 105.
- <sup>143</sup> Fish (1996), 108.
- <sup>144</sup> Mason and Sidorenko-Stephenson (1997), 698.
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- <sup>147</sup> Meadowcroft (1996), report on round two of the 1996 election.
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- <sup>176</sup> Talbott (2002), 206-208.
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- <sup>188</sup> OSCE, Final Report on the 1999 Elections to the State Duma, 6.
- <sup>189</sup> The "opposition vs. incumbent contest" became more prevalent when Unity emerged as a new identity representing pro-Kremlin forces.OSCE, Final Report on the 1999 Elections to the State Duma, 8.
- <sup>190</sup> OSCE Final Report on the 1999 Elections to the State Duma, 11. Yabloko and the Communist Party were the exceptions.
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- <sup>194</sup> OSCE Final Report on the 1999 Elections to the State Duma, 15.
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- <sup>197</sup> OSCE Final Report on the 1999 Elections to the State Duma, 21.
- <sup>198</sup> OSCE Final Report on the 1999 Election to the State Duma, 26.
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- <sup>201</sup> OSCE Final Report on the 2000 President Election, 6.
- <sup>202</sup> OSCE Final Report on the 2000 President Election, 7.
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- <sup>204</sup> OSCE Final Report on the 2000 President Election, 8.
- <sup>205</sup> Shevtsova (2005), 73.
- <sup>206</sup> OSCE Final Report on the 2000 President Election, 2.
- <sup>207</sup> OSCE Final Report on the 2000 President Election, 19.
- <sup>208</sup> OSCE Final Report on the 2000 President Election, 19.
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- <sup>211</sup> OSCE Final Report on the 2000 President Election, 24.
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- <sup>213</sup> Shevtsova (2005), 75.
- <sup>214</sup> Shevtsova (2005), 76.
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- <sup>248</sup> “Russian Economic Report.” The World Bank. June 2004, 2.
- <sup>249</sup> “Russia: From Transition to Development.” The World Bank. 2004, 27.
- <sup>250</sup> “Russian Economic Report.” October 2001 (Table #1) and December 2006 (Table #10).
- <sup>251</sup> I do not include 1993 in the average because it was a unique election called after the violent conflict between the executive and legislative branches.
- <sup>252</sup> Hedlund and Sundstrom (1996), 893.
- <sup>253</sup> Bergson (1995), 341.
- <sup>254</sup> Bergson (1995), 343.
- <sup>255</sup> For example, the Directorate for Financial and Enterprise Affairs of the OECD states that 2002 FDI in Russia was just \$27 per head of population compared to \$817 in the Czech Republic.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

In determining the best direction for studies of democratic development in comparative political scholarship three basic questions must be addressed: 1) How should we define democracy? 2) What has been the focus in understanding democratic development? 3) What should be the focus in understanding democratic development? The dominant paradigm, as Thomas Carothers puts it, has been transitions theory.<sup>1</sup> A detailed discussion of the development of transitions theory as a response to modernization theory was provided. Essentially, transition scholars understood the transition process to be dynamic, rather than based on preconditions, and emphasized the establishment of elections and institutions in producing a functioning democracy. As Steven Fish observes, this focus has largely failed "to provide a reliable road map for understanding regime change."<sup>2</sup>

As I see it, there are several reasons for this. First, a focus on elections and institutions under appreciates the lack of new political and economic elites, particularly in post-Soviet societies. In Ukraine and Russia, for example, prominent "democratic" leaders have had previous careers in the former regime be it office holding (Boris Yeltsin), secret service (Vladimir Putin), or economic bureaucracy (Victor Yushchenko). This has caused several development problems. Elites often lack training and experiences with democratic norms and procedures in various capacities of government operation. As one Western observer put it, "I've been to meetings with Yushchenko. They last for hours. He has no knowledge or experience of how to run things efficiently."<sup>3</sup> Other problems include a lack of transparency, a general will to moderate the pace of change in



order to preserve traditional power structures, the consistent abuse of state resources, a general willingness to restrict civil liberties, and a general lack of motivation to be genuinely accountable given the relatively limited nature of organized and sustained popular pressure.

Second, a focus on elections and institutions under appreciates mixed public sentiment regarding democracy, specifically the roles of institutional implementation and international forces in shaping these attitudes. As Phillip Roeder points out, "many of the institutions recommended by political scientists for deeply divided societies actually aggravate the problems of political stability and thus undermine democracy."<sup>4</sup> Ukrainian children are taught they live in a democracy based on rights granted in the Constitution, yet university students commonly speak of the need for justice and fairness, not freedom and democracy, when reflecting on the shortcomings of contemporary government. In Russia, meanwhile, the turbulent period of shock therapy propelled stability atop the list of public priorities for government, well ahead of abstract principles regarding the role of government in society. Such observations do not intend to suggest that democracy should not be universally valued by those who study its development and promotion. Rather, scholarly approaches must be particularly cognizant of how various societies in the age of globalization conceive of democracy and what the end result should be. Democracy as a form of government is a process, but one by its basic nature that will be undertaken with different cultural attitudes, values, and objectives that constantly shape, even impede, development processes.

Third, a focus on elections and institutions under appreciates the lack of meaningful and sustained political organization necessary for elections to

have governance and policy that is representative of public will. As Ishiyama and Kennedy state, "where relatively stable patterns of partisan competition have emerged in most states of the former Soviet Union" it has taken the form of "pseudo-parties" that are "largely shifting coalitions of individuals unanchored in post Communist society and incapable of performing even the most basic functions of political parties."<sup>5</sup> The problem has not been an insufficient quantity of parties, but insufficient quality. In Ukraine and Russia, for example, pseudo-parties center upon dominant political figures, rather than platforms, many of which come and go with various elections.

In addition, civil society has been sporadic and disorganized. In Ukraine, strides were made with the Gongadze affair and Orange Revolution. Just a few years later, however, Madan became a public space for parties to pay people to stand around next to this flag or that flag each time the President and Prime Minister reached a standoff. Many Ukrainians describe their politics as "a circus" where money, not collective action, speaks the loudest. This is not surprising considering that even "free" medical care requires informal payments to government practitioners to ensure adequate care.

As a whole, a focus on elections and institutions under appreciates the role of personnel, attitudes, and organizations related to democratic development, particularly in the Russia and Ukraine. Criticizing various shortcomings of transitions theory is important, though regional scholars, particular of the former Soviet Union, have been highly dismissive of any potential benefit of the transitions approach. To best serve comparative political scholarship, "regionalists" and "transitologists" should move beyond largely methodological debates like the ones between Bunce, O'Donnell, Karl, and others. Greater empirical debate that clarifies and questions transitions theory would

be more useful to the study of democratic development as a whole. Such efforts would help establish consensus among scholars and help determine where the literature should go from here. The world is full of diverse experiences in an age of highly interrelated and accelerated political, economic, and social change. In turn, pockets of scholarship that share the general theme of democratic development will not remain in isolation long, nor should they. Conversely, universal generalizations that fail to face comprehensive reflection and revision are of limited scholarly benefit. A middle ground between “regionalists” and “transitologists” needs to be found in which the best of each approach is combined.

To move toward this middle way, scholars need to reconceptualize and refine basic ideas toward democracy and democratic development in comparative political scholarship in a way that people can understand, rather than simply expanding the literature by constructing more abstract and elaborate models that focus on obstructing recession of the third wave. This begins by asking *what is democracy*, a simply question that has generated significant debate. Election centered definitions, as put forth by Joseph Schumpeter, even with the addition of civil liberties, as put forth by Robert Dahl, are no longer sufficient. A working definition of democracy must incorporate the multifaceted nature of the government system, yet be concise enough so as to be clearly comprehended and applied. I define democracy as the process by which popularly elected representatives, legitimate government structures, government recognized civil liberties, and active civil society combine to form a political system that collectively seeks to promote public good. This is a purposefully narrow definition to ensure conceptual clarity.

Transitologists have focused too much on institutions at the expense of other important dimensions of democracy. Democracy is not institutionally determined, nor solely the product of choices made by key actors. As such, the process must not be thought of as simply building "the right track" and voting on who should drive for awhile. This ignores important considerations such as desired destination, driving experience, speed, council, maintenance, obstacles, etc., all of which play an important role in moving forward. In turn, democracy consists of several components interacting: part elected office holding, part institutions, part legal protections from government, part popular organization and civic activity. Together these parts peacefully mediate conflict and move society forward toward some conception of public good. Without one of these parts, functioning democracy will be very difficult to attain, as we have seen in Ukraine and Russia.

If transitions theory was on target, one would expect development in Ukraine and Russia to be quite similar given that both countries established democratic elections and institutions at relatively the same time and transitioned from the same authoritarian regime. As Alexander Motyl puts it, however, "Ukraine and Russia are especially vivid, and paradigmatic examples of diametrically opposed paths that the USSR's successor states can follow."<sup>6</sup> As Andrew Wilson explains, "a decade and a half is not a particularly long time, but the assumption that post-Soviet politics can be studied within the framework of some kind of 'transition to democracy' was always doubtful and is now untenable."<sup>7</sup> This work seeks to move beyond assumptions and engage transitions theory in its own words. To be fair to the transitions approach, the model was tested with empirical rigor in a region where many other variables, such as timing, geography,

history, culture, language, and religion are similar. To my knowledge, no critical evaluation of this nature has yet taken place.

My research question asked: *Have elections and institutions been highly effective in promoting political and economic development in the former Soviet Union?* My thesis argued that the predominant emphasis on elections and institutions among transition scholars has been largely ineffective in understanding democratic transitions in the former Soviet Union and thus, hinders efforts to promote democracy. To evaluate this thesis I conducted in-depth case studies of Ukraine and Russia, two countries that have a historical connection that dates back to the 9<sup>th</sup> century and over the next 14 centuries came to share many social commonalities including ethnicity, language, culture, and religion. If the emphasis on elections and institutions of the transitions approach is justified, then democratic development in Ukraine and Russia would have been relatively successful and similar in each case because elections and institutions were established and functioning early in the transition process. This work, on the other hand, found that the development experiences in Ukraine and Russia were highly divergent and ineffective, which strongly suggests that the emphasis on elections and institutions in the transitions approach such be reconsidered.

I created ten indicators to measure the effectiveness of elections in promoting democratic development. When effective, elections fundamentally promote the peaceful and legitimate transition of power. Indicators of an effective electoral process include holding frequent elections, high voter turnout, popular candidate selection, effective oversight procedures to resolve electoral disputes, low levels of fraud, low levels of violence, wide acceptance of results, low levels of media favoritism, ideological variance

among candidates, and candidates that represent stable and principled parties.<sup>8</sup> The existence of these indicators were measured cumulatively, meaning what prevalent from 1991 to 2006, and currently, meaning what is the dominant trend as of 2006. Such measurements provided a perspective on both the norm and direction of post Soviet development in each country.

Ukraine and Russia experienced several indicators of peaceful and legitimate transition of power from 1991 and 2006: frequent elections, strong levels of voter turnout, popular selection of candidates, and wide acceptance of results. In both countries scheduled elections were never postponed or cancelled and the average turnout for elections was approximately 70% in Ukraine and 67% in Russia. Respective electoral laws permitted citizens in both systems to popularly candidates. Both systems widely accepted the results of elections, even fraudulent ones in the case of Ukraine.

Ukraine and Russia also consistently failed to experience certain indicators of peaceful and legitimate transition of power, including low levels of fraud, low levels of violence, and candidates that represent stable and principled political parties. In Ukraine, electoral fraud was blatant throughout much of the first decade of independence. Official results were manipulated by at the direction of powerful members of the administration, particularly under President Kuchma. In Russia, the dominant form of fraud was the illegal use of state resources to further the electoral advantages of politicians in power, particularly those favorable to the President. Both had a significant and negative impact on a legitimate electoral process.

Ukraine and Russia have not had stable and principled parties as a norm of post Soviet development. Parties have been numerous, but fleeting, and are typically centered

upon candidates, rather than platforms. Given this nature, party members have been typically held accountable by party leaders, not the other way around. Interestingly, the dominant ruling coalitions in each country, Our Ukraine under Yushchenko and United Russia under Putin, pursue very different political objectives with very different levels of organizational solidarity. This points to the fact that in addition to common trends of electoral development, both positive and negative, Ukraine and Russia produced divergent experiences with several indicators as well.

The media in Ukraine, for example, faced strict censorship throughout the 1990's, particularly under Kuchma, and now appears to be moving toward greater independence for journalists, albeit tentatively. Media favoritism certainly exists in Ukraine, but certain channels predominately support certain candidates, rather than one candidate dominating the vast majority of media coverage as a whole. In Russia, on the other hand, Yeltsin's unpopularity during to his bid for reelection led to a massive and illegal proliferation of pro-Yeltsin content in oligarch-controlled media networks, which laid a foundation for Putin to slowly abolish independent media.

Ideological variance among candidates, effective oversight procedures to resolve electoral disputes, and low levels of violence are further examples of variance in Ukrainian and Russian development. Ukraine did not have genuine ideological variance until 2002, when opposition and reform candidates formed their own parties to compete in the Rada elections. Since, there have been genuine and strong policy divisions between major political figures, such as President Yushchenko and Prime Minister Yanukovich. In Russia, on the other hand, there were very strong policy divisions between the Communists, democratic reformers, and pro-presidential groups throughout the 1990's,

whereas today, substantive policy divisions have faded under Putin and his vast consolidation of political power. In terms of oversight, Ukraine had electoral oversight procedures in place since the first election after independence, but these mechanisms were ineffective until the Orange Revolution. Russia, meanwhile, demonstrated relatively effective electoral oversight procedures, particularly given their size, even though democratic norms and behaviors have been significantly restricted under Putin.

Violence surrounding Ukrainian elections has been particularly dramatic by Western standards. Candidates, supporters, and political figures regularly experienced physical assault and destruction of property. Consecutive presidential elections witnessed murder attempts. Natalya Vitrenko was supposedly wounded in 1999 by a grenade attack, while Yushchenko experienced lethal amounts of the deadly poison dioxin in 2004. To this day, the culprits have not been publicly identified, let alone brought to justice. The Orange Revolution provides hope for genuine and lasting electoral change, but this is not yet certain. Though Russia has experienced some violence surrounding elections, it has not been the same in nature or scale as Ukraine.

As illuminated in the figure 1 and figure 2, elections as a whole were highly ineffective in promoting democratic development in Ukraine from 1991 to 2006, while moderately effective in Russia. Currently, the situation is reversed. Elections are now moderately effective in promoting democratic development in Ukraine and ineffective in Russia. This suggests that the relationship between elections and democratic development in Ukraine and Russia has been and continues to be one of great variance in terms of the trajectory and level of effectiveness.



**Figure 3:**  
**Electoral Indicators in Ukraine and Russia**

	<u>Ukraine</u>	<u>Russia</u>
Holding Frequent Elections	yes	yes
High Voter Turnout	yes	yes
Popular Candidate Selection	yes	yes
Wide Acceptance of Results	yes	yes
Low Levels of Violence	no	yes
Low Levels of Fraud	no	no
Low Levels of Media Favoritism	no (until 2005)	no
Candidates Represent Stable and Principled Political Parties	no	no
Ideological Variance	no (until 2002)	yes (until 2003)
Effective Oversight Procedures to Resolve Electoral Disputes	no (until 2005)	yes

**Figure 4:**  
**Effectiveness Scale**

When all indicators are present in a respective category, the development process is considered exceptional. Conversely, lower percentages correspond with lower levels of effectiveness. If a percentage of effectiveness in a case study falls below 60%, the category will be considered highly ineffective in promoting their respective objectives.

The scale of effectiveness is as follows:

- Scores between 60% and 69% will be considered ineffective.
- Scores between 70% and 79% will be considered moderately effective.
- Scores between 80% and 89% will be considered effective.
- Scores between 90% and 100% will be considered highly effective.

**Figure 5:**  
**Cumulative Electoral Scores in Ukraine and Russia**

	<u>Ukraine</u>	<u>Russia</u>
Cumulative Score (1991-2006)	40% Elections ineffective	70% Moderately effective
Current Score (As of 2006)	70% Moderately effective	60% Elections ineffective

Let us next see how institutions compare to elections. I created five indicators to measure the effectiveness of democratic institutions in promoting democratic development and five indicators to measure the effectiveness of institutions in promoting capitalist development. When effective, democratic institutions fundamentally promote stable and representative government in the political realm. Indicators of effective institutional operation include the establishment of a democratic constitution, low levels of corruption, low levels of violence, wide acceptance of the political system, and a meaningful role for the opposition. These indicators consider both formal and informal aspects of institutional development and operation. When effective, democratic institutions fundamentally promote stable and sustained economic growth in the economic realm. Indicators of effective institutional operation include a rising gross domestic product, a balanced budget, significant privatization of state owned industries, rising wages, and rising foreign direct investment. These indicators focus on macroeconomic indicators that measure basic health of a developing economy.

Since the fall of the Soviet Union, Ukraine and Russia have produced and failed to produce indicators of stable and representative government with relative similarity. For

example, both countries established democratic constitutions and have experienced wide acceptance of the political system. The mere establishment of democratic constitutions ignores however the important role of the implementation process in each country. Ukraine had the dubious distinction of being last former Soviet republic to adopt a democratic constitution, while Russia adopted a democratic constitution after a violent standoff between powerful factions that dominated two different powerful institutions, the executive and legislature. This suggests that formal measures of democratic development embraced by transition scholars are limited in their ability to best understand the deeper dynamics of development in transition countries.

Ukraine and Russia also experienced high levels of corruption and high levels of violence without a meaningful role for the opposition in government. In a recent visit with the Minister of Agriculture in Ukraine, I was astonished that in response to a question regarding a specific law not being effectively enforced, the Minister simply stated before a public audience that this was Ukraine and like with many things in Ukraine it's not hard to get around the law if you want to. This illuminates the well known fact in both Ukraine and Russia that laws apply differently to different people and as a result corruption is so woven into these political systems in a way that makes it very difficult to even figure out where to begin undoing the knot. In such situations, formal political opposition is very difficult to mount because without legitimacy and transparency, political forces that control resources exert extraordinary formal and informal influence.

To the detriment of democratic development, violence was integral in resolving the most divisive institutional conflicts in post Soviet Russia and even persisted in day to

day Russian politics. Several Duma members were murdered in while holding office. Victims have come from different parties, including Communists, liberals, liberal democrats, and pro-government forces. The murders appeared to be contract killings and went unsolved. Such violence was emblematic of society as a whole. At the turn of the century, official statistics of violent crimes in Russia and the prison population were comparable to the world's most criminalized countries. Violence in Ukraine was less epidemic, but no less severe. Episodes have ranged from fist fights in the Rada and to the secret decapitation of critical journalists by government insiders following orders from the very top.

As with political measures, Ukraine and Russia shared similar experiences with economic measures of institutions. Both countries produced significant privatization of state owned industries and paid a high political and social price in doing so. It would be disingenuous, however, to categorize this development as a success because of the negative political, economic, legal, and social consequences that resulted from the privatization process. As the Orange government in Ukraine quickly realized, rectifying grossly corrupt transition practices is very difficult to do without serious political and economic repercussions. At the same time, if genuine reform is truly the goal, it is also very difficult to turn a blind eye toward such massive injustice. Putin, on the other hand, was much less concerned about social justice and used the re-privatization issue to consolidate power. Putin simply imprisoned and sought to imprison oligarchs who failed to adhere to the demands of the administration, stating throughout there would be no re-privatizations. This approach allowed the President to eliminate political rivals, increase the resources of the State via seized assets, and maintain a positive public image because

few Russians cared for wealthy individuals who obtained massive wealth via fraud and corruption.

National budgets have not been consistently balanced in Ukraine or Russia. This was a significant problem during the 1990's, particularly during the economic collapse of the Russian economy in 1998. Progress has been made in both countries since the turn of the century, but the sustainability of such progress is uncertain. Ukraine's economic turnaround was largely a product of Yushchenko's fiscal policies, the future of which are uncertain given his falling popularity since 2004. Russia's economic turnaround was and continues to be largely a product of high oil prices, rather than sound fiscal policies, the future of which are also uncertain. In both societies, cutting government spending has been very difficult, but possible, depending on the political climate and the status of government revenues. Wages dropped throughout much of the 1990's and then began to rise as the economic situations in each country improved.

Experiences with foreign direct investment (FDI) and economic production have varied more than the previous indicators. Ukraine has slowly and steadily garnered FDI since the fall of the Soviet Union, whereas Russia experienced rising levels of FDI up until the 1998 collapse, albeit surprisingly small compared to other Eastern European countries. FDI began to climb once again after the crash, though Putin's centralization and the uncertainty surrounding the end of his term have been reasons for caution. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Ukraine fell for several years after the transition began, but grew fairly steadily from 1994 to 2004. GDP in Russia plummeted after the transition began, even worse than Ukraine, worse, in fact, than the Great Depression in the United

States. After the crash, however, GDP grew on average about 7% each year, providing a means for greater investment in restructuring and better equipping the military.

As illuminated by the figures 3, figure, 4, and figure 5, institutional experiences between 1991 and 2006 were more similar in Ukraine and Russia than electoral experiences over the same period. Importantly, however, institutional experiences were consistently ineffective in promoting democratic development. This does not mean that factors such as the establishment of a constitution and the privatization of state owned industries did not contribute to development, certainly they have. Rather, these findings point to how the relationship between democratic institutions and democratic development in each country is more complicated than the mere existence of basic pieces of democracy (a constitution) and capitalism (private property).

**Figure 6:**  
**Political Measures of Institutions in Ukraine and Russia**

	<u>Ukraine</u>	<u>Russia</u>
Establishment of Constitution	yes	yes
Wide Acceptance of Political System	yes	yes
Low Levels of Corruption	no	no
Meaningful Role for Opposition	no	no
Low Levels of Violence	no	no

**Figure 7:**  
**Economic Measures of Institutions in Ukraine and Russia**

	<u>Ukraine</u>	<u>Russia</u>
Significant Privatization	yes	yes
Rising Foreign Direct Investment	yes (slow, steady)	yes (up and down)
Balanced Budget	no	no
Rising Wages	no (up since 2000)	no (up since 1999)
Rising Gross Domestic Product	yes	no (up since 1999)

**Figure 8:**  
**Cumulative Institutional Scores in Ukraine and Russia**

	<u>Ukraine</u>	<u>Russia</u>
Cumulative Score for Political Measurements (1991-2006)	50% Institutions ineffective	60% Institutions ineffective
Cumulative Score for Economic Measurements (1991-2006)	60% Institutions ineffective	40% Institutions ineffective
Combined Score for Institutions (1991-2006)	55% Institutions ineffective	50% Institutions ineffective

As a whole, elections have been ineffective in Ukraine and moderately effective in Russia between 1991 and 2006, while institutions were consistently ineffective. Clearly, the predominant focus of transition scholars needs to be rethought. Assuming that elections and institutions have some merit in promoting development, scholars of comparative political development need to reorient predominant understandings of transitions away from election-centered, institution-centered models of democratic development toward a multifaceted approach that incorporates the lessons of the last fifteen years of post Soviet development. Essentially, we must determine what should be more seriously considered aside from elections and institutions in understanding how a country can move toward a functioning democracy. I label these considerations "environments" and develop seven that are worth consideration: 1) popular environment; 2) historical-cultural environment; 3) international environment; 4) institutional environment; 5) legal environment; 6) economic environment; 7) civil environment. Environments are chosen to distinguish different aspects of democratic development. Environments are static, yet must be sustainable to be effective, and thus are constantly in a process of destruction and construction, creation and recreation, similar to the transition process.

The *popular environment* concerns the level of desire for democracy within a given society. Key questions to consider include: *What do people think the new regime should look like? What do people believe are the key objectives in reaching these goals?* In evaluating the state of a popular environment, one must not assume democracy and capitalism are universally desired goals and get down to what aspects of a popular government and a competitive economy are most appealing. If a country is interested in



Western conceptions of democracy, then Western assistance should be made available. If democracy is not the desired alternative, then such societies should not be forced on countries either explicitly or implicitly. Democracy is a form of government where the populace plays a unique and tremendous role in governance. Thus, public attitudes must be understood and embraced, rather than ignored or assumed.

The *historical-cultural environment* concerns the level of experiences and values that fit with democratic norms. Democracy does not develop in a laboratory with all variables constant, so history will impact the transition process. Key questions to consider include: *Is there a history of democracy? What was the impact on society? Why did democracy or related components breakdown and/or fail to be effective?* In evaluating the state of historical-cultural environment one must not assume that any history of democracy is beneficial in considering contemporary development. Democracies can easily produce undemocratic leadership and trends that may have a strong influence on the value a society places on popular governance. History and culture does not absolutely limit or guarantee democratic development; however, history and culture does provide a context in which contemporary attitudes and reforms can be better understood.

The *international environment* concerns external influences on development in a given country. Key questions to consider include: *What external groups have a stake in the new regime? How involved are external groups in the transition process? What is the impact of this involvement?* Throughout the third wave of democratic transitions external influences have played a significant role in the nature and process of regime change, particularly in the former Soviet Union. Given that contemporary politics transpires in international context of globalization, it is difficult for a society to undergo massive

transformation without consideration of external incentives or disincentives. In addition to States, intergovernmental organizations and nongovernmental organizations may wield tremendous influence over a given territory, as well as non-state actors, such as terrorist or criminal organizations. In turn, international relations must be considered alongside domestic history and culture to ascertain the context in which a transition occurs.

The *institutional environment* concerns a good part of what transitions theory addresses. Elections and institutions are an important part of a transition process, but neither alone, nor together, do these conditions effectively encapsulate the process. Basic government structures, such as a legislature, and mechanisms, such as national elections, are necessary for democracy to develop. Key questions to consider include: *How were institutions implemented? How have they operated since implementation?* In evaluating the state of the institutional environment, one must not assume that the very existence of elections and institutions are solely beneficial to development because the implementation process is important and may intentionally manipulate or unintentionally distort institutional operation. This is particularly evident in post Soviet societies.

The *legal environment* concerns the degree to which a given society is law-based. Formal mechanisms, such as elections and institutions, will mean very little without transparency, widespread adherence to established legal procedures, and government protected civil liberties. Key questions to consider include: *How transparent is government activity? Is there widespread adherence to constitutional and legal provisions? Are there effective judicial bodies that mediate constitutional and legal disputes?* In evaluating the state of a legal environment one must not assume that because transition societies have formal documents that establish certain political and

legal procedures that these procedures are regularly and effectively implemented, respected, and mediated when there is a dispute.

The *economic environment* concerns the state of the economy and quality of life in a given society. If economic conditions are unstable or in steady and prolonged decline, this will certainly have a negative impact on development objectives and related public opinion. Key questions to consider include: *Are people better off than when the transition began? Under the previous regime? Do people believe they are better off?* In evaluating the state of an economic environment one must not under appreciate the potentially devastating impact that rapid economic transformation can have on individuals and reform objectives. The business perspective of cutting your losses as quickly as possible or the belief that opportunities must be maximized in some mythical "window of opportunity" ignores the basic humanity of those involved in dramatic social change. It is important to not lose sight of the fact that the security and savings of average people hang in the balance while they try to make sense of new obstacles and opportunities by navigating around wealthy and/or criminal elements that can dominate chaotic political scenarios. If basic quality of life is not maintained during the transition process, or at least quickly reestablished, the achievement of long term development goals will be severely complicated if not compromised.

The *civil environment* concerns the state of political organization within a given society. This includes parties, blocs, and coalitions, as well as other forms of collective organization outside of government, such as interest groups, civic groups, and think tanks. If there are no sustained forms of collective organization inside or outside of government, it will be very difficult for a system of governance to determine and work

towards some conception of public good. Key questions to consider are: *Does the country have stable and representative parties? Are there public groups outside of government that can effectively communicate their policy goals to society and government?* The concept of civil society has received a lot of attention in recent years as it should. Democracy scholars must be careful, however, not think of civil society as a magic bullet of sorts. Collective organization can be very effective in promoting greater accountability and transparency of systems in transition, but this only one of many important components.

These seven democratic environments must interact together, not exist separately or partially, for democracy to develop. The ideas behind the environments are simple enough to be generally comprehended, yet complicated enough to appreciate how genuinely difficult it is for democracy to develop. Democratic development takes time, as we commonly hear in arguments surrounding the state of affairs in Iraq, but more accurately, development takes an array of political, economic, and social changes that must effectively complement one another. This is something America must clearly understand about the dynamics of democratic development in order to effectively promote it around the world.

Now more than ever, scholars of comparative political development need to think of new and effective ways to explain the myriad of development scenarios that have emerged since Rustow and Huntington pioneered the transitions approach over 30 years ago. The predominant emphasis on elections and institutions which has persisted throughout this time has silently become core perspectives of many democracy proponents in and out of academia and government. This research has clearly shown that

such a focus is flawed and provided some basic suggestions for how to rethink what democracy is and how it develops. Hopefully, greater dialogue will emerge over the usefulness and effectiveness of the transitions approach and the counterapproach presented. Forging new and better perspectives in this very important and timely area of study is of the utmost importance to comparative political development and the future American foreign policy making.

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<sup>1</sup> See Carothers, Thomas. "The End of the Transition Paradigm." *Journal of Democracy*, 13.2 (2002), 5-21.

<sup>2</sup> Fish (1999), 798

<sup>3</sup> This comment was made off the record in Lviv, 2006.

<sup>4</sup> Roeder (1999), 855.

<sup>5</sup> Ishiyama and Kennedy (2001), 1177.

<sup>6</sup> Motyl (1997), 433.

<sup>7</sup> Wilson (2005), 273.

<sup>8</sup> This research was confined to the study of national elections.

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