The Nature of Mass Communist Beliefs in Postcommunist Russian Political Space

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The Individual Political Mind: An Introduction

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of Communist Party political rule in 1991 has led to a dramatic change in political regimes across the former Soviet region. Although Russia's postcommunist political history has not been characterized by a smooth transition to democracy,[1] it would be misguided to assume that the mass political mind in Russia shares a uniform taste in favor of authoritarian political and economic relations. In fact, it would be imprudent to assume anything about the underlying contours of the political predispositions of the Russian public and the impact of seventy years of communist rule on shaping Russian opinions towards forms of political, economic, and social organization. The lack of substantial reliable data from the communist period has limited the study of Russian political "belief systems"—defined by Philip Converse as "a configuration of ideas and attitudes in which the elements are bound together by some form of constraint or functional interdependence."[2] As a result, little is known historically about individual-level Russian and Soviet political beliefs. Rather, inferences about the political attitudes of the Russian public are frequently based on aggregate election results or group-level indicators, with individual-level analysis limited to the study of socioeconomic characteristics.

The significant increase of survey work in the postcommunist region since the late 1980s has developed data that can be used to analyze Russian belief systems, political attitudes, and ideology. Scholarly analysis of this data is in the early stages and thus necessitates a constant dialogue between hypothesis testing and inductive theory building. This paper will engage in both through a two-stage analysis of the 1995-1996 and 1999-2000 Russian National Election Studies. Part I will investigate the organization of Russian political attitudes and search for

[1] Russia's most recent ranking in the Freedom House "Freedom in the World" survey is "not free." See Freedom House, "Freedom in the World 2006," http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=20&year=2005.
[2] Philip Converse, "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics," in ed. D. E. Apter, *Ideology and Discontent,* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1964), p. 207.

underlying structures among these attitudes. Part II will apply the results obtained in Part I in a basic vote choice model for the 1996 and 2000 Russian presidential elections in order to better understand the relationship between belief systems and vote choice.

Part I: Exploring the Dimensions of Russian Political Predispositions

Political Context: Russian Political Space after Communism

The study of political attitudes, predispositions, and ideology in democratic polities, which has developed within the field of comparative politics over the past half century, has contributed substantially to our understanding of the contours of political space in liberal democracies. Perhaps the most substantial finding has been the near universal existence of the left-right continuum for ideological organization, which is present in all advanced democracies. Although this form of ideological constraint has proved enduring in Western democracies, there is little theoretical reason to expect that political attitudes should be similarly organized in all polities, particularly those that have been established in postcommunist regimes. Moreover, the expectation of a left-right continuum for structural political beliefs is particularly suspect when considering cases such as Russia where political discourse has rarely been organized around the concepts of left and right. Evidence from the 1999-2000 Russian National Election Study challenges the assumption of a left-right continuum in Russian political space. In response to a question in which participants were asked to place themselves on a 0-10 left-right scale, the mean, median and modal score was 5, and about one-third of the respondents found it hard to place themselves.

A brief look at Russian political activity throughout the 1990s suggests that Russian political space during the first decade of postcommunism was not easy to interpret based on the

aggregate picture alone. In the first parliamentary elections in 1993, thirteen political parties or electoral blocs competed in the party list proportional representation ballot.[3] In 1995, the number ballooned up to forty-three, and in 1999 it dropped down to twenty-six. In all three presidential contests the winner has not belonged to a political party.

Although much more chaotic than the governance of their elder brother democracies, the organization of politics in the first postcommunist decade was not without some visible structure. Three political parties were elected via party list during all three parliamentary elections: the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF), the liberal Yabloko party, and the nationalist Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR). A pro-presidential party was also elected to each parliament. Additionally, the leaders of each of the above three parties participated in both the 1996 and 2000 presidential elections. Nevertheless, in spite of the existence of some very basic elements of political stability, Russia does not fit into a nice, neat binary left-right, liberal-conservative, or communist-democrat spectrum. The political space is infused with multi-dimensional, cross-cutting conflicts over economic and political organization, state borders, political and social power, national interests and nationhood. Although two political camps might share similar views regarding economic organization, they could be on completely opposite ends of an entirely different spectrum regarding executive powers, civil liberties, and the role of the state in individual affairs.

While it is clear that Russian political space cannot be mapped on a left-right continuum, it may include several underlying dimensions and individuals may exhibit belief systems that follow a yet undefined structure of constraint. In order to examine potential dimensions, it is

[3] In 1993, 1995, 1999, and 2003 one-half of the 450-seat State Duma was elected through proportional representation and one-half through single-member districts. Starting in 2007 all seats will be elected through proportional representation.

useful to consider hypotheses of the probable structure of Russian political space and individual belief systems.

Hypotheses: Communism, Nationalism, Liberalism

The hypotheses under consideration have evolved from my own analysis of issue attitudes as determinants of Russian vote choice, interpretation of results from Russian public opinion polls, and observations from interviews with politicians, party activists, and ordinary Russians. In an unpublished analysis of the 1995-1996 Russian National Election Study (RNES),[4] I attempted to capture aspects of organized belief systems through the construction of several indices of questions on particular policy domains. I hypothesized that belief systems, rather than following a liberal-conservative continuum, could exhibit different positions with regard to aspects of communist ideology. Potential attitudinal domains might involve the role of the state in both economic and social affairs, the prioritization of the rights of society and social guarantees above the rights of individuals and individual liberties, and the degree of power accorded to political authority.

The search for underlying structure in Russian public attitudes undertaken in this paper considers three or four hypothesized domains: (1) economic organization and the role of the state; (2) structure of the post-Soviet Russian state and political community, specifically do individuals conceive of their political space as "Soviet" or "Russian;" (3) the balance between state order and individual liberties; and possibly (4) the concentration and allocation of political power.

[4] Danielle Lussier, "Exploring the 'Against All' Voters: An Inductive Analysis of the 1996 Russian Presidential Election," May 2005, unpublished seminar paper.

Data: Russian National Election Studies 1995-1996, 1999-2000

The data employed in this analysis comes from the 1995-1996 and 1999-2000 Russian National Election Study.[5] Both studies are three-stage panel surveys in which respondents were interviewed before the December State Duma (parliamentary) elections, after the State Duma elections, and after the springtime presidential elections. Respondents were selected in a multistage area-probability sample of the voting-age population (age eighteen and older), with primary and secondary sampling units in thirty-two (1995-1996) and thirty-three (1999-2000) regions of the Russian Federation. The 1995-1996 sample includes a total of 2,841 respondents in the first wave, 2,776 in the second wave, and 2,456 in the third wave. The sample size for 1999-2000 is 1,919 in the first wave, 1,842 in the second wave, and 1,748 in the third wave. Data from all three waves are included in this analysis. Missing data on socioeconomic characteristics was minimal and thus was recoded to the mean group.[6] Missing data on several attitudinal variables was replaced by using multiple imputation of chained equations. Variables with data missing from 15% or more of the respondents were excluded from the analysis.[7]

Methodology: Covariance Structure Modeling

In order to analyze the underlying structure of Russian belief systems, this paper will employ two techniques in covariance structure modeling: principal components analysis and factor analysis. The choice of these techniques relies on the assumption that the correlations we find among the

[5] The 1995-1996 RNES is available in the data holdings of the Interuniversity Consortium for Social and Political Research (http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/). The raw data file of the 1999-2000 RNES was generously provided to me by Timothy Colton, the principle investigator of the study, which was financed by the National Science Foundation and the National Council for Eurasian and East European Research. To my knowledge, this data has yet to be publicly archived.

[6] The one exception is the variable for having been sent on forced employment leave in the 1995-1996 dataset. Multiple imputation of chained equations was employed to replace missing values on this variable.

[7] The 1999-2000 model was also estimated with missing data recoded to mean and median values. The substantive results of both models are essentially the same.

observed variables are due to their common dependence on an underlying unobserved variable or variables. A total of twenty variables were selected from the 1995-1996 survey and twenty-five variables from the 1999-2000 study as indicators of the hypothesized dimensions of political beliefs described above.[8] In the interest of space, the full text of questions is not repeated below, but rather only brief summaries are included. Most indicators were organized in ordinal scales, but with properties that allowed them to be treated cautiously as continuous variables. Responses involved either placement on a 1-5 scale, a range of strength with agree or disagree statements, or clearly ordered categorization.

(1) Economic organization:

a. What do you think about the privatization of state property in Russia?
b. What do you think about market reforms?
c. We must defend our industry against competition from foreign firms (agree/disagree);
d. It is normal when the owner of a prosperous enterprise, using the labor of his workers, becomes richer than many other people (agree/disagree);
e. All heavy industry must belong to the state and should not be given to private ownership (agree/disagree);
f. The state should set food prices (agree/disagree);
g. The government ought to guarantee a job to everyone who needs one (agree/disagree);
h. The state should limit the incomes of the rich (agree/disagree);
i. Private property in land should exist in our country (agree/disagree);
j. The capitalist system is not suitable for Russia (agree/disagree); (1995-1996 only)

(2) Structure of state and political community:

a. The Soviet Union should never have been dissolved (agree/disagree);
b. Should Russia seek out its own path of development or utilize the experience of the West?
c. Russia should strive for economic and political organization with the former Soviet Republics (agree/disagree); (1995-1996 only)
d. Russia and Belarus should unite in a single state (agree/disagree); (1999-2000 only)
e. Russia and Ukraine should unite in single state (agree/disagree); (1999-2000 only)
f. Ethnic Russians in Russia should have certain advantages over all other nationalities (agree/disagree); (1999-2000 only)
g. Are you proud to be a Russian citizen? (1999-2000 only)

(3) State order and individual liberties:

a. Order should be introduced at all costs, even if citizens' rights are violated (five-point scale);
b. The rights of the individual must be defended even if guilty people sometimes go free (agree/disagree);
c. In any society there will always be a need to forbid the public expression of dangerous ideas (agree/disagree);

[8] While many questions were repeated in both surveys, several questions appear only in one survey. In some instances, insufficient response rates in one survey year necessitated removing the variable from consideration.

d. It is better to live in a society with strict order than to give people so much freedom that they may destroy society (agree/disagree);
e. How important to you are providing social guarantees to the people? (1999-2000 only)

(4) Political power:

a. Some people believe that the President of Russia should have more powers than the Parliament. Others want the Parliament to have more powers. Five point scale on who should have much more power;
b. Some people think that in Russia everything should be decided by the top organs of government in Moscow, that the center should be strongest. Others think that everything should be decided in the regions, that the regional authorities should be strongest. What do you think?
c. Are there too few political parties, the right number, or too many? (1995-1996 only)
d. What kind of political system would be most appropriate for Russia? (Continuum of Soviet system before perestroika to democracy of Western-type); (1999-2000 only)
e. Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections is a good/bad way of having a political system; (1999-2000 only)
f. Political parties are necessary to make our political system work (five-point scale); (1999-2000 only)

Results: A Single Dimension Solution

Separate principal components analyses were conducted on the two surveys.[9] In both instances, analysis of the eigenvalues and scree plots indicated that most of the common variance was explained by one dimension, although the level of this variance was rather low in both cases—22% in the 1995-1996 data and 20% in the 1999-2000. The low level of total variance explained suggests that there is actually relatively little unifying structure among the indicators listed above. Nevertheless, the presence of at least one component that explains about one-fifth of the variance in the analysis yields support for a one-dimensional factor analysis model, which was estimated using maximum likelihood.[10] The pattern matrices of the one-dimensional model for each survey are listed in Table 1.

[9] Due to the complex calculations involved in covariance structure modeling, functions for conducting principal components and factor analyses are not supported for use with multiply imputed datasets. Therefore, the principal components analyses and factor analyses were conducted with listwise deletion of missing variables. Once factor scores were produced, multiple imputation of chained equations was conducted to replace missing values on the factor scores and on attitudinal variables used in Part II. The principal components and factor analyses were repeated on data sets created from single imputation on all attitudinal variables, and while the coefficients exhibited some minor fluctuation, the overall pattern is consistent with the results presented here.

[10] This model was also estimated using iterated principal factoring, yielding the same substantive result.

Table 1: Pattern Matrices for Single-Dimension Factor Model

Indicators	*Factor Pattern Coefficients (λ)*	*Communalities (h^2)*	*Factor Pattern Coefficients (λ)*	*Communalities (h^2)*
	1995-1996		1999-2000	
Privatization	**.64**	.41	**.53**	.28
Market Reforms	**-.45**	.21	**-.55**	.31
Defend Industry	**.62**	.39	**.43**	.18
Owners Wealth	**-.52**	.27	-.39	.16
Heavy Industry	**.53**	.28	**.46**	.21
Food Prices	**.66**	.44	**.64**	.41
Guarantee Job	**.48**	.23	**.48**	.23
Limit Incomes of Rich	**.55**	.31	**.56**	.31
Privatization of Land*	**.43**	.19	.25	.06
Capitalist System	**.49**	.24	-	-
USSR Dissolution	**.48**	.23	**.67**	.46
Example of West	.37	.13	**.45**	.20
Former Soviet State Integration	.13	.02	-	-
Russia-Belarus	-	-	**.54**	.29
Russia-Ukraine	-	-	**.56**	.32
Ethnic Russian Advantages	-	-	-.19	.04
Proud Russian Citizen	-	-	-.21	.05
Order-Rights	.17	.03	.19	.04
Rights of Individuals	.09	.00	.14	.02
Public Expression	.20	.04	.25	.06
Order-Freedom	.35	.12	**.45**	.20
Social Guarantees	-	-	.11	.01
Power of Presidency	-.15	.02	-.05	.00
Decisions in Moscow	.06	.00	-.07	.00
Number of Political Parties	.22	.05	-	-
Political System	-	-	**.56**	.32
Strong Leadership	-	-	.18	.03
Political Parties	-	-	-.21	.04

* This variable was coded to reverse the disagree-agree continuum. A positive value suggests disagreement with the privatization of land.

The results presented in Table 1 show that a total of eleven of the twenty variables examined from the 1995-1996 data and thirteen variables from the 1999-2000 data have factor pattern coefficients of .40 or higher in the factor analysis. Likewise, there is a considerable degree of resemblance between the analyses of the two time periods, with most variables that were included in both analyses exhibiting strong similarities with regards to size and direction of coefficients. Those variables that show greater change between the two periods—privatization of land, dissolution of the USSR, and the trade-off between order and freedom—can be explained in party by proximate events: agricultural land was largely privatized in the mid-late 1990s,

reducing the salience of the topic, and greater discontent with democratization and lawlessness has contributed to an increase in public support for greater public order.

While it appears that most of the significant coefficients involve the domain of economic organization, several indicators from the other hypothesized dimensions also have significant correlations to the underlying factor. From the hypothesized dimension of state structure, the question about the dissolution of the Soviet Union is significant in both surveys, and the variables measuring Belarus-Russian unification, Ukraine-Russian unification, and following the example of the west show a high correlation with the factor in the 1999-2000 data. From the other two hypothesized dimensions, the importance of order over freedom and the preference for a political system like that of the Soviet Union also load on this factor solution for the 1999-2000 data.

A closer look at the direction of the factor pattern coefficients on specific questions suggests an interesting substantive interpretation of this factor. From the 1995-1996 data alone, we could conclude that the underlying dimension measures attitudes towards economic organization, arguing that the high correlation with the question about the dissolution of the Soviet Union is tapping into a reaction to the economic recession of the early 1990s. Yet, upon further consideration of questions from the 1999-2000 data that correlate with the underlying factor, one is left to consider how unification of Russia and Belarus or Russia and Ukraine relate to a strictly economic interpretation of the factor. Rather, when including the positive correlations on questions that relate to the structure of the state, political community, and political power, it appears that the underlying dimension captured in this analysis is a system of attitudinal constraint with regards to communist ideology. Respondents who supported a greater role for economic central planning also tended to support other attitudes consistent with the

tenets of communism in general, and the specific policies of the previous communist regime in particular. They generally conceived of their political space as one that included the former Soviet republics of Belarus and Ukraine, supported the Soviet form of government, believed that that the Soviet Union should not have been dissolved, were against following the western example of development, and prioritized societal order over individual liberties. Likewise, individuals who supported a greater role for market forces in economic organization generally supported a political system closer to democracy, the dissolution of the Soviet Union, independence for Belarus and Ukraine, individual liberties, and a western development model.

Examination of the questions that did not correlate to the one factor solution lends further support to the substantive interpretation of a communist dimension. First, the two variables from the 1999-2000 data intended as indicators for structure of the state and political community that did not load on the factor—pride of Russian citizenship and belief that ethnic Russians should have additional advantages—are not related to communist ideology. Rather, they likely measure views of Russian nationalism, which might also be an aspect of one's perception of the political community, but are not necessarily components of a belief system structured around communist ideology. Second, the questions measuring attitudes towards the power of federal political organs and the presidency load at almost zero and have communalities at near zero as well. This suggests that there is no perceptible relationship between attitudes towards these specific questions of division of political power and other indicators in the model. To the extent that an underlying dimension about the division of political power exists, it does not appear to be connected to an underlying dimension that structures views about economic organization or individual rights. Likewise, views about individual rights and civil liberties do not appear to

follow the communist ideology dimension. With the exception of a prioritization of societal order, attitudes towards freedom and individual rights are not part of this constraint system.

It is crucial to emphasize, however, that the pattern matrix derived from factor analysis is only as good as the data it is fed. The results of this analysis must be interpreted bearing in mind two possible mitigating issues. First, of the twenty-eight variables included in the analysis, nine were good measures of economic organization with a moderate to significant amount of correlation. Thus, a factor analysis in which these indicators loaded heavily on a factor dimension was not surprising. A principle components analysis and subsequent factor analysis of the economic indicators alone produced a similar result to the model explored in this paper. In contrast, the remaining variables were perhaps poor indicators of possible underlying dimensions of political community, societal values, and political power. An analysis that included different data on attitudinal measures might produce an outcome with more factor dimensions.[11] Yet, a significant substantive conclusion can be drawn from this analysis: while it may be difficult to map the prominent domains of Russian political space as a whole, it is clear that a belief system structured around communist ideology exists within a segment of the Russian voting-age population.

In order to move from hypothesis testing to inductive theory building, the results of these factor analyses were used to create factor score variables by regressing the communist dimension extracted in the factor analyses on the matrix of indicators.[12] Yet, before applying this communist dimension variable to the vote choice model presented in Part II of the paper, it is

[11] In developing the model presented in this paper, approximately forty different variables were examined. In some instances, principal components analysis suggest two or three dimension models, but upon estimating these factor solutions it was clear that the dimensions captured were related to the methodological structure of the question design or to the lack of variation in the responses and thus were not capturing an underlying substantive dimension.
[12] A cautionary note must be made about the use of factor scores in regression analysis. Because factor scores are estimates of estimates rather than true data, the standard errors produced for factor score coefficients are likely to be too low. One must bear this in mind when considering the impact of statistical significance in interpreting results.

first useful to consider possible determinants of the communist dimension. An ordinary least squares regression was estimated with the communist dimension as the dependent variable and several socioeconomic indicators as the independent variables (see Table 2).[13]

Table 2: Socioeconomic Determinants of Communist Dimension

	1995-1996		*1999-2000*	
Variable	*Slope coefficient (b)*	*(standard error)*	*Slope coefficient (b)*	*(standard error)*
Age	**.08*** **	.01	**.10*** **	.02
Ethnic Russian	(.06)	.07	(-.03)	.06
Russian Orthodox	(-.06)	.05	(-.09)	.06
Female	**.10***	.05	**.09***	.05
Education	--	--	**-.65*** **	.62
Illiterate	**-.24***	.11	--	--
Higher Education	**-.28*** **	.05	--	--
Income	**-.24*** **	.07	**-.17***	.09
Regional Capital	**-.19*** **	.06	**-.24*** **	.05
Wage Arrears	--	--	(-.01)	.06
Unemployed	(.09)	.11	(.05)	.07
Union	(.05)	.04	**.11***	.05
CPSU Member	(08)	.07	**.23****	.08
Intercept	(-.08)	.11	.25*	.03
Adjusted R^2	.09		.12	

For explanation of the variables and their coding, see Appendix 1.
(p > .1), ***p ≤ .001, ** p ≤ .01, *p ≤ .05

Several of the findings in Table 2 are particularly interesting. The results suggest that the greater one's education level, the less likely s/he will exhibit pro-communist beliefs. Additionally, residence in a regional capital and higher income also correlate strongly with anti-communist positions. Increasing age, membership in a union, and previous membership in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) all correspond to greater support for pro-communist attitudinal positions. These are all socioeconomic characteristics that are typically associated with citizens who endorse the Communist Party of the Russian Federation in

[13] These models were estimated using Patrick Royston's multiple imputation of chained equation commands (ICE) in Stata 9.

elections, which lends further support to the interpretation that the underlying dimension uncovered here is a belief system structured around acceptance or rejection of communist values.

Part II: A Preliminary Vote Choice Model

Having identified and analyzed an underlying dimension of communist/anti-communist belief structure in Part I, the second part of this paper will apply this observed characteristic to a simple voting model of the 1996 and 2000 Russian presidential elections. The goal of this analysis is not to undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the determinants of Russian vote choice, but rather to understand the particular affect of the observed communist belief structure on voting behavior. Part II will begin with a brief review of the specific features and candidates in the two elections. This will be followed by an explanation of the methodology for the basic vote choice model and interpretation of the results. The paper will conclude with a summary of the empirical findings and several suggestions for further research.

Setting the Stage: 1996 and 2000 Russian Presidential Elections

Since the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, Russian voters have had the opportunity to make eight trips to the national election polls, voting in four parliamentary and three presidential elections. The 1996 Russian presidential election marked the first direct election for the Russian presidency since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. The election occurred in two rounds. The first round, held on June 16, 1996 included a field of ten candidates. President Boris Yeltsin came in first (35.8%), followed by leader of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF) Gennady Zyuganov (32.5%), General Aleksandr Lebed (14.7%), Grigory Yavlinsky (7.4%), and

Vladimir Zhirinovsky (5.8%), with the remaining candidates mustering less than 2% each. In the second round held on July 3, 1996, Yeltsin won 54.4% of the vote and Zyuganov took 40.7%.

On March 26, 2000, Russians voted in the first round of presidential elections, which—in accordance with the Russian Constitution—had been set ahead of schedule following President Boris Yeltsin's surprising resignation on New Year's Eve in 1999. Yeltsin's surprise departure from the Russian presidency at the end of 1999 curtailed preparations for the presidential campaign, giving a clear edge to Acting President Vladimir Putin. In spite of the rushed campaign period, a total of eleven candidates competed in the March ballot. Three candidates, Gennady Zyuganov (KPRF), Grigory Yavlinsky (Yabloko), and Vladimir Zhirinovsky (Liberal Democratic Party of Russia—LDPR), all leaders of their respective political parties and members of the State Duma, had previously run for president in 1996 and had considerable recognition among the Russian general public. Nevertheless, Putin easily won the election in the first round, receiving 53.4% of the vote. Zyuganov came in second with 29.5%, followed by Yavlinsky with 5.9%. Zhirinovsky came in fifth place with 2.7% of the vote, edged out of fourth by the popular governor of the Kemerovo region Aman Tuleev, who received 3.0%. The remaining candidates took less than 2% each.

Mass political participation was high in both elections. In the 1996 RNES, 2,078 respondents reported voting in the first round of the election and 1,941 in the second round, constituting 85% and 79% of survey participants. In 2000, a total of 1,501 respondents—86% of wave three respondents—reported voting in the presidential election.

Methodology: Maximum Likelihood Estimation

For the purpose of evaluating the impact of the communist attitudinal dimension identified in Part I on Russian political behavior, I have elaborated a simple vote choice model. The statistical technique employed to estimate the model is maximum likelihood estimation.[14] Multinomial logistic regression is used for the first round of the 1996 election and for the 2000 election, while binary logistic regression is employed for the second round of the 1996 election.[15] Although multinomial logit is perhaps the most common algorithm for analyzing non-ordered categorical dependent variables, its use requires rather strong simplifying assumptions that consequently limit the inferential power of the results. The assumption of the independence of irrelevant alternatives is mathematically necessary to prevent the odds ratios from changing with the addition of new alternatives. This assumption, however, leads to odd behavioral implications when applied to the study of voting behavior since ratios of probabilities in all likelihood do change based on the full choice of candidates. When deciding whether or not to vote for Boris Yeltsin, Vladimir Putin, or any other candidate, an individual was not choosing only between Yeltsin and one other candidate, but rather selected Yeltsin from a field of ten candidates. Thus, it is necessary to bear in mind that the model presented in this analysis cannot serve as a universal template of a Russian "funnel of causality," but rather can only offer some suggestions of factors that affected vote choice among specific groups of candidates.

[14] The vote choice models were estimated two ways: using a single imputation of chained equations in Stata9 and using multiple imputation. Due to limitations in calculating postestimation commands, the predicted probabilities reported in this section come from the single imputation data. The regression coefficients were compared with those from the multiple imputation estimation and exhibit no substantive differences.

[15] For more information on maximum likelihood estimation using binary and multinomial logit, see J. Scott Long, *Regression Models for Categorical and Limited Dependent Variables* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1997).

Vote Choice Model: Seeking Apparent Total Effects

The vote choice model estimated for 1996 includes twenty independent variables and a six-category dependent variable. The sample used for estimation is the 2,078 respondents who voted in the presidential election. The dependent variable includes categories of vote choice for Yeltsin (n=700), Zyuganov (n=639), Lebed (n=346), Yavlinsky (n=174), Zhirinovsky (n=74), and a category for all votes cast for the other five candidates and against all candidates (n=145).[16] The dependent variable for the second round includes two categories: vote choice for Yeltsin (n=1,038) and Zyuganov (n=768).[17] The 2000 model includes twenty-seven independent variables and a five-category dependent variable. The dependent variable includes categories of vote choice for Putin (n=881), Zyuganov (n=409), Yavlinsky (n=86), Zhirinovsky (n=21), and a category for votes for any of the other seven candidates or against all candidates (n=104).[18]

The independent variables are based on four stages in vote choice adapted from the bloc recursive vote choice model introduced by Warren Miller and Merrill Shanks in *The New American Voter.*[19] The first stage includes socioeconomic characteristics that have exhibited statistical significance in other models of Russian voting behavior. The second stage involves a basic index of perceptions of current conditions. The third stage aims to look at political predispositions and includes the communist dimension variable created in Part I as well as several dummy variables for the primary ideological party "families" in Russian politics. The fourth stage includes different measures of candidate evaluations. For 1996 there is a question

[16] This category will not be discussed in the analysis of the results due to minimal substantive interest.
[17] The 135 respondents who voted against both candidates are excluded from the analysis.
[18] In test analyses of single independent variables on a six category dependent variable that included a category for fourth place finisher Aman Tuleev, no independent variables proved statistically significant. For this reason, Tuleev is included in the fifth category, which will not be analyzed here due to minimal substantive interest. Additionally, the small number of respondents voting for Zhirinovsky provides little variation on the dependent variable and thus limits the statistical power of the results for this category.
[19] Warren E. Miller and J. Merrill Shanks, *The New American Voter,* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996). See also Timothy Colton, *Transitional Citizens: Voters and What Influences Them in the New Russia,* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000).

about approval of Yeltsin as president and two questions about "feeling thermometer" scores for Yeltsin and Zhirinovsky.[20] Measures for 2000 include: a question about approval of Putin as prime minister, a like/dislike scale of the candidates, and simple indices of perceptions of candidates' qualities. Further description of all variables and their coding can be found in Appendix 1.

Analysis of Vote Choice Results: Communism and Candidate Characteristics

Since coefficients obtained from logistic regression are of little substantive interest on their own, Tables 3-5 provide the first differences in predicted probabilities for the three vote choice models. Although predicted probabilities do not have a measure of statistical significance, I have indicated which variables yielded statistically significant logit *coefficients* by including *p* values with the first differences. For the first round of 1996, Yeltsin is the base category, and statistical significance as indicated in Table 3 is dependent on this base. It is important to bear in mind that it is possible for the independent variables that are statistically significant to change with a different base category. For the 2000 election, Putin is the base category.

While there is much of substantive interest in this table, particularly with regards to the relationship between candidate evaluations and vote choice, the predicted probability of the communist factor scale is of primary interest to the present analysis. The first round of the 1996 election suggests that the hypothesized communist belief system played an important role in choosing between Yeltsin and Zyuganov. Voters with a maximum score on this factor were 14 percentage points more likely to vote for Zyuganov and 20 percentage points less likely to vote for Yeltsin. The only socioeconomic factor that appears to have had as great of an impact on vote choice for Zyuganov is age. *Ceteris paribus,* moving from the minimum to the maximum

[20] Feeling thermometer scores were other candidates were excluded due to extensive missing data.

Table 3: Apparent Total Effects for 1996 First Round Vote Choice

(Coefficients are first differences in predicted probabilities arising from a change from the minimum to the maximum of each variable)

Variables	*Yeltsin*[†]	*Zyuganov*	*Lebed*	*Yavlinsky*	*Zhirinovsky*
Socioeconomic					
Age	-.08***	.29***	(-.11)	-.02*	(-.00)
Ethnic Russian	(.00)	(-.05)	(.01)	(.00)	(.00)
Russian Orthodox	(.00)	(-.03)	(.04)	(.01)	(.01)
Female	(.03)	(-.01)	(-.01)	(-.01)	(-.01)
Illiterate	(.08)	(-.01)	(-.03)	(-.08)	(-.01)
Higher Education	.08**	-.08**	(-.00)	(.01)	-.02*
Income	.07**	-.11**	(.06)	(.01)	(-.01)
Regional Capital	.13***	-.14***	.01*	(.00)	(-.00)
Unemployed	(.01)	(-.02)	(.04)	(.00)	(-.00)
Union	-.06**	.07**	(-.00)	(-.00)	(.00)
CPSU Member	(-.01)	(.01)	(.01)	(.01)	(-.00)
Current Conditions	(.17)	(-.12)	-.08*	(.01)	(.03)
Political Predispositions					
Communist Factor Scale	**-.20***	**.14***	**(.04)**	**(-.01)**	**(-.01)**
Socialist	-.25***	.40***	(-.07)	(-.02)	(-.02)
Centrist	.13*	-.08*	-.05*	-.02*	(-.00)
Liberal	.12*	-.13*	(-.01)	(.03)	(.02)
Nationalist	(-.02)	(-.06)	(.11)	(-.01)	(-.00)
Candidate Evaluations					
Yeltsin Approval	.30***	-.22***	-.04*	(-.01)	-.01*
Yeltsin Thermometer	.33**	-.18**	-.07**	-.01*	-.03*
Zhirinovsky Thermometer	-.16*	.09*	(-.16)	(-.04)	.29***
Constant					
McFadden's R^2	.14				
Count R^2	.48				

[†] Statistical significance for Yeltsin uses Zyuganov as the base.
(p > .1) *p ≤ .05, ** p ≤ .01, *** p ≤ .001; Statistical significance is based on the coefficients from the multinomial logit.

on the communist scale had a greater impact on voting for Yeltsin than did a similar move on any socioeconomic characteristic—such as moving from the lowest to the highest income bracket. The impact of the communist factor scale on the other vote choices appears minimal. This may be due to the fact that voters who were choosing between Yeltsin and Lebed, Yeltsin and Yavlinsky, and Yeltsin and Zhirinovsky did not fall into the segment of the population that

holds a communist belief system. As a result, this belief system would be unlikely to play a role in their vote choice.

Table 4: Apparent Total Effects for 1996 Second Round Vote
(Coefficients are first differences calculated from logistic regression; Vote for Zyuganov=0 and Vote for Yeltsin=1)

Variable	*First Difference*
Socioeconomic	
Age	-.29***
Ethnic Russian	(-.07)
Russian Orthodox	(.00)
Female	(.02)
Illiterate	(-.05)
Higher Education	(.04)
Income	.13**
Regional Capital	.20***
Unemployed	(.05)
Union	-.06*
CPSU Member	(-.03)
Current Conditions	.22**
Political Predispositions	
Communist Factor Scale	**(-.12)**
Socialist Partisan	-.41***
Centrist Partisan	.13**
Liberal Partisan	.16**
Nationalist Partisan	(-.01)
Candidate Evaluations	
Yeltsin Approval	.24***
Yeltsin Thermometer	.31***
Zhirinovsky Thermometer	-.27**
McFadden's R^2	.23
Count R^2	.73

(p > .1) *p ≤ .05, ** p ≤ .01, *** p ≤ .001; Statistical significance is based on the logit coefficients.

Curiously, in contrast to the first round, the hypothesized communist belief system did not turn up statistically significant in the model estimating round two, even though the election was between Yeltsin and Zyuganov—the same candidates that were evaluated together in round one. Even though the coefficient was not significant, the magnitude and direction of the predicted probability of the communist factor score is similar to that in the first round, only slightly smaller. The socioeconomic, partisan, and candidate evaluations behave similarly between the two rounds as well. One possible reason for the disappearance of statistical

significance of this communist factor score in the second round of the election is the narrowing of choice among presidential candidates. Many voters who selected other candidates in the first round were now choosing between Yeltsin and Zyuganov, perhaps washing out the overall affect of the belief system. In choosing between candidates that were not one's first choice to begin with, it is unclear which heuristic upon which one would rely.

Table 5: Apparent Total Effects of 1999-2000 Presidential Election
(Coefficients are first differences in predicted probabilities arising from a change from the minimum to the maximum of each variable)

Variables	*Putin*[†]	*Zyuganov*	*Yavlinsky*	*Zhirinovsky*
Socioeconomic				
Age	(.08)	(-.07)	(.00)	(-.00)
Ethnic Russian	-.11**	.09**	(.00)	(.00)
Russian Orthodox	(-.03)	(.03)	(-.00)	(-.00)
Female	(.05)	(-.02)	-.00*	(-.00)
Education	.09*	-.15*	.00***	(-.00)
Income	(-.04)	(-.00)	(.00)	(.00)
Regional Capital	(-.01)	(-.01)	(.00)	(.00)
Wage Arrears	(-.05)	(.02)	(-.00)	(.00)
Unemployed	.08*	-.07*	(.00)	(.00)
Union	(.02)	(-.03)	(-.00)	(-.00)
CPSU Member	(.00)	(-.01)	-.00*	(.00)
Current Conditions	.13*	-.13*	(.00)	(-.00)
Political Predispositions				
Communist Factor Scale	**-.20***	**.20***	**(-.00)**	**(.00)**
Socialist Partisan	-.18***	.20***	(-.00)	(.00)
Government Partisan	.17*	-.13*	(-.01)	(-.00)
Centrist Partisan	(-.02)	(-.02)	(.00)	(-.00)
Liberal Partisan	(-.04)	(-.01)	.00*	(.00)
Nationalist Partisan	(.04)	(-.01)	(-.00)	.00***
Candidate Evaluations				
Putin Approval	.39***	-.35***	-.00**	(-.00)
Putin Scale	.53***	-.34***	-.00*	-.00**
Zyuganov Scale	-.58***	.63***	(-.00)	(.00)
Yavlinsky Scale	(-.03)	(.02)	.01***	(-.00)
Zhirinovsky Scale	(.03)	(.07)	(.00)	.00*
Putin Qualities	(.06)	(-.08)	(-.00)	(.00)
Zyuganov Qualities	-.18**	.16**	(.00)	(.00)
Yavlinsky Qualities	(.03)	(-.03)	.00*	(-.00)
Zhirinovsky Qualities	(.03)	(-.03)	(-.00)	(.00)
McFadden's R^2	.32			
Count R^2	.72			

[†] Statistical significance for Putin uses Zyuganov as the base.
(p > .1) *p ≤ .05, ** p ≤ .01, *** p ≤ .001; Statistical significance is based on the coefficients from the multinomial logit.

The results of the 2000 election show strong similarities to the first round of the 1996 election. We find that, *ceteris paribus*, a strong pro-communist voter is 20 percentage points more likely to vote for Zyuganov and 18 percentage points less likely to vote for Putin. Likewise, the communist dimension does not appear to have an impact on voters who were choosing between Putin and Yavlinsky and Putin and Zhirinovsky. This finding is further confirmation that a segment of the Russian voting-age population exhibits a belief system structured around acceptance or rejection of communist beliefs. For Zyuganov voters, the impact of the communist factor scale on vote choice was greater than any socioeconomic indicator in the model. Only Zyuganov's and Putin's likeability had a greater influence in predicting vote choice.

A noteworthy observation is change in the importance of variables between the two elections. The relative strength of the hypothesized communist dimension does not appear to have declined over time. Rather, it played as significant of a role in determining vote choice in 2000 as it did in 1996. Additionally, its relative importance over partisanship appears to have increased. This is particularly interesting bearing in mind the decline in KPRF's political power and popularity in the second half of the 1990s.

Summary and Conclusion: The Search for More Structure in Undefined Space

To summarize the empirical results of this paper, in Part I principal components and factor analyses were conducted in search of underlying attitudinal domains in Russian political beliefs. The factor analyses provided a one-dimensional solution lending support to the existence of an attitudinal belief system structured along the tenets of communist ideology. A variable of this dimension was created by regressing the factor on the matrix of indicators. Relationships between this variable and several socioeconomic indicators were then analyzed through an

ordinary least squares regression estimation, yielding support to the hypothesis that a communist belief system might be prevalent within particular segments of the population.

Part II of the analysis tested the communist dimension variable in a simple vote choice model that examined the 1996 and 2000 Russian presidential elections. The results suggest that voters with a high score on the communist dimension were much more likely to vote for the Communist Party candidate, Gennady Zyuganov. For voters deciding among other alternatives, however, the communist dimension scale had little correlation with vote choice.

While the impact of the communist dimension scale on the vote choice model appears intuitive, it is necessary to bear in mind that most hypotheses of the determinants of communist partisanship and support for communist candidates rest on socioeconomic indicators, such as level of education and urbanization, as well as negative responses to current conditions—not underlying political predispositions. The empirical results presented in both Part I and Part II suggest, rather, that attachment to communist values may in fact serve as a form of ideological constraint among a segment of Russian voters. Furthermore, for individuals who exhibit this belief system, it appears to have a greater influence on voting behavior than do socioeconomic indicators. The results of the analysis presented in this paper suggest that while socioeconomic indicators did have a direct effect on vote choice for Zyuganov in 1996 and 2000, these indicators also had an indirect effect that was mediated through the communist belief system.

The original goal of this analysis was to search for any underlying structure to the mass political mind in Russia. The result of this inquiry is that the most visible form of structured beliefs in Russian political space appears to be an underlying dimension organized along the tenets of communist ideology. This dimension, however, represents only part of the contour of Russian mass beliefs. It is clear that not all questions relating to state structure, political power,

and individual rights and liberties fall along this communist dimension. Other attitudes might align along other dimensions that were not uncovered in this analysis.

Additionally, while the communist belief system is the only visible form of ideological constraint among the sample of the Russian voting-age population surveyed in the 1999-2000 RNES, it is not necessarily the universal belief system for all Russians. The dimension uncovered here explained less than 25% of the overall variance in responses to the questions included in the factor analysis. There is much variance in mass beliefs that is left unaccounted for. While some Russians appear to exhibit a belief system structured along a communist ideological constraint that corresponds with vote choice, for others this belief system does not appear to play an influential role. Thus, it seems logical that not all Russians structure their political beliefs along this domain. In fact, those that do exhibit this belief system are probably clustered within a specific demographic that also correlates with increasing age and rural communities, although this has yet to be empirically demonstrated. It is both possible and likely that other belief systems exist among the Russian public, but the data limitations of this analysis prevented further underlying dimensions from being uncovered.

These findings suggest several potential areas of further research, both in the fields of political behavior and comparative politics. First, additional covariance structure analyses of other indicators may uncover another dimension of ideological constraint. Second, if possible, covariance structure analyses should be conducted on other similar data from a different time period to confirm that the finding of a communist belief system in this model was not spurious, but rather indicative of a medium-term to long-term trend in Russian politics. The identification of socioeconomic indicators that relate to the communist belief system should be further explored, and the implications of these findings should be brought into analyses of Russian mass

political behavior and attitudes to more clearly discern the impact of direct and indirect effects on mass politics. Another line of further research could explore socialization and its impact on the hypothesized belief system.

The implications of a communist belief system on other political outcomes should also be explored. One topic for further research would be to investigate the extent to which an attachment to communist values as a form of ideological constraint is present in other postcommunist regimes as well. Perhaps the antecedent regime postcommunist cases affect latter-day political beliefs and competition more deeply than the prior regime does in other postauthoritarian cases. If so, this could have consequences for democratization and regime consolidation.

Appendix 1: Index of Variables

Socioeconomic Characteristics
Age: Recoded in decades: 18-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, 70 and up;
Ethnic Russian: Dummy variable, 1=identifies as ethnic Russian, 0=identifies as other nationality;
Russian Orthodox: Dummy variable, 1=identifies with Russian Orthodox religious affiliation, 0=identifies with other religious affiliation or no religious affiliation;
Female: Dummy variable, 1=female, 0=male;
Illit: Dummy variable, 1=highest level of education is four years of elementary school or less, 0=having completed more than four years of elementary school (1995-1996 only);
Higher Education: Dummy variable, 1=having completed university-level education, 0=not having a university education (1995-1996 only);
Education: Six point index coded 0-1, 0=without education, illiterate, .2=elementary education, .4=incomplete secondary education, .6=secondary education, .8=specialized secondary education or incomplete higher education, 1=higher education or graduate degree (1999-2000);
Income: Total family monthly income in rubles, divided into five groups that approximate quintiles of the sample. For 1995-1996, 0=0-250,000, .25=251,000-450,000, .50=451,000-750,000, .75=751,000-975,000, 1= >976,000); For 1999-2000, 0=0-2,500, .25=2,501-5,000, .50=5,100-7,500, .75=7,501-10,000, 1= >10,000.[21]
Regional Capital: Dummy variable, 1=resides in a provincial capital city, 0=lives elsewhere;
Wage Arrears: Dummy variable, 1=has experienced wage arrears since May 1999 (1999-2000 only);
Unemployed: Dummy variable: 1) For 1995-1996, 1=was forced to take involuntary unpaid leave in past twelve months; 2) For 1999-2000, 1=has been unemployed at some point in last twelve months;
Union: Dummy variable, 1=union member;
CPSU Member: Dummy variable, 1=was previously a member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union;
Current Conditions and Political Predispositions
Current Conditions: Index comprised of average score to three questions about the state of the Russian economy, whether or not the national economy has improved in the past twelve months, and how the family situation of the

[21] The Russian ruble was deflated effective January 1998.

individual has changed in the past twelve months. Variable is coded 0-1 with 0 representing greatest satisfaction with current conditions (perceives improvement of national and personal economic circumstances) and 1 representing greatest satisfaction (perceives worsening of national and personal economic circumstances);

Socialist Partisan: Dummy variable, 1) For 1995-1996, 1=identification with the Communist Party of Russian Federation, Communists for the Soviet Union, Agrarian Party of Russia, Power to the People, 0=identification with another political party family or no partisanship; 2) For 1999-2000, 1=member of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF), Agrarian Party, Stalinist bloc, Pensioners Party, smaller communist and patriotic splinter parties, or any iteration of "Communist," 0=member of another political party family or no partisanship;

Government Partisan: Dummy variable, 1=identification with Yedinstvo, Our Home is Russia, or any iteration of "Putin's party" or "Shoigu's party," 0= member of another political party family or no partisanship (1999-2000 only);

Centrist Partisan: Dummy variable: 1) For 1995-1996, 1=identification with Women of Russia, Employees' Self-Management Party, Union of Labor, Ecological Party of Russia (KEDR), Rybkin Bloc, My Fatherland, Transformation of the Fatherland, For the Motherland, Stable Russia, Inter-ethnic Union; 0=identification with another political party or no partisan identification; 2) For 1999-2000, 1=identification with Fatherland-All Russia, Women of Russian, Women in Defense of the Motherland, Nikolaev/Fedorov bloc, KEDR, any iteration of "Luzhkov's party" or "Primakov's party," 0=identification with another political party or no partisan identification;

Liberal Partisan: Dummy variable: 1) For 1995-1996, 1=identification with Yabloko, Russia's Democratic Choice, Forward Russia, Pamfilova-Gurov-Lysenko Bloc, Common Cause, Beer Lovers' Party, Party of Russian Unity and Accord, Social Democrats, Party of Economic Freedom, Bloc of Independents, Federal-Democratic Movement, Eighty-nine Regions Bloc, 0=identification with another political party or no partisan identification; 2) For 1999-2000 1=identification with Yabloko, the Union of Right Forces (SPS), the Green Party, or any identification of partisanship with the party of a liberal leader, 0=member of another political party family or no partisanship;

Nationalist Partisan: Dummy variable: 1) For 1995-1996, 1=identification with the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, Congress of Russian Communities, Derzhava, Govorukhin Bloc, National-Republican Party, Russian All-People's Movement; 0=identification with another political party or no partisan identification; 2) For 1999-2000, 1=identification with the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR), the Zhirinovsky Bloc, SPAS, Russian National Unity, smaller nationalist parties, or any iteration of "Zhirinovsky's party," 0=member of another political party family or no partisanship;

Candidate Evaluation

1995-1996

Yeltsin Approval: Approval of Yeltsin's performance as president, 0=fully disapprove, 1=fully approve;

Yeltsin and Zhirinovsky Feeling Thermometers: Rating respondent feeling to candidate on scale of 0-100, recoded to 0-1;

1999-2000

Putin Approval: Approval of Putin's performance as prime minister, 0=fully disapprove, 1=fully approve;

Putin, Zyuganov, Yavlinsky, and Zhirinovsky Scales: Measures like/dislike of candidate on a 0=10 scale, 0=strongly dislike, 10=strongly like;

Putin, Zyuganov, Yavlinsky, and Zhirinovsky Qualities: Index comprised of average score to three questions in agreement/disagreement about a candidate's intelligence, leadership ability, and honesty and trustworthiness. Respondents answered in a range from "yes, probably yes, probably no, no." Variable is coded 0-1.

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