

"*The Russian Transformation* is a fascinating and instructive volume that should be of interest to historians, political scientists, and students of the psychology of political change. Professors Glad and Shiraev are to be commended."

—Fred I. Greenstein, Princeton University

"Glad, Shiraev and their coauthors have written a balanced, integrated and perceptive assessment of the revolutionary changes that have engulfed Russia over the course of the past decade and a half. They provide a solid historical overview of major developments during the period. Much more important, however, is their contribution to an understanding of the place of key leaders—Gorbachev, Shevardnadze, and Yeltsin—in the process of change, and their emphasis on the crucial importance of the psychological dimensions of economic and political transition. As they emphasize, unless one understands the complex factors associated with attitudinal and value change, it is especially difficult to understand developments in post-communist Russia. Finally, the book is written in a clear and straightforward style and is integrated into a single argument much more effectively than is the case of most multi-authored books."

—Roger E. Kanet, Professor and Dean,
School of International Studies, University of Miami

"An extensively researched and methodologically innovative book, it provides political, cultural and psychological explanations for the peaceful end of the cold war as well as today's instability of young Russian democracy."

—Vladislav Zubok, Senior Fellow, National Security Archive

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THE RUSSIAN TRANSFORMATION
POLITICAL, SOCIOLOGICAL, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS

Edited by
Betty Glad
and
Eric Shiraev

St. Martin's
Press

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Introduction

Betty Glad with Patricia Karl

In this work on the Soviet/Russian transformation we delineate three broad categories of issues critical to the development and direction of reform. In part I we address the question of leadership as a catalyst in the Soviet transition. In part II we look at the broader political, institutional, economic, and sociological changes that were introduced by the new leadership. The carryover of patterns from the Soviet past to the new Russia will be noted where relevant. In part III the contributors analyze popular adaptations to these institutional changes. Gordon Smith, in "The Psychological Dimensions of the Transition" (chapter 8), delineates six historical phases in terms of the leadership/public reactions to the tasks that must be undertaken. The emphasis in the remaining chapters in this section will be on popular adaptations to changes in phases three through five. Particular subjects addressed include overall attitudinal changes towards governmental institutions, generational differences in those attitudes, the impact of new political parties on political attitudes, changes in gender role perceptions, pop music as a reflection of value changes, and Russian attitudes towards the West.

Political scientists have often assumed that totalitarian regimes could not produce transitional leaders committed to democratic reforms and values. Hannah Arendt, in *Totalitarianism* (1969), argues that these regimes are so corrupt that people who come to power are opportunists whose main goal is to maintain their positions within the political hierarchy. Yet Mikhail Gorbachev, Eduard Shevardnadze, and Boris Yeltsin—persons socialized in such a system—arrived on the Soviet political scene

Chapter 15

Russia's Open-Ended Transition: toward an Integrated Research Model

Andrei Melville

The Soviet/Russian transformation between 1985 and 1998 was an important and in some respects a unique event in human history. As a turning point in the flow of political and cultural development in an important part of the world, it deserves the kind of endeavor undertaken in this volume. To even attempt to understand such a complex process, a holistic approach employing concepts from several different disciplines is almost a necessity. The contributions of each author to what may be a partial understanding of this process is provided in the introduction to this volume and will not be repeated here. Rather, I shall deal in this chapter with some of the broader methodological issues related to building a more inclusive, integrated theory of transformational politics.

Two distinct approaches in comparative politics and area studies have emerged during recent years, each offering a different model for understanding what happened in Russia during the last turbulent decade.

Russia's transition from communism is understood by some authors as an example of a larger generic case—a transition from authoritarianism to democracy (Di Palma 1990, Bova 1991, Huntington 1991-92, Schmitter with Karl 1994, Linz & Stepan 1996). From this point of view, Gorbachev's perestroika, the disintegration of the USSR, the collapse of communism, and the subsequent transformations in post-communist Russia and the former socialist countries are all part of one global process—the “third wave” of the “global democratic revolution.”

A quite different understanding of post-communism has emerged in recent years, according to which post-communism is, to a large degree, a specific phenomenon (in regard to initial conditions, tasks, political actors, and the like). The assumption is that there is no reason for comparing it with the processes of democratization that are characteristic of southern Europe and Latin America (Terry 1993; Bunce 1995, 1998). In line with this approach there is also an understanding of post-communism as a “peaceful revolution” (McFaul 1995, Fish 1995), differing from other processes of democratization because of the political and socioeconomic tasks it introduces. The complexity and difficulty of these tasks make post-communist transitions fundamentally different from the mainly political transitions from authoritarianism to democracy.

It appears to this author, however, that the time for a general and integrated theory of post-communism is yet to come. Post-communism as a metaphor still needs to be developed into a comprehensive theory, which would provide the conceptual tools to analyze the full variety of transformations in Russia and in other former Soviet-type societies. What is missing today in the methodological arsenal of both comparativists and area specialists is an integrated theory that enables us to conceptualize the multitude of political, social, economic, psychological, ideological, and other phenomena that have emerged out of the rubble of communism.

It should be admitted that those who stress a specific post-communist transition process point to some very real features not present in most other types of post-authoritarian transitions. Among them are the simultaneous tasks of political democratization and economic marketization; the need for the dismantling of a great part of existing production capacities for the sake of modernization and restructuring of others; the appearance of a nationalist (and nondemocratic) reaction to the communist collapse; and the lack of a civil society consisting of a system of ties within civil society itself and between civil society and the State. This list of differences between post-communist and post-authoritarian transitions can easily be extended.

One should add to this list of post-communist transitions the possibility that the result may not be a consolidated democracy but a type of hybrid regime that uses the democratic rhetoric as a smoke screen for a de facto restoration of various and even pre-communist forms of authoritarianism. By way of illustration, we can consider a recent survey undertaken by Freedom House that rates countries according to evaluations of the state of political processes, including free and fair elections; the evolution of civil society; the status of an independent media; rule of law, including constitutional, civil, and criminal law reform; governance and public administration, including transparency and government accountability; privatization; and economic reform. According to these criteria, only seven among the newly independent states (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia) are considered to be consolidated democracies. Fourteen (Russia, Moldova, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, Macedonia, Croatia, Albania, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Georgia, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan) are transitional, while four (Belarus, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan) are consolidated autocracies (Karatnycki 1997).

This data suggests that it is probably more beneficial not to use a notion of “transition to democracy” (which implies that the final result of the process of transition is democracy in its Western sense) but a broader and more neutral notion of democratic transition. The role of unpredictability in such transitions is widely recognized (Przeworski 1991). In spite of the extensive use of democratic rhetoric, these transitions may very seldom meet democratic standards, even in a minimally procedural (a la Schumpeter or Dahl) sense of the word. A consolidated democracy is not necessarily the final result of such a process.

Even the establishment of formal democratic institutions and procedures of either “electoral democracy” or “illiberal democracy” (Diamond 1996; Diamond, Plattner, Chu, & Tien 1997; Zakaria 1998) in no way guarantees a particular outcome of the transition. Therefore, there is a widely accepted distinction between two major phases in the practice of democratic transition: (1) the formal inauguration of democracy and (2) its consolidation (Mainwaring, O'Donnell, & Valenzuela 1992; Gunther, Diamandouros, & Puhle 1995; Linz & Stepan 1996; Merkel 1998).

We may go even further, raising the following question: Do democratic transitions really have one predominant direction from the initiation of democratic reforms to consolidated democracy at the end of the process? The answer could imply that different types of illiberal democracies may emerge and some of them may represent not an intermediate

stage in a democratic transition but quite different phenomenon—a transition from one type of non-democracy to another type of non-democracy.

All this leads to important theoretical and methodological problems related to current comparative research on post-authoritarian and post-communist transitions: Are we able to trace a causal relationship between a multitude of factors which are at hand at the beginning of transition, as well as during the transitional process, to its political, economic, and social outcomes? Why do democratic transitions begin earlier and proceed more smoothly in some countries than in others? Why do some non-democratic regimes initiate a gradual democratization themselves, while others resist it until they collapse? Why do only a few transitions result in consolidated democracies while many others stumble while in a non-consolidated phase or stagnate as consolidated autocracies?

In an effort to answer these questions, some authors (Almond & Verba 1963; Rustow 1970; Inglehart 1988; Lipset 1959, 1996) emphasize structural factors—socioeconomic and cultural conditions—as prerequisites of both democracy and democratization. Others stress procedural factors, such as the sequence of specific choices, decisions, and actions taken by actual political actors upon whom the process of democratic transition rests (O'Donnell & Schmitter 1986, Linz 1990, Di Palma 1990, Przeworski 1991, Schmitter with Karl 1994, Karl & Schmitter 1994).

It appears that these two methodological approaches, the structural and the procedural, do not mutually exclude each other. Moreover, there is apparently no insurmountable contradiction between them. It must, however, be admitted that at present even a preliminary theoretical synthesis of these two methodological approaches has not been achieved. Such a synthesis would be equally important for the elaboration of an integrated theory of contemporary post-communism. And what is more important, there may very well be other significant but unnoticed factors, that may in different ways influence the democratic transition at its different stages. In the absence of an integrated theory of democratic transitions (and post-communist transitions in particular) it may be a useful preliminary step to try to structure and systematize all major factors—from macro to micro—that may influence such transitions (Melville 1998). Post-communist Russia may provide us with a good case study within the frame of reference of this approach.

Such an endeavor makes it necessary to reveal both general and specific elements of the process. Keeping in mind all the differences between Russia's post-communist transformation and the transitions from right-wing authoritarianism to democracy in Southern European and Latin

American countries, it can still be suggested that these processes were influenced at least partly by some similar factors. Analogies between the Russian and the classic post-authoritarian transitions are often dismissed on the grounds that Gorbachev's coming to power was not the result of a split in the Soviet elite into reformers and conservatives. It is argued that he initiated reforms by using purely Soviet apparatus methods (from top to bottom). In reality, even if Gorbachev's way to power was ensured by traditional nomenklatura methods, his subsequent reform initiatives caused the Soviet elite to split.

As in most cases of democratic transition, the initiation, first of a liberalization and then of a partial democratization of the regime, was taken from above by the leader-reformer. As a centrist reformer, Gorbachev was initially inclined to gradual and evolutionary reforms within the framework of the existing system. He appealed for support to the radical democratic opposition forces outside the regime in order to strengthen his position in the confrontation with conservatives and fundamentalists within. However, the legalization and then the institutionalization of the radical democratic opposition (for example, the Interregional Group of Deputies of the USSR Supreme Soviet and the "Democratic Russia" movement) caused a defensive reaction from the conservatives, who pulled their ranks more closely together and subsequently institutionalized themselves as the Communist Party of the RSFSR, and as the "Unity" bloc in the Supreme Soviet. For a time Gorbachev succeeded in balancing between these two groups by pursuing a policy of zigzags. However, the gap between the two political poles, both of which assumed their own speed and logic of development, was constantly widening. As a result, political centrism as a method of reforming the system suffered a complete collapse. The unsuccessful conservative coup in August 1991 aimed at saving the system resulted in a successful countercoup staged by the radical democrats.

One can easily see that almost from its outset the transition pattern in the Soviet/Russian case differed profoundly from classic types of democratic transitions. What, then, are the macro- and micro-factors which may be responsible for these peculiar aspects of the Russian transformational trajectory?

Starting our analysis at the macro-factor level in accordance with our research model, we should direct attention to international (geopolitical, strategic, economic, political, and cultural) factors that stimulated the efforts of reforms in the USSR. It seems that these external/international factors, while creating a stimulus for perestroika-type reforms in the Soviet

Union, were neither crucial nor determining. However, the analysis of these international factors of Soviet/Russian transformations is still on the research agenda. External factors may come to be seen as presenting conditions and obstacles to democratic consolidation in Russia in the future.

We should also mention the fact that in the Soviet/Russian case one basic precondition for democratization—i.e. the existence of a state integrity and national identity—was and is missing. The multiethnic composition of both the USSR and Russian Federation and the rise of the centrifugal forces of nationalism that led to the disintegration of the USSR continue to be a threat to Russia. During the disintegration of the Soviet Union, calls for national self-determination were used to give meaning and substance to the program of anti-communism. However, in the post-communist context the desire for national revival began to assume forms hardly compatible with democracy. In some places, nationalism assumed the features of openly ethnocratic and imperial forms.

The crisis of national identity, which is clearly felt today in post-communist Russia, cannot be found, as a rule, in other cases of democratic transitions. From a long-term perspective it may prove to be the most difficult task. At present, there is no clear answer to the following questions: What is today's Russia like? Did it really inherit the status of the USSR? Is it a successor to the last great empire of the world? Or is it only one of the empire's 15 splinters? Is it true that post-communist Russia represents a fundamentally new type of statehood, which emerged out of the rubble of the old empire? Or is today's Russia a continuation of the framework of that Eurasian geopolitical entity which existed first in the form of the Russian empire and then in the form of the USSR? There is still no answer to the question of whether it is possible to achieve a different—democratic and non-imperial—regime that could govern and organize these territories which historically have been structured in an autocratic and imperial paradigm. Until answers to these questions are found, until the problem concerning territorial integrity within the framework of a voluntary federation is solved and the new national identity of Russia established, it is difficult to predict not only the results but also the progress of Russia's democratic transit.

The economy provides additional obstacles to democratization in Russia. Unlike most democratic transitions of the third wave, the processes of democratization in the USSR and Russia were initiated as attempts at revitalizing the economy and society. Moreover, in the Soviet Union, unlike several post-authoritarian transitions to democracy, there were not even simple elements of a market economy, an absence that complicated and continues to complicate transformation processes.

Still some authors (Starr 1988, Lapidus 1989, Lewin 1991) argue that behind the facade of the Soviet regime there were gradually emerging forces of modernization. These forces resulted from accumulated social change—including urbanization, professional differentiation, increased educational level, and the emergence of the “embryonic” middle class as the carrier of new values and attitudes. There is another line of argumentation, according to which transformation processes initiated by perestroika were caused not by the gradual modernization of the Soviet society but, quite the contrary, by its decay and devolution (Malia 1990, 1992; Janos 1991; Jowitt 1992). This debate certainly should be continued.

Narrowing our focus further, we should consider the lower structural level of social and class factors. First, we need to integrate into our argument the absence of an adequate social base for democracy. From the standpoint of political democratization and its tasks, the transition to a market economy is not an end in itself but a means of creating a middle class as a mass basis for democracy. The processes of transformation in the Soviet society, at least since the 1960s, created a kind of early analogue of a middle class. With the disintegration of the Soviet state, the deepening economic crisis, and the initiation of market economy reforms, this embryonic Soviet “old middle class” was actually washed away as the society split up into two poles (a process also typical for Third World countries). One extreme represented a zone of mass poverty, the other a narrow stratum of wealth, with socially amorphous elements between them. As for a “new middle class,” it has not yet appeared in Russia. The problem of shaping an adequate mass social basis of democracy, based on private property relations as opposed to relations vis-à-vis the state, remains unsolved in post-communist Russia.

Another specific feature of Russia's transition is the maintenance of the old ruling class in power. In cases of successful transition, a pact between parties competing with and confronting each other during the process of democratization provides for the old ruling class guarantees of political and economic security (Glad 1996, Glad & Blanton 1997). As a result of this process, the old ruling class can take part in the democratic political process. In Russia, however, there was a lack of a social agreement. The old nomenklature retained its political and economic status by the camouflaging of apparent administrative changes made by the new authorities—for instance, by the relabeling of official positions, while filling these positions with the same personnel. This was accomplished without any rhetorical explanations of what had transpired (Khryshthanovskaia 1996; for a different argument see Lane & Ross 1998).

It is partly for this reason that the uncompleted democratic transition

in Russia became not so much a radical break with the past Soviet system, but rather a particular metamorphosis of it. The nucleus of the old nomenclatura (which included the old party apparatus and economic pragmatists) joined the new career professionals from democratic ranks as part of the renewed ruling class under slogans of democracy and anti-communism (Shevtsova 1995). This renewed ruling class held on to power and acquired private property. It became the winner in the large-scale processes of redistribution of state property and of the transfer of this property to private hands. Hidden behind a smoke screen of so-called public privatization, the redistribution took place among clans and cartels that were and still are part of the ruling class. As a result, corporate interest groups created a base for the oligarchic political system that is presently being established in Russia. At the same time, the interests of the masses are still poorly articulated and the lower layers of society do not have adequate political representation.

The present situation is one in which an elite employs the formal procedures of democracy for nondemocratic purposes. This situation is the result of a superficial democratization that provides virtually no mechanisms of democratic control over the actions of the authorities (Shevtsova 1997). According to the terminology of Schmitter and Karl (1994), it is a hybrid, a kind of "democradura," a regime that drastically limits the possibilities for an effective mass participation in politics, but at the same time allows competition for power at the elite level. Still, the "democradura" in Russia is a relative one, at least because at the elite level, the rules of the game are not based on open political competition. They consist of clan and corporate laws structuring the "under-the-carpet" struggle for power. Characterizations such as "delegated democracy" (O'Donnell 1994), "authoritarian democracy" (Sakwa 1997), or "hybrid regime" (Shevtsova 1997) can also be applied in many respects to the key features of the current Russian regime. On the other hand, the present hybrid regime in Russia inherited much of the old Soviet political genotype, and it resembles, to an ever-greater extent, a closed corporate and profoundly corrupt political structure of the Latin American type.

The issue of the nature of the current political regime in Russia is related to a more general methodological problem. This problem arises in the first place within the context of a large variety of post-authoritarian regimes, which are referred to as "democracies with adjectives" (for example, "authoritarian democracy," "neopatrimonial democracy," "military-dominated democracy," "protodemocracy," "illiberal democracy," "electoral democracy," etc.). One can only agree with Collier and Levitsky (1997, 450)

that this issue still needs conceptual clarification: "Diminished subtypes are useful for characterizing hybrid regimes, but they raise the issue of whether these regimes should, in fact, be treated as subtypes of democracy, rather than subtypes of authoritarianism or some other concept."

At the level of cultural factors we need to address the following problem. Both in the USSR and in Russia, the democratic transition was not preconditioned by a civic culture that supported democratic values and orientations. The functioning of new, formally democratic political institutions, however, influences the dynamic of public values and orientations. As a result, the latter start to develop and acquire a dynamic of their own, which in turn begins to influence political institutions and processes. Empirical evidence shows the tendency toward consolidation of some dispersed and uncoordinated democratic values, habits, and practices in Russian mass consciousness (Melville, 1998a). Still, in Russia today, according to various public opinion polls, normative support of democracy is lower and normative support of authoritarianism is higher than in many other current cases of democratic transition. The analysis of cultural and value-attitudinal dimensions of transition processes in Russia and in other countries in transition remains a challenging task for political scientists and comparativists.

Since at the level of structural factors we are not able to develop a comprehensive explanatory model of Russian democratic transition, we should also consider procedural factors. It has become almost trivial to speak about the unprecedented task of carrying out both democratic transformations of the political system and economic reforms aimed at creating a market economy in post-communist Russia. The latter task presupposes a dismantling of the command economy and the creation of new foundations for market economy relations. It is believed that, ideally, both tasks should not only condition each other but also, in the end, mutually support each other: Democratization facilitates an advancement towards the market, while the market creates the economic and social basis of democracy. In classic post-authoritarian transitions the problem concerning the simultaneous nature of political and economic reforms does not arise because a market economy already exists in some form. However, in the Soviet Union and then in Russia, these two tasks proved in many respects to create obstacles for each other.

This is not to claim that quite painful economic structural transformations, including the privatization of state property, were not on the agenda of other democratic transitions. Nevertheless, successful political and economic reforms, including those taking place in the

countries of Central and Eastern Europe, were not carried out simultaneously. Nor were they carried out in the way they are in China, where economic reforms not only precede but actually replace political reforms.

In most successful democratic transitions a consistent political democratization was carried out first, and then effective democratic institutions were built and consolidated. Next came the establishment of what Linz and Stepan (1996) call an "economic society," that is, a system of social guarantees and mediating institutions between the state and the market. Only after these political developments were painful economic transformations were carried out. Other authors (Brzezinski 1993, McFaul 1995) draw attention to this circumstance. Following such a sequence of events, persistent political democratization helped ensure mass support for democracy during heavy economic reforms on one hand, while a social contract was provided to facilitate the economic transition on the other.

Neither of the above happened in Russia. After 1991 the state disintegrated, for Yeltsin created neither democratic political institutions that could have supported the economic reforms, nor institutions of state support for the market economy and the social security system. The impact of extremely painful economic reforms, which were not accompanied by any social contract and were not supported socially or politically, fell upon the socially unprotected population.

When analyzing these developments, one ought to go beyond the framework of the Western-style free market's opposition to the command administrative system in transition. This should be done for analytical and comparative reasons. None of the countries that have undertaken processes of successful democratic transition during the last two decades was entering the market in its pure form *per se*, a prerequisite of, or a guarantee for, democracy. Here lies the source of one of the fatal errors of the early strategists of Russia's transition, who acted out of the belief that a free market (even if it is "wild") can provide the economic and social basis needed for political democracy. The economic and financial collapse in Russia on August 17, 1998, signaled the end of seven years of Russia's post-communist political reform and the "virtual economy" (Gaddy & Ickes 1998), conducted only formally and superficially according to monetarist models. In fact, the privatization of the state with the help of state mechanisms turned out to be a mere *prikhvatizatsia* (robbery, confiscation), with the subsequent flow of capital out of the country. This strategy, seen from today's perspective, was based on a false premise that

the most important thing for successful marketization is appropriation of big capital by whatever means possible.

A comparative analysis of successful democratic transitions shows that nowhere in Southern Europe, Latin America, or Central and Eastern Europe did the transition to democracy rely solely on the reconstruction of the classic ideal of a free market under a state functioning as a "night watchman." Contrary to some widespread misconceptions, both the logic and actions of successful "democratizers" were quite opposite: First radical political transformations (the building of effective institutions of democracy); then social reforms, which provide some sort of a social safety net and a social basis of support for democracy; to be followed by profound structural transformations of the economy (the establishment of a modern free market).

The ideological opposition to state interventionism of the now globalized and Western-centered market does not apply to the present situation in Russia. The Soviet administrative system of economic management, which had disintegrated by the end of the Gorbachev epoch, was completely crushed by the reformers. At the same time, many key levers of administrative influence continue to exist. As a result, there has evolved a political-criminal market in which bargaining between political and economic clans in key positions, combining power and property, takes place. Today, as distinct from what was going on in the recent past, these cartels have become all the more vigorous and powerful. They no longer enter politics by delegating the representation of their interests to authorized persons, but are themselves becoming the most influential political players. These players do not need free market competition. They have already adjusted the state they privatized to their own personal and corporate needs. Now it is the state that is propped up by shadowy political bargains and government subsidies, no matter how insubstantial, that are needed to preserve the monopoly and domination of certain economic cartels.

An analysis of procedural factors also points to the continuation of traditional administrative methods of carrying out political and economic reforms. The almost complete subordination of social groups, classes, and strata to the paternalistic vertical arrangement of state power was always a characteristic of pre-Soviet Russia and the USSR. It was not society that was creating the state, but state power itself that was shaping society. In other words, social and economic relationships were a creation of the state. The Soviet state was not a creation or product of pre-existing social and economic relationships. In post-Soviet Russia, embryonic

signs of democracy and its representative institutions began to emerge on a flat social landscape in which there were few historical patterns or infrastructures of diverse socioeconomic interests (McFaul 1993).

Moreover, the new authorities in Russia followed the Russian tradition of carrying out reforms and transformations according to a vertical, top-down power structure. In most successful democratic transitions the reform initiative comes from above. However, an important and fundamental difference between Russia and other cases is that in the latter a reform impulse from above acts only as the primary catalyst of broader and profounder processes that emerge and develop in society. The functions of the authorities are usually reduced to providing institutional support for these processes in accordance with generally accepted democratic procedures.

In Russia, the political processes were different. The new authorities' approach to reform was consistent with traditional administrative methods (mainly due to the new political elite's ties with the old nomenklatura). This, in turn, created a split between the authorities and the society, a split that is pernicious for democracy and leads to a growing alienation of society from the government. Public disappointment and indifference increases. Certainly, positive factors can also be observed in the available data. For example, the "privatization" of one's personal sphere is about to replace a sense of traditional statism according to which an individual is only partly subordinate to the state. However, private interest is perceived in the mass consciousness not merely as independent of the state and the authorities, but in direct conflict with them. This does not in any way provide favorable conditions for the development of the forms of political participation needed for effective functioning of democratic institutions.

The lack of a pact between reformers and conservatives is also revealed at the procedural level of analysis. After renouncing the compromises that Gorbachev sought, albeit inconsistently, and as part of the bid for a full and unconditional victory over the Soviet regime, Yeltsin and the radicals supporting him dismissed the possibility of compromising with their adversaries. In other cases such a pact helped formulate the rules of the democratic game, ones that were subsequently adhered to by the main political forces of the system. As there was no such pact in Russia, quite a big political segment of society was artificially excluded from the democratic process for a long time, until the 1993 elections, which legalized the opposition.

It should also be noted that the lack of a formal pact in no way prevented the second and third echelons of the Soviet nomenklatura from

successfully becoming part of the new system of authority. Today, there is reason to believe that some elements of a pact after all did take place *de facto*. One of the elements of this partial pact was the recognition of formal elections as the only acceptable method of legitimization of power by the nation-wide political forces of Russia. However, as distinct from the logic of classic transitions to democracy, this pact was not a phase that preceded the democratization of an authoritarian regime. It was a stage of post-communist transformation at which a new ruling class had already emerged and different ruling groups had already "adjusted" to each other, determined their interests and zones of intersection, and agreed upon the "rules of the game." They did not take into account the overwhelming mass of the population. As a result, the pact, which appeared *de facto* but in a limited form and among the most influential groups within the present Russian elite, only deepens the gap between the authorities and the society and keeps society from participating in politics.

The Russian democratic transition is also characterized by the lack of founding elections that could have legitimized the new order in social and political life. Relying on his charisma as a people's leader who enjoys the support of everyone and therefore does not need an additional legitimization, Yeltsin refused to hold the first free elections. Thus he failed to lay the foundations for a legitimate democratic power which would have facilitated a smooth and gradual development of a multiparty system in the country. It should be noted that Yeltsin refused to hold these first free elections in a situation where radical democrats would have had the best chance of obtaining a powerful majority in the parliament. This majority might have provided popular support for the radical economic reforms he initiated. The lack of this most important initial institutional phase in the process of Russia's democratic transition largely explains (or at least makes it less unexpected) the results of the parliamentary elections in December 1993, which shocked most observers in Russia and abroad. These parliamentary elections were only formally and chronologically the "first" and founding ones.

The initial shock stage of market economic reforms, in short, was forced on the population by an executive power already associated in mass consciousness with the radical democrats. It does not come as a surprise that the result of this short and agonizing stage of shock therapy was the growth of mass discontent with the democratic authorities and their policies. This has been the case in practically all similar of democratic transitions. Reforms have inevitably caused a public reaction, and the pendulum of mass sentiment has swung against them. It happened in Russia during the first free parliamentary elections in December 1993, which

according to the general logic of democratic transitions fulfilled the function of the second elections—the “elections of disappointment.”

When dealing with the characteristics of Russian democratic transition, we have almost accomplished our methodological descent to the level of micro-factors that relate to personal and individual factors—decisions and actions of the key political actors. It seems only one factor can more or less convincingly explain Yeltsin's refusal to hold free parliamentary elections in the autumn of 1991. It was his reluctance to share the laurels of victory with persons who only recently had become his close associates in the democratic movement. As a result, only some of the Russian democrats were co-opted into the new structures of authority. A large section of the democratic movement remains out of business, in a position of disappointed observers who are becoming ever more critical.

The role of individual and personal factors (to put it bluntly—Yeltsin's personality) had its influence upon the general trajectory of the transition. Here we would like to refer to what Breslauer outlines as a fundamental contradiction in Yeltsin's approach to managing the transition—a contradiction between his personalism (patriarchal familialism), on the one hand, and the need for institution building, on the other. “Yeltsin put far more energy into establishing and developing the formal structures of a capitalist democracy than he did into creating the regulatory institutions and organizational infrastructure required to make such a system function effectively” (Breslauer 1998, 6). To summarize, individual micro-factors need to be taken into account as important ones in the analysis of different cases of transition and in the attempts to conceptualize them.

Is the research framework presented above suited for the analysis of the democratic transitions in the Russian case and in general? Ideal methodologies, we must admit, do not exist but it seems that this research model of gradual descent from macro- to micro-factors may be considered a fruitful one. Certainly it does not provide a full explanation. It does provide one possible route toward the broader explanation of the “mystery” of democratic transitions.

As for the particular Russian case, the author of these remarks believes that at this moment we are dealing with an open-ended transition and cannot yet see its directions or its outcome. Meanwhile an important analytical task may consist in the continuation of our efforts first to systemize and take into account relevant factors to the Russian transition, and then on this base try to develop conceptualizations of post-communist transitions as a very specific and diversified phenomenon.

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