

## Abstract

# **Nothing to Gain But Your Chains: Popular Support for Democracy and Authoritarianism in the Former Soviet Union**

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Among countries that have undergone regime transition, why is support for authoritarianism highest in the most democratic post-transition states, while support for democracy is higher in authoritarian states? I argue that regime preferences are built into the national identities of certain nations, identities that reflect the historical legacy of foreign occupation in the post-Soviet space. When authoritarian countries occupy populations with well-established national identities, the occupied nations can come to define themselves as a democratic “us” in opposition to an authoritarian “them.” In contrast to earlier literature on political culture, my work suggests that these culturally conditioned regime preferences are strong but not static, particularly in the wake of a major regime transition. I argue that economic collapse in the post-transition period can upend these preferences. When democratization occurs simultaneously with economic collapse, citizens can become much more critical of democracy. Once set, these beliefs about democracy and authoritarianism became remarkably durable and resistant to change. Thus, the scale of economic collapse that one experiences leaves a lasting mark on one’s beliefs about democracy and authoritarianism. I argue that when these post-transition critics of democracy gain additional experience with democratic rule, they become increasingly critical of democracy. The paradoxical outcome is that support for authoritarianism is highest in the most democratic post-transition states, while support for democracy is higher in authoritarian states.

**Nothing to Gain But Your Chains:**  
**Popular Support for Democracy and Authoritarianism in the**  
**Former Soviet Union**

A Dissertation  
Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School  
of  
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*To Christine*



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## Acknowledgments

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# CHAPTER 1

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## Economics, Culture, and Support for Democracy & Authoritarianism

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At the start of the new year in 1991, one-sixth of the world's inhabitable territory was formally ruled by the authoritarian Soviet regime. By the end of that year, the Soviet Union ceased to exist, leaving fifteen independent countries in its place. As we inspect the post-Soviet space today, it is striking that a tremendous spectrum of regime types now spans the once politically monolithic territory. From liberal democracy in Latvia to dictatorship in Belarus to creeping authoritarianism in Russia and weak democracy in Ukraine, there is now wide variation in regimes where the Soviet regime once stood. How do we explain this great variation in regime type across the region given the common authoritarian starting point two decades ago?

I argue that mass support for democracy is an important variable that must be considered when explaining variation in post-Soviet regime trajectories. Contrary to many theorists and policymakers who assume that individuals prefer democratic rule, I also argue that popular support for authoritarian governance is a likely outcome under certain conditions. Thus, one focus of my research is exploring the factors which lead ordinary citizens to tolerate or even demand nondemocratic rule: under what conditions do citizens prefer authoritarian forms of government over democracy? By looking at popular sup-



port for democracy *and* authoritarianism we can achieve a clearer picture of mass regime preferences as whole.

But do mass preferences for democracy and authoritarianism influence a state's regime type? If the citizens demand authoritarian rule, will they actually succeed in voting democracy out of existence? If they demand democracy of their leaders, is that enough to guard against elite-driven efforts to reassert authoritarian rule? Many would dismiss out of hand the role public opinion plays in influencing regime development, arguing that regime trajectories are entirely controlled by elites. I would not argue that public opinion is the only determinant of regime types. Elites, institutions, and socioeconomic structures are among the many factors that affect regime development in new democracies. But mass regime preferences are likely another factor that can influence over the longer term whether democracy thrives or perishes. My interest in this dissertation is in exploring what forces generate mass regime preferences; future work will elaborate on the complex relationship between democratic and authoritarian support and regime outcomes.

Though public opinion is not always able to move dictatorships toward democracy or vice versa, there are a number of other important political phenomena that are likely influenced by mass regime preferences, including parliamentary and executive electoral outcomes; the rise of fringe (especially right-wing) political groups; mass political mobilization and participation; and public and elite reactions to electoral fraud. To take a relevant example, it is hard to discuss Ukraine's Orange Revolution of 2004 without reference to public opinion about the legitimacy of the fraudulent second round of the presidential election, regardless of whether one considers the Orange Revolution to be a democratic turning point for Ukraine.

## 1.1 The Puzzle: Popular Demand for Authoritarianism and Democracy in Post-Transition Societies

My research is motivated by an empirical paradox: popular support for authoritarianism is highest in countries that have successfully democratized since the collapse of the

Soviet Union. Conversely, support for democracy is higher in countries where authoritarian rule remains entrenched. Among countries that have undergone regime transition, why is there greater support for authoritarian rule in democratized countries than in countries where authoritarianism remains entrenched? Given that people living under authoritarian regimes often struggle for democratization, why do we often continue to see high levels of support for authoritarianism among the citizens of new democracies? These are the fundamental questions that I seek to answer in this dissertation.

To preface the general argument, I will identify three layers of influence that shape the regime preferences of ordinary citizens. The first layer falls under the umbrella of “political culture”: certain nationalities consider themselves to be the bearers of a democratic national identity that is passed across generations through familial and informal networks. This sense of the nation as fundamentally democratic increases democratic support among members of the nation. The second layer of influence is also cultural: political values that are transmitted to individuals through state-controlled institutions of political socialization (particularly schools) can also shape beliefs and preferences for democracy and authoritarianism. The third layer of influence is economic: support for democracy and authoritarianism can be influenced by economic conditions around the time of transition and by perceptions of a regime’s economic performance. Thus, popular support for democracy or authoritarianism be a function of contemporary developmental trends *and* long-term, deep historical and cultural factors. Though cultural and economic explanations of political preferences are often pitted against each other, the purpose of this dissertation is to develop a dynamic model of regime preferences that combines the two approaches.

Many studies of support for democracy explore either economic or cultural influences as central causal variables. Very few seriously consider both, and those that do tend to dichotomize the two explanations. The theory developed here rejects this dichotomy as false, arguing that there are multiple and diverse influences on an individual’s behaviors and beliefs. What has been lacking is a theoretical treatment of regime preferences as a *dynamic interaction between cultural and economic factors*. Such factors may work congruently with one another, while others might exert opposing forces. Cultural traditions may

point an individual's orientation toward democracy, while the pain of an empty pocketbook leads them toward more authoritarian preferences. If we are to understand the complexity of political beings and the factors that shape their beliefs and actions, it is essential to acknowledge that regime preferences are not monocausal. In the conclusion of one of the few explicit studies of electoral support for potentially authoritarian candidates, Tucker and Seligson (2005) acknowledge the necessity of examining multiple explanations for regime preferences. They find that even when controlling for economic performance there remains evidence of a preference for authoritarian rule that is deeply ingrained in parts of the populace in Russia. If such a reservoir of pro-authoritarian public opinion exists, they note, "this begs the question of why certain citizens continue to harbor such attitudes while others have been more supportive of the new democratic polity," even when taking economic conditions into account (Tucker and Seligson 2005, 32). The present work attempts to incorporate economics and political culture in addressing this puzzling question.

Another shortcoming in many explanations of regime preferences is an imbalanced focus on support for democracy and democratization without giving sufficient attention to the opposite side of the coin, support for authoritarianism.<sup>1</sup> There is no doubt that support for democracy and support for authoritarianism are closely related and intertwined. My study recognizes this fact and devotes considerable attention to explaining popular support for democratic rule. But because support for authoritarianism and democracy are closely intertwined we cannot afford to ignore the former in favor of the latter, as many have done before. The bias towards studying democratic support without examining the full picture of regime preferences is no doubt a reflection of the assumptions of the post-communist transitions literature of the 1990s, much of which naively presumed that a transition to democracy was taking place throughout the post-communist world (Carrothers 2002). With democracy as the eventual end point of transition, it was easy to overlook the alternative (re-authoritarianization) and the mass demands that might allow (or even encourage) such an outcome.

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<sup>1</sup>Notable exceptions include Canache (2002), Seligson and Carrion (2002), Tucker and Seligson (2005), and Rose, Mishler and Munro (2006).

Yet as the final years of the 1990s and early years of the 2000s have shown, a drift toward authoritarianism and the public opinion that has allowed it to develop are very real concerns in many post-transition countries, leading us to pick up the trail where the previous literature on democratic support left off. We must explore both what brought about initial support for democracy in post-transition countries, what led to the collapse in support for democracy, and whether that collapse has revealed an increased demand for authoritarian rule. It is tempting to simply consider demand for authoritarianism to be the perfect inverse of support for democracy. But Churchill's famous quip that "democracy is the worst form of government, except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time," reminds us that the relationship among regime preferences is more complex than first assumed. In the case of post-transition countries, we must not only ask how they came to decide that "democracy is the worst form of government" (this certainly was not the case at the outset of transition in many countries), but also under what conditions they would agree that it is better than other forms of government. From the perspective of ordinary citizens struggling to survive, is democracy really better than "all those other forms?" We can imagine a continuum of democratic disillusionment, stretching from *indifference to alternatives* on the benign end to *outright support of authoritarian government* on the malignant end. And yet we must recognize that even benign indifference born out of disillusionment with democracy is not so benign, for such sentiments provide fertile ground for demagogic politicians and their promises of a better life through order, stability, and a strong guiding hand. Thus, a major purpose of this dissertation is to extend the analysis beyond support for democracy to include empirical examination for authoritarian support among those in post-transition countries.

I have selected four post-Soviet countries as the focus of this research agenda: Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, and Latvia. These four countries shared a common authoritarian institutional starting point as republics of the Soviet Union. Furthermore, three of these cases – Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus – share a deeper common historical legacy as part of the Russian empire, as well as a closely related eastern Slavic culture. At the same time, certain domestic characteristics such as Ukraine's historical divide between the Austrian

and Russian empires, Latvia's large ethnic Russian population, and Belarus' weak sense of national identity make these useful cases for tracing the influence of historical legacies on contemporary political beliefs. Perhaps most importantly, these cases represent almost the entire spectrum of post-transition regime types, ranging from liberal democratic in Latvia to strongly authoritarian in Belarus. Between these poles sit weakly democratic Ukraine and the increasingly authoritarian Russia. This variation in regime type allows us to observe how popular support for democracy and authoritarianism develops under a wide range of political regimes, making my findings generalizable beyond formerly communist countries. The particular qualities that make these countries individually and collectively ideal for examination in this study will be discussed in greater detail throughout the dissertation.

At this point it is necessary to note that the scope of this inquiry is limited to regimes experiencing a significant political transition in which the collapse of an authoritarian regime results in – however temporarily – an opening of political competition. I avoid using the term “democratization” to characterize these states with its implication of progress towards democracy. Nonetheless, the universe of cases that we consider to have experienced “democratic transitions” and those that I characterize as being “post-transition” regimes largely overlap; my terminology explicitly recognizes that while the political order has been restructured to produce a new political regime with at least a minimal improvement in openness, further democratic development is by no means assured. A large percentage of the cases falling into this category are those of the post-communist world, and indeed the empirical evidence presented in this dissertation is drawn from several post-communist states. But the insights generated should extend beyond post-communist countries to a broader set of countries that have experienced significant political transitions following the collapse of an authoritarian regime. Why is it desirable to limit the scope of this study to countries that have experienced a significant political transition? I argue that it is more informative to study mass regime preferences in post-transition countries because it is precisely in these contexts that public opinion can matter for regime outcomes. In firmly entrenched and repressive dictatorships there is clearly an “oversupply” of authoritarianism. Simply put, mass preferences for democracy or authoritarianism are unlikely to affect the trajectories of

heavily repressive regimes.<sup>2</sup> But, as argued above, mass preferences for democracy and authoritarian do have important influences on a variety of political phenomena in democratic and hybrid regimes, as well as newly democratizing states.

### 1.1.1 Public Opinion and Post-Communism

Since the collapse of communism, numerous studies have examined public opinion in post-communist countries, seeking to explain a wide variety of politically relevant outcomes including voting behavior (Colton 2000; Fidrmuc 2000; Duch 2001; Tucker 2001; Mishler and Willerton 2003), support for political and market reforms (Duch 1993; Miller, Hesli and Reisinger 1994; Gibson 1996*a*; Brym 1996; Bahry 1999; Shulman 2005), regime support (Munro 2002), citizens' understanding of democracy (Miller, Hesli and Reisinger 1997), dynamics of civil society (Howard 2003), support for democracy (Reisinger et al. 1994; Evans and Whitefield 1995; Rose and Mishler 1996; Gibson 1996*b*; Waldron-Moore 1999; Kullberg and Zimmerman 1999; Dowley and Silver 2002), political culture (Hahn 1991), democratic and liberal values (Bahry, Boaz and Gordon 1997), and (occasionally) support for nondemocratic forms of government (Tucker and Seligson 2005; Rose, Mishler and Munro 2006).

My work builds upon these foundational works in important ways. Of those studies that explored economic determinants of regime preferences, many written in the 1990s, shortly after the collapse of communism, lacked the benefit of evidence from longer economic trends. My study presents a more complete analysis than was possible in the past with annual subnational economic data from 1990-2007. My study also extends the scope of the inquiry beyond single-case studies by adopting a comparative framework of multiple countries. Though much can be gained from single-country studies, the appeal of comparative work – comparing countries that shared vary similar initial conditions and which have followed remarkably divergent pathways since – is obvious.

This study also advances our understanding of public opinion in post-transition soci-

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<sup>2</sup>Obviously in some cases mass political preferences can make a significant difference to repressive regimes, though I will refer readers to the vast literature on revolutions for this, a subject that is outside the scope of this dissertation.

eties by utilizing empirical methods that were not available to earlier generations of scholars due to technical limitations. My empirical analyses employ methods to correct for the bias in standard errors that is inherent in multistage survey sampling designs, as well as the bias in coefficients that can occur if sampling weights are not used. I also address the potentially serious problem of missing data in survey responses. At best, missing data due to nonresponse leads to inefficiency as valuable (and costly) observations are eliminated due to missing values of the independent and dependent variables. Suddenly a sample size of 1,000 can be cut by a third or even worse if there are even moderate levels of missingness across a large set of independent variables. Valuable information in the non-missing data contained in observations subject to listwise deletion is wasted and estimate errors are increased by virtue of the smaller sample size. Even more troubling is the potential bias that arises from listwise deletion of missing data if missingness of variables is not random (King et al. 2001; King and Honaker 2009). These methods, as well as an explanation of the survey sample design and analysis are discussed in greater detail in the data and methods appendix, which begins on page 320.

In the remainder of this chapter I present a theory of regime preferences that takes a multi-causal approach, identifying different layers of factors that interact with each other to produce often surprising outcomes for mass regime preferences. This theory explains how national identity, state-driven political socialization, and post-transition economic trauma and democratization interact to shape mass regime preferences in post-transition societies. More nuanced theoretical development, as well as a review of the relevant literatures will take place at the beginnings of chapters 2, 4, and 5 according to the substantive focus of each chapter. The purpose of the remainder of the following section is to present a broad overview of the theory as a whole.

## 1.2 A Dynamic Theory of Democratic and Authoritarian Support

I argue that temporal and spatial variation in support for democracy and authoritarianism in the post-Soviet states is a function of three layers of influence that interact to shape an individual's beliefs about and preferences for democratic and authoritarian rule. The

first layer can be considered one of political culture: deep beliefs about the desirability of democracy, embedded in the national identities of certain nationalities can be an important source of mass democratic support. The second layer also falls within the realm of political culture: political socialization that takes place under the control of the state through the education system can also influence what individuals believe about the value of democracy and authoritarianism. These two cultural layers of political cultural influence interact in important ways, with deeper historical predispositions for democratic support often interfering with state-led efforts at political indoctrination. The final layer of influence is a more contemporary one. As individuals gain first hand experience with democracy during the post-transition period, their preferences for democracy and authoritarianism are strongly influenced by the economic conditions under which they first experience democracy, often producing surprising revisions of their regime preferences as they reevaluate the desirability of living under a democratic regime. I will explore each layer of influence in greater detail below, with a more complete development of each theoretical framework taking place in chapters 2, 4, and 5.

### 1.2.1 National Identity and Regime Preferences

The cultural content of national identity<sup>3</sup> – what it means to be a member of the nation – can be an important locus of political culture and values. If certain political characteristics, such as a suitability for democracy or love of freedom, become salient attributes of political and national identity for a national population, they can serve as a base for democratic support among that population. But how does a self-conception of the nation as fundamentally democratic come to be a salient attribute of a given nation’s identity? While there are many possible mechanisms, I argue that one mechanism is key among the former Soviet states: foreign occupation and annexation by the Soviet empire.

At first glance it may seem counterintuitive to argue that occupation by an authori-

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<sup>3</sup>Here I utilize the definition of national identity put forward by Smith (1994a, 381), who writes that national identity consists of “[1] myths and memories of common ancestry and history of the cultural unit of population... [2] the formation of a shared public culture based on an indigenous resource (language, religion, etc)... [3] the delimitation of a compact historic territory, or homeland.” Also see Smith (1992).



tarian state could produce a democratic culture. But in order to understand this paradox, we must go farther back in time to the rise of nationalism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As Darden (2009) has persuasively argued, populations that experience nationalization for the first time become remarkably loyal to the newly awakened nation. Furthermore, these identities are durable and resistant to re-nationalization later: once peasants are turned into Frenchmen (Weber 1976), it is nearly impossible to convince them that they are Germans later on. Darden places the key moment of national identification at the point where a population reaches above 50 percent literacy, with a majority of the population therefore able to join the “imagined community” that is bonded by the printed word (Anderson 1983). And so, the timing mass schooling of a population – schooling which gives them literacy *and* the content of national identity – becomes central to understanding nationalism. Equally important is the nationalizing state that seeks to make loyal citizens out of peasants: whether one is nationalized by the French state or the German has deep, long-lasting consequences.

My theory picks up where populations that have already developed these durable national identities come under foreign occupation by an outside hegemonic power. Under the yoke of occupation and cultural assimilation policies, occupied nationalities can build metaphorical boundaries between themselves and the occupier. By emphasizing the cultural differences between “us” (the occupied) and “them” (the occupier), occupied nations highlight the illegitimacy of the foreign occupation. Furthermore, new cultural boundaries can be established, essentially adding new attributes to a nation’s collective identity that further widen the gap between “us” and “them.” Therein lies the answer to the paradox: when a nation with a well developed national identity comes under foreign occupation by an authoritarian power, it can come to define itself as fundamentally democratic, in contrast to the occupier. “We” are democratic, civilized, and western; “they” are authoritarian, barbaric, and eastern. Thus, democraticness becomes ingrained in the cultural content of what it means to be part of the nation. It becomes part of the national identity and reflects itself in higher popular support for democracy among the occupied populations.<sup>4</sup> This predis-

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<sup>4</sup>As the discussion below will highlight, this high support is likely only insofar as populations have

Table 1.1: National ID and predicted regime preferences

Strong national identity/perception of occupation?	Predicted democratic support	Predicted authoritarian support
Yes	High	Low
No	Low	High

position for democratic support is transferred, I argue, across generations primarily within families, particularly in authoritarian environments that see independent nationalism as a threat.

Where this strong national identity does not exist – for example, in parts of the empire that have long been subject to the center’s rule or where other structural conditions have delayed the onset of national identification – such a dichotomization between occupied and occupier will fail to develop. The result is that these populations, while not necessarily predisposed to authoritarian rule, nonetheless lack the self-ascription of a democratic political culture that can buoy democratic support. Thus, I argue that a nation’s history of national identity formation and development is an important explanatory factor in understanding mass preferences for democracy and authoritarianism. These themes will be explored in detail throughout chapters 2 and 3.

## 1.2.2 The State Pushes Back: Authoritarian Political Socialization

Of course, parents, grandparents, and nationalists are not the only parties with an interest in shaping the political values of the population. The state also has strong incentives to develop a loyal population, as noted above. This holds not only for the “golden age” of nationalism in the late nineteenth century but throughout the modern era as well. The authoritarian empire described above will also attempt to control the political socialization of its citizens using the very same tool that nationalizing states used: the education system.

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minimal first-hand experience with democracy. Once democratization occurs and populations experience it for themselves, high expectations for democracy that go unmet can produce widespread disillusionment with democracy.

Table 1.2: Generation effects and predicted regime preferences

Strong national identity/perception of occupation?	Predicted structure of generational effects on regime preferences
Yes	Generational differences absent or non-linear
No	Generational differences present and linear: oldest generations most authoritarian, youngest generations most democratic

This is particularly true for states that derive their legitimacy from ideological justifications, wherein the mass acceptance of the ideology is essential for the regime's power.

This suggests that the ideological content and climate under which individuals are socialized through schooling can have an important and long-lasting influence on an individual's political values and regime preferences. If this is true – that early state-led political socialization can leave a lasting mark on political beliefs – then we should observe evidence of distinct political generations that reflect changes in ideological climate. All else equal, an individual who was socialized under a stridently anti-democratic program should show lower democratic support than someone socialized in a more benign climate.

But all else is not equal. Recall the two populations that were described above. The population with a strong national identity will likely be resistant to state-led political socialization as part of the broader passive resistance to foreign rule. Thus, we should actually see less evidence of the political generational effects that I describe above among these populations. Populations with weaker national identities, on the other hand, should be more amenable to state efforts of political socialization and should therefore display stronger evidence of political generational effects. In the Soviet Union, the gradual decline of ideological orthodoxy (which was hostile to western liberal democracy) should produce a distinct linear pattern in which there are noticeable differences between generations, with the oldest generation (socialized during the Stalin era) being the most pro-authoritarian and younger generations being successively more pro-democratic. This pattern should be present in areas with weak national identities but absent in areas where strong national

identities developed. These generational effect and the interaction of state-led political socialization and national identity are the subject of chapter 4.

### 1.2.3 A Brief Digression on Information

The theoretical explanation I put forward here regarding democratic support is essentially one of information. Readers will notice two facts about the influences that I have described above. First, both of these mechanisms convey second-hand information about the value and desirability of democracy. Populations with a long history of living under authoritarianism do not themselves have first-hand experience with democracy; even where a democratic episode may be part of a population's history, the farther it recedes into history the fewer people have first-hand experience with democracy. Thus, the desirability and value of democracy that is embedded in the political cultures of certain nations under the conditions that I elaborated above is based on an abstract idealization, not actual experience. Similarly, the information that a state seeks to pass on to its citizens about democracy – information that may be hostile to democracy – is also coming from a “secondary source,” not primary experience.

The second fact that the astute reader will note is that both political cultural influences that I've described above explain the forces shaping mass regime preferences of populations *under authoritarian rule*. In other words, these are the factors that shape preferences for democracy and authoritarianism before transition and before the population gains primary experience with democracy. These two facts – the secondary nature of information about the value of democracy and the formation of democratic and authoritarian support prior to democratization – have important implications for the stability of regime preferences following regime transitions in which citizens gain primary experience with democracy for the first time. We turn to this theme next.

### 1.2.4 Regime Preferences After Transition

A regime transition that involves some degree of democratization and liberalization gives citizens the opportunity to experience democracy first-hand for the first time in their

lives. Because their existing priors about the desirability of democracy are based on second-hand information at the beginning of the transition period, I argue that those priors should be subject to significant revision when confronted with first-hand experience that counters one's priors. In other words, individuals will give greater weight to their first-hand experiences in the post-transition period than to their culturally conditioned priors formed prior to the onset of democratization.

Thus, those early experiences under democratization will have a major impact on an individual's preferences for democracy and authoritarianism. If one's priors are confirmed – that life really is better under democracy than it was under authoritarianism, for example – then we should expect to see continued support for democracy among the populations that had the highest cultural predisposition for democratic support. Among those populations that lack the predisposition for democratic support, a higher quality of life under democracy would likely cause them to revise upwards their assessment of democracy, though perhaps slowly due to lingering skepticism.

Table 1.3: Early economic collapse and predicted regime preferences

Severity of post-transition economic collapse	Predicted democratic support	Predicted authoritarian support
Severe	Low	High
Mild	High	Low

But what if the first experience with democracy is a negative one? What if one is significantly worse off under democracy than under the pre-transition authoritarian regime? I argue that simultaneous economic collapse and democratization can cause individuals to significantly revise their assessments of democracy downwards, especially among those populations that had the highest expectations for democracy prior to transition. Met with powerful, persuasive evidence in the midst of economic chaos and trauma that life is not better under democracy, individuals will update their beliefs to reflect a new skepticism toward democracy.

This suggests that the scope and scale of the initial economic collapse under democratization should have a major impact on post-transition preferences for democracy. I also argue that these effects of a traumatic economic collapse should be particularly durable and long lasting: once individuals are “shocked” into a new equilibrium regarding their regime preferences, those beliefs become resistant to further revision for cognitive reasons that are explored in greater depth in chapter 5. My theory also argues that once this cognitive framework associating democracy with chaos and disorder is set, further exposure to and experience with democracy can make populations more critical as they selectively interpret new information that confirms their now-solidified posteriors.

Table 1.4: Democratic experience and predicted regime preferences

Level of democratic experience, given an economic collapse	Predicted democratic support	Predicted authoritarian support
High	Low	High
Low	High	Low

The paradoxical outcome of these dynamics is that support for democracy can plummet and support for authoritarianism can rise in the very populations that expressed the highest support for democracy prior to transition as they are shocked into a powerful cognitive equilibrium associating democracy with disorder in the post-transition period. Additional experience with democracy can serve to confirm democratic skepticism, resulting in populations that become more critical of democracy the more they are exposed to it. By contrast, support for democracy can remain stable and even increase among the populations that have less exposure to and experience with democracy. In other words, populations with little exposure to the disorder that is perhaps inherent in democracy are less likely to develop critical attitudes about democracy in the post-transition period. These dynamics are the focus of chapter 5.

### 1.2.5 Applying the Theory to Cases

The remainder of this dissertation consists of a series of empirical tests of the theoretical arguments outlined above, primarily through the use of public opinion surveys and qualitative interviews conducted in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Latvia. Here I provide a brief preview of how my theory of regime preferences operates when applied to the cases under consideration.

#### National identity and regime preferences in the former Soviet Union

The theory I propose argues that communities that experience nationalization prior to the inclusion in or occupation by an external hegemonic power should engage in identity-based boundary building as a way to differentiate and delegitimize the external nation's rule. In the cases at hand, the hegemon is the Russian and Soviet empires, which spent most of their histories expanding across Eurasia, bringing Russian rule over a vast number of non-Russian peoples. Russian rule was established in many areas *prior* to the nationalization of many eventual national groups. In such cases the Russian (and later Soviet) regimes played a significant role in determining the content of non-Russian national identities, emphasizing fraternity and similarity to the Russian nation. This was not the case in areas where populations that were highly literate and in whom strong national identities had already crystallized were later brought under Russian/Soviet rule. These areas – primarily the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, as well as the portion of Hapsburg-ruled western Ukraine known as Galicia. In these areas, elites and masses alike perceived incorporation into the empire as Russian occupation. The resistance that these populations mounted against Moscow's rule was vigorous, especially in the early years following WWII. Partisan nationalists continued to fight the Soviets for several years after the end of the war. Though armed resistance was eventually stamped out, passive resistance continued, largely through the preservation and propagation of national identity, its symbols, attributes, and history. Parents taught children about the pre-Soviet histories of their people, instilling in them pride for the nation and distrust of the foreigners who occupied their countries. Passed through generations, the boundaries between “us” and “them”

were drawn and reinforced. Latvians and Galician Ukrainians were not like the occupiers from the East; they were civilized, European, and *democratic* nations. These countries could point to periods in their history, however brief, when their countries had been under democratic rule, a crucial seed from which the nation's democratic myth could grow. This cultural self-conception as a democratic nation meant that support for democracy was high in 1991 at the beginning of the transition period.

By contrast, the peoples of eastern Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia either did not have strongly developed national identities (Belarus, Ukraine) or were themselves the center against which the periphery defined itself (Russia). In these areas, democratic culture was never a part of these people's historical legacy. Recall Nicholas I's proclamation that the ideological doctrine of the Russian empire was based on "Orthodoxy, autocracy, and nationality." Thus, the seeds of a democratic myth were lacking for these nations. Belarusians and Ukrainians were considered to be "white Russians" and "little Russians" respectively, offshoots of the culturally and linguistically similar Russian nation. These national identities, combined with long incorporation into the greater Russian empire, meant that Ukrainians and Belarusians failed to define their nations in dialectical terms against the Russian nation as was done in the Baltics and western Ukraine.

These dynamics suggest that at the end of the Soviet period and the beginning of the transition period, we should observe the highest support for democracy and the lowest support for authoritarianism among Latvians and residents of Ukrainian Galicia. Conversely, we should see lower support for democracy and higher support for authoritarianism among the populations of Russia, Belarus, and eastern Ukraine.

#### State socialization, generations, and regime preferences

If the hypotheses about state-led political socialization through the Soviet educational system are correct, we should find Soviet political values – collectivism, social welfare, and mistrust of democratic government – to be most deeply entrenched among people who had the greatest exposure to the Soviet ideological message. Since the regime's ideological commitment became increasingly diluted over time we expect to see the greatest



hostility to democracy among the oldest generations. Younger generations will be increasingly supportive of democracy and less supportive of authoritarian government. This is the pattern we expect to find among Russians, Belarusians, and eastern Ukrainians. However, we should observe different dynamics in the liberal-nationalist populations of Latvia and Ukrainian Galicia, where nationalism and anti-Soviet sentiments should hinder the penetration of Soviet indoctrination about democracy. This suggests that we should observe a lack of significant differences between generations in these areas, as changes in the ideological climate in Moscow made little difference to peripheral populations resisting the entire Soviet socialization project.

Case-specific predictions for regime support before transition are summarized in table 1.5.

#### Regime preferences, economic collapse, and democratic experience after transition

In general, my predictions about levels of support for democracy in the cases under consideration should be clear: the highest support for democracy immediately following the collapse of the Soviet Union should be found in Latvia and western Ukraine, with markedly lower levels of support in Russia, Belarus, and eastern Ukraine. Regime preferences should also be a function of political generation, with older generations more supportive of authoritarian rule and Soviet political values, except in the Baltics and Galicia, where the oldest generation is expected to be resistant to Soviet socialization. What happens, then, when we introduce the chaos of the dual economic and political transition of the 1990s?

Conventional wisdom might suggest that these patterns of democratic support should endure in the years and decades following the collapse of the Soviet Union, with the highest levels of support for democracy appearing in the most democratic states – Latvia and Ukraine – and, conversely, the highest levels of support for authoritarianism in Russia and especially Belarus, the most authoritarian of the cases studied here. One might expect democratic values embedded in national identity to provide a “buffer” that would preserve democratic support among these nations in the face of economic collapse. Yet the theory I’ve presented here predicts a different outcome entirely.

Table 1.5: Empirical Cases - Regime Preferences Before Transition

Case	Historical treatment	Strong national ID?	Generation effects?	Predicted democratic support	Predicted authoritarian support
Latvia	National awakening in mid-late 19th century with autonomy in Russian empire. Independent from 1918-1940. Occupied by USSR in 1940.	Yes	Absent or non-linear	High	Low
Galicia (Western Ukraine)	Ukrainian national awakening in mid-late 19th century under Austro-Hungarian empire with Vienna's support. Part of interwar Poland. Occupied by USSR in 1940	Yes	Absent or non-linear	High	Low
Eastern Ukraine	Fully incorporated into Russian empire by end of 18th century. Nationalized by Russians/Soviets	No	Present and linear	Low	High
Belarus	Fully incorporated into Russian empire by end of 18th century. Western Belarus part of interwar Poland. Nationalized by Russians/Soviets.	No	Present and linear	Low	High
Russia	Autocratic imperial center until 1991.	No	Present and linear	Low	High

Each of the Soviet successor states experienced a disastrous economic contraction following the end of communist rule in 1991. The magnitude, speed, and duration of the post-Soviet economic collapse varied among the countries. Where that economic collapse was more severe (particularly in Ukraine and Russia), I expect the experience to have depressed democratic support compared to areas that experienced a milder collapse. These variations will be explored as important explanatory variables, but for the moment it is sufficient to note that every country experienced a traumatic economic collapse during the post-Soviet political transition. Thus, none of the countries under consideration were immune to the disillusionment that arose as a result of simultaneous economic collapse and democratic reforms.

It is this simultaneity of economic collapse and political liberalization that complicates the picture and our predictions. As I have argued, the dual experience of economic collapse and democratic reforms established among post-Soviet citizens a strong association between democracy and disorder. This initial cognitive frame was durable and resistant to updating after the initial shock. The paradoxical result, I argue, was that in the ensuing years individuals who had greater exposure to democracy became more critical of democracy than individuals who had less experience with democracy. Thus, greater democratic experience actually *depressed* democratic support among the people of Latvia and Ukraine, in contrast to citizens of Russia and Belarus who had less experience with democracy in the post-Soviet decades.

The effects of economic collapse and democratic experience, which are sometimes complementary and sometimes competing will be explored in greater detail in chapter 5. In that chapter I will also untangle the intricacies of the interactions of these variables. In the meantime, the basic post-transition characteristics and predictions for the cases under consideration are summarized in table 1.6.

### 1.2.6 Chapter 1 Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that the traditional competing explanations for popular support for democracy and dictatorship – economics and political culture – should not be

Table 1.6: Empirical Cases - Regime Preferences After Transition

Case	Severity of economic collapse	Level of democratic experience	Predicted democratic support	Predicted authoritarian support
Latvia	Mild	High	Med/Low	Med/High
Ukraine	Severe	Med/High	Low	High
Belarus	Moderate	Low	High	Low
Russia	Severe	Med/Low	Medium	Medium

viewed as mutually exclusive theories. Rather, I have argued that both economic factors and cultural characteristics can be combined into a dynamic model of regime preferences. But we must critically assess where democratic or authoritarian culture comes from and how it is transmitted. I have argued that processes of national identity formation and interaction can be an important means of embedding democratic political values in the self-conceptions of certain nations. These identities and political values are transmitted through familial and informal channels, particularly when transmission must take place in environments hostile to peripheral nationalism. At the same time, authoritarian states use their own tools to shape the political beliefs and values of their citizens, utilizing schools and the media to create citizens who share the regime's values and serve its interests. Thus, the state-driven political socialization of citizens – and the different eras and environments under which they are socialized – is important for our understanding of their political preference development.

These pre-transition regime preferences interact in surprising ways with conditions of economic collapse following the onset of transition. It is those who have the highest hopes and the highest expectations that will be the most disappointed when democracy fails to deliver the better life that they have always dreamed of. For people who expected little of democracy and experienced even less, there was little first-hand knowledge to deflate

expectations and create cynics. Though the grass may be greener on the other side for these populations, it may turn out to be a mirage in the desert that disappears when times are tough, leaving little but a handful of sand in its place.

The remainder of this dissertation develops these theoretical frameworks in greater detail and presents empirical evidence in support of my theory. It proceeds as follows: chapter 2 theorizes the link between national identity and democratic culture, as well as outlines the historical development of nationalism in Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, and Latvia. Chapter 3 presents qualitative interviews and quantitative survey data to explore the link between national identity and regime preferences. Chapter 4 investigates the role of state-led political socialization in shaping political preferences across generations, and chapter 5 discusses the role of post-transition economics and democratic experience in influencing popular support for democracy and authoritarianism. Chapter 6 explores the implications of my findings and concludes.

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### National Identity and Regime Preferences I: Theory and History

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As the Soviet Union crumbled under the weight of its moribund economic system in the late 1980s and early 1990s, a process that was significantly accelerated by the mobilization of nationalist movements (Beissinger 2002), why were some parts of the empire emphatic in their demands for greater democratization and liberalization while others were content to continue under the authoritarian Soviet system that had long ruled over them? To be sure, the distribution of democratic support in the Soviet Union was not random, with the Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania taking the lead in pushing for greater political liberalization.

It is no coincidence that these Soviet territories – territories that were annexed by the Soviet Union during the Second World War and that always considered themselves to be occupied nations – were the epicenter of both nationalist and democratic movements in the Soviet Union. For nations that had long chafed under Moscow’s “foreign” rule, democratization was a way to assert greater national sovereignty. But perhaps more importantly, democracy was a link to the past and to the desired future for these territories. For wrapped in the idea of democracy were memories of the independent interwar Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian republics as well as hopes for one day returning to the democratic Euro-

pean fold from which these nations were torn by the Soviet occupation. Thus, the issues of nationalism and democratic support were closely intertwined for the Baltic nationalities, as well as for the Ukrainians of Galicia, who also thought of themselves as an occupied people.

In this chapter I will develop a theory that links processes of national identity formation and development to democratic and authoritarian support. I will also present the general contours of national identity development in the four countries that are part of this study. By tracing these historical processes we will arrive at a better understanding of the forces that shaped support for democracy and authoritarianism among these populations during the Soviet era. In the next chapter I will use survey data to test the theory and make the case that the foundations laid by nationalism in the pre-Soviet and Soviet era continue to influence regime preferences to this day.

## 2.1 Political Culture and Regime Preferences

A logical place to begin theorizing the link between national identity and democratic support is the literature on political culture. This literature contains a wide range of work that develops theories of how cultural values and characteristics lead individuals to support democracy. Some works identify civic culture and the tolerance, trust, and post-materialist values that result as central to the emergence of democratic support (Verba and Almond 1963; Inglehart 1988, 2003; Putnam 1993; Diamond 1994; Kunioka and Woller 1999). While these characteristics are no doubt important to the smooth functioning of a democracy, it is unclear the degree to which such things are truly cultural attributes versus learned skills and behaviors that grease the democratic wheels. It is difficult to determine whether the presence of tolerance, trust, and the like *cause* mass preferences for democracy or are *caused by* those preferences. The approach I take assumes the latter, suggesting that we turn to other realms in order to explain the connection between political culture and support for democracy in post-transition societies.

A significant strand of the literature argues that democratic (or authoritarian) values are more deeply embedded in particular national cultures (Park and Shin 2006; Kuzio 2001; Eke and Kuzio 2000; Shulman 2005; Bunce 1999, 2003). These sorts of political

culture explanations also have a long lineage in literature written about formerly communist countries, with many identifying strands of authoritarianism in Russian and Soviet culture (Inkeles and Bauer 1959; Tucker 1971; Pipes 1974; White 1979; Almond 1983).<sup>1</sup> What many studies linking national culture to support for democracy and authoritarianism lack, however, is a critical discussion of how the relevant democratic or authoritarian values emerge, evolve, and are transferred. The prevalence of single-country studies also prevents the development of a more generalized theory of national culture and regime preferences, leaving us with platitudes about Russia's need for a strong Tsar, for example.

## 2.2 National Identity and Political Culture

Bunce (1999, 2003) also notes that democratization has been most successful in post-communist countries (the Baltics and Slovenia in particular) where liberal ideology was fused with national independence movements. She provides a brief explanation of how such a fusion of nationalism and liberalism came about but does not delve into the precise mechanisms involved. In this section I develop a more complete theory of how liberal and democratic values can become embedded in the cultural content of certain nationalities that have little or no previous experience with democratic politics.

How do members of a nation come to view themselves as a “democratic” people when they do not have a recent legacy of democracy? How do they do so when they do not have a recent legacy of democracy or only have a brief and remote historical experience with democracy? To answer this question it is necessary to first lay some conceptual groundwork. When we talk about the values and beliefs – political or otherwise – that make up the “cultural content” of a given nation, we are in essence talking about national identity. I utilize the definition of national identity put forward by Smith (1994*a*, 381), who writes that national identity consists of “[1] myths and memories of common ancestry and history of the cultural unit of population. . . [2] the formation of a shared public culture based on an indigenous resource (language, religion, etc). . . [3] the delimitation of a compact

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<sup>1</sup>For an alternate view, see Hahn (1991).



historic territory, or homeland.”<sup>2</sup> It is these myths, historical memories, public culture, and ties to a historic homeland that constitute national identity and define what it means to be a member of a nation.

While many instruments of the modern state have been tied to the development of nationalism, education has been recognized to be the most clear and direct state-controlled mechanism through which national identities are transferred among citizens (Gellner 1983). As Darden and Grzymala-Busse (2006) argue, “schooling provides the one clear channel for the *deliberate and systematic* inculcation of a set of values.” But at what point can we say that a given population has been nationalized collectively and has come to internalize the attributes of a given national identity? Again, Darden and Grzymala-Busse provide a compelling answer: the point at which a community shifts from an oral to literate mass culture<sup>3</sup> through the first round of mass schooling is the key developmental moment for the nationalization of populations. They argue that the national ideas instilled in a population during this time are remarkably durable as they are transferred across subsequent generations. At the same time, they note that once a population has become nationalized through mass literacy, it becomes extraordinarily difficult to re-nationalize them, especially by an external nationalizing entity. In short, once nationality has been engraved into the hearts and minds of the people, it is nearly impossible to clear and rewrite the slate, turning Frenchmen back into peasants to say nothing of turning them into Germans (Darden 2009).

Thus, we can imagine that if democratic values were part of the initial cultural content into which pre-national populations were socialized, such values would likely endure across time in those populations. Yet the era in which European populations achieved the mass literacy required for nationalization (the mid to late nineteenth century) can hardly be considered a golden age of democratic ideology. Indeed, most of these populations gained national consciousness under monarchies and other autocratic regimes. If this is the case, how do we explain how democratic political values became embedded in some national identities? Equally important, how do we explain how these values failed to become

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<sup>2</sup>Also see Smith (1992).

<sup>3</sup>This is operationalized as the point at which literacy rates exceed 50 percent of the population

embedded in other national identities?

The answer lies in the interaction among nations and their identities. Even if a population has been nationalized it becomes extraordinarily difficult to drastically reshape this identity into a new nationality (Darden 2009). But this does not mean that states across the ages have not tried. Hechter (2000) identifies several different types of nationalism, the most crucial of which is what he terms *state-building nationalism*. State-building nationalism “is the nationalism that is embodied in the attempt to assimilate or incorporate culturally distinctive territories in a given state. It is the result of the conscious efforts of central rulers to make a multicultural population culturally homogenous”(Hechter 2000, 15). State-building nationalism can engender *peripheral nationalism*, which “seeks to bring about national self-determination by separating the nation from its host state”(Hechter 2000, 70). But beyond the juridical separation of peripheral nations from the host (or occupying) state, I argue that occupied nations engage in the delineation of identities that results in the cultural separation of the nation from its host. Thus, the interactions of two nations, especially when one rules over another, can increase the salience of national identity and widen the perceived differences between two nations. For, as Ernest Gellner wrote, the contrast between Megalomanians and the Ruritarians “taught [the Ruritarians] to be aware of their culture and to love it”

An attempt by one nation to impose its culture on another, or even simply to impose its political control over a nation can result in the reification of identity boundaries. The occupied nationality seeks to differentiate itself from the occupying nationality for the sake of delegitimizing the latter’s rule. As Barth argued, the differentiation between “us” and “them” is central in delineating not only the boundaries between groups but also the cultural content that they encircle: “A dichotomization of others as strangers, as members of another ethnic group, implies a recognition of limitations on shared understandings, differences in criteria for judgement of value and performance, and a restriction of interaction to sectors of assumed common understanding and mutual interest”(Barth 1969, 15). With strong antagonisms between occupied and occupier, little room is left for common understanding, and the occupied nation increasingly views itself as irreconcilably different from

its occupiers.

Thus, we have uncovered a mechanism by which national identities can develop new attributes that delineate the cultural boundaries of the nation. Hegemonic rule over another nationality can widen the identity gap in order to delegitimize the occupier's rule. I argue that it is this interaction in which nations distinguish "the self" from "the other" that can lead to the incorporation of democratic values into the pantheon of national attributes. Thus, the members of an occupied nation can come to believe in themselves as a fundamentally democratic, liberal, or civilized nation, in contrast to their characterization of "the other" as authoritarian, illiberal, and barbaric. The contrast and dichotomization of the two groups, in which "we" are liberal and civilized while "they" are illiberal and barbaric, can over time solidify the self-conception of the occupied nation as fundamentally democratic.

Of course, it should not be assumed that any nation that is subject to occupation will come to define itself as democratic. In dialectical fashion, the composition of the self also depends on the composition of the other. Thus, the attributes that the occupied nation chooses to highlight as points of difference are shaped by what are seen as the dominant attributes of the occupier. Thus, "European" would only be a salient dichotomization if the occupier can be portrayed as "asiatic." There may also be multiple "others" whose cultural traditions are attractive to the occupied nation. The basis for such an attraction may be historical experience or other shared cultural similarities such as religion, language, or race. Thus, when the occupied nation is repelled by the occupier, it may redefine its identity as similar to another more desirable "other." A Central European nation might emphasize its fundamental historical roots as a European nation (and everything it means to be European, including in the post-WWII era, democratic) in the face of Soviet occupation. An Iraqi or Afghan nation might distinguish itself from its occupiers in religious terms. Thus, the attributes that the nation takes on in opposition to hegemonic control are derived from three sources: from within its own cultural and historical traditions; in contradistinction to the occupying nation; and from the realm of relevant but friendly "others" to which the nation feels a cultural affinity.

That this contentious interaction of national identities can result in the emergence and development of new categories of identity attributes has been recognized by some scholars writing about post-transition societies. While we will return to the historical development of national identity in former Soviet states later in this chapter, for the moment I will simply present a particularly relevant example to illustrate the argument:

*“Myths of national character and myths of the other are therefore a vital means of delineating a separate past and providing boundary markers to distinguish the eponymous nation from its neighbors. The three most common character myths in... [Ukrainian] historiography are that their [nation is] democratic, demotic, and European... It is argued that natural intercourse with (the rest of) Europe was rudely and unnaturally severed by Russian occupation. [Ukrainiophiles] therefore see themselves at the dawn of the twenty-first century as returning to Europe and to their associated democratic traditions. These myths also constitute boundary markers to distinguish Ukrainians... from Russians, the main traditional other, who are portrayed as natural despots and imperialists”*(Smith 1998, 25-26).

This story shows that timing is everything. Nations that have reached the required levels of literacy and developed strong national identities *prior* to coming under occupation will define themselves in contrast to what they see as the native traits of the occupier. Nations that have yet to develop literacy and well-established national identities at the time of occupation will be much more malleable in the face of the occupier’s assimilation. Two factors are critical to our explanation of why some peoples embrace liberalism and democratic values as central components of their national identity: 1) the period of the widespread nationalization of the population<sup>4</sup> and 2) the period when an area is occupied by an external state. If 1 precedes 2, we expect resistance and boundary building. If 2 precedes 1, we expect a weaker emphasis on national differences, including differences between political values.

Regardless of the content of a national identity – democratic, authoritarian, “western”, “eastern,” etc. – we must give some attention to how that identity is cultivated and propagated among members of the nation once the idea of nationhood has salient meaning for a significant portion of the population. In other words, we wish to know how people

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<sup>4</sup>Following Darden and Grzymala-Busse this is proxied by the point at which literacy rates exceed 50 percent of a population

come to identify themselves as members of the French, Russian, German, or Ukrainian nations, taking on both the label and the meaning behind that label. On a micro level, this amounts to asking how individuals - children and youth in particular - become aware of their national identity and its contours.

As noted, mass schooling has long been recognized as an important tool for the nationalization of populations. But what if (to continue using Gellner's imaginary nations) the people of Ruritania are ruled from afar by the empire of Megalomania, an empire which has little interest in supporting an independent Ruritanian national identity through its education system? What if the propagation of national identity is prevented from taking place through the usual public channels of schools, the military, and other public institutions?<sup>5</sup> It is here that families become central to the transmission of national identity and the cultural attributes embedded within that identity.<sup>6</sup> Absent public institutions to carry out the nationalization of individuals, these functions will be continued within families and other informal networks that seek to preserve their collective identity in the face of external efforts to minimize the salience of national identity or modify its meaning.

This argument follows the direction of recent advances in the study of political socialization. As Sapiro notes, "learning why the founding of the nation was good, who caused the war or suffering, what stories best represent who we are... are all important elements of political socialization, especially because they help to weave the appropriate emotional substance into political understanding and response"(Sapiro 2004). While the field of political socialization has gone in and out of style, its recent renaissance carries on common themes from earlier generations of theorists while seeking to improve many of the flaws persistent in early socialization research (Sapiro 2004; Niemi and Hepburn 1995). In particular, many works have again recognized the importance of parents and family in transferring political knowledge, beliefs, and values across generations (Jennings and Niemi 1981; Westholm 1999; McDevitt and Chaffee 2002; Achen 2002). Drawing from four waves

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<sup>5</sup>It is obvious that here we have in mind the Russian and Soviet empires, both of which maintained tight control over the development of nationalism among the various peoples scattered across their vast territory.

<sup>6</sup>Also see Darden (2009) for further treatment of national identity development and transmission through families.

of panel data across three generations of Americans, Jennings writes, “Early acquisition of parental attributes has lifelong consequences, especially for basic attitudes concerning the political parties (party identification and vote choice) and religion (prayer in the school, view of the Bible), as well as in level of political knowledge”(Jennings, Stoker and Bowers 2001, 20-21). It is reasonable to suppose that preferences for regime types might display dynamics similar to those for party preferences, while national identity tends to approach the depth and stickiness of religion. Hence, it is plausible that these political values, like those of party identification and religious beliefs, will be greatly shaped by parental influence.

### 2.2.1 Theoretical Summary

To summarize the theoretical argument, I assert that regime preferences are built into the self-conceptions of certain nations and reflect the historical legacy of foreign occupation in the post-Soviet space. When authoritarian countries occupy populations with well-established national identities, the occupied nations can come to define themselves as a democratic “us” in opposition to an authoritarian “them.” These national identities and the political values contained within are transmitted primarily through families as parents teach their children about the nation. Empirically, I expect these dynamics of nationalism and democratic self-conception to be strongest in the Baltic countries and in the western Ukrainian region of Galicia because of their historical legacies of national identity formation and Soviet occupation. By contrast, the legacy of weak national identity in Belarus should have prevented the cultural boundaries that would dichotomize Belarusian and Russian identities. As a result, I do not expect to find strong evidence of a democratic national self-conception among Belarusians.

I will explore and test these empirical expectations in the next chapter. In the meantime, our attention turns now to a more detailed discussion of the historical legacies of national identity formation and development in the peripheral parts of the Russian and Soviet empires that are central to the present inquiry: Latvia, Ukraine, and Belarus.

## 2.3 Historical Development of National Identity in the Post-Soviet States

In the sections that follow, I will provide a brief historical account of the development of nationalism and national identity in Latvia, Ukraine, and Belarus, paying particular attention to the conditions that have infused these national identities with particular understandings of themselves and “the other,” Russia. This discussion will also include a brief history of nationalities policy in the Russian empire and the Soviet Union. While it is impossible to provide a complete history of nationalism, national awakenings, and broader national development in the limited space available, this section is intended to provide a sufficient - if limited - basis for understanding the national identity dynamics in each country that shape political beliefs to this day.

### 2.3.1 Empire and Identity: Russian and Soviet Nationalities Policy

It may seem odd at first glance that a work dealing with the confluence of national identity and political values in the former Soviet Union should have relatively little to say about nationalism and national identity of the largest nation in the post-Soviet space, the Russian nation. However, as the theoretical discussion above makes clear, the story I seek to tell is one of reaction: how did the peripheral nations of the Russian and later Soviet empire, nations that had different levels of national identification at the time of their incorporation into the empire, react to the imposition of Russian rule, language, and culture on their people? More specifically, one of the broader purposes of this work is to examine how the imposition of foreign rule or occupation on nations with strongly developed national identities leads to a nationalist reaction that seeks to increase the cultural distance between occupied and occupier, including along political dimensions: *we* have a democratic culture, history, and destiny; *they* do not. And so, the primary concern is how “our” national identity (that is, the identity of the Latvian, Ukrainian, and Belarusian nations) developed (or failed to develop) in opposition to “their” (Russian) imposition of political and cultural domination.

This suggests that what is warranted is less an examination of Russian nationalism *per se* and more an examination of the nationalities policies of the Russian imperial and



Figure 2.1: Map of the European post-Soviet States. Source: (CIA 1995)



Soviet governments that were applied throughout the peripheral territories under their control. What was it that Petersburg and later Moscow did to provoke such a reaction among certain nationalities within their imperial borders? Of course, the ebb and flow of Russian nationalism played a role in determining the policies pursued by the center, and will thus enter the story in certain places. But the emergence, evolution, and content of Russian national identity or nationalism as such is not the central focus of this tale.

The following section therefore outlines the development of Russian and Soviet nationalities policies, particularly as they were applied in the territories that are central to this work: Latvia, Ukraine, and Belarus. Many of these events and policies will come up again in sections 2.3.2 (Latvia), 2.3.3 (Ukraine), and 2.3.4 (Belarus) within the context of each country's the national movement. The present section, therefore, is intended to provide the broad contours of the view from Petersburg and Moscow as the Russian and later Soviet state ruled its vast lands.

### **Territorial Development of Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union**

Three historical episodes in the territorial development of the Russian empire and Soviet Union are central to the story of national identity formation and reaction among the people living in the western borderlands of the empire. The first episode is the Partitions of Poland, which took place in three stages in 1772, 1793, and 1795 (Riasanovsky 2000, 267-72). In each partition, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was gradually whittled down by the hungry states surrounding the Commonwealth: the Hapsburg empire, the Kingdom of Prussia, and the Russian empire under Catherine the Great. By 1795, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth ceased to exist, having been swallowed up entirely by the three partitioning powers. An independent Polish state would not return to maps of Europe until after the First World War.

The First Partition of 1772 added what is now eastern Belarus to the Russian empire, as well as Polish Livonia, which corresponds with the present-day Latgale region of Latvia.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Part of present-day Latvia, the region of Vidzeme, was annexed by Russia in 1710 during Peter I's Great Northern War. Estonia was also added to the empire during the war. The territorial acquisitions were formalized in the 1721 Treaty of Nystad.



Figure 2.2: The Partitions of Poland, 1772-1795. Source: (Gilbert 2007, 43)

Importantly, the ethnographic territory of Ukrainians was split by the First Partition: the great majority of the ethnic Ukrainian population now lived within the borders of the Russian empire. However, the Ukrainians living in the Galicia region (now the westernmost part of Ukraine) came under Hapsburg rule as a result of the division. The imposition of this imperial boundary cutting across the Ukrainian population and the very different policies each empire pursued would have immense consequences for the development of Ukrainian national identity in the coming centuries (Darden 2009). The Second Partition of 1793 incorporated much of central Belarus and western Ukraine into the Russian empire. This expansion was followed shortly thereafter by the Third Partition of 1795, in which Russia took control of Lithuania, western Belarus, and the Volyn region of Ukraine. Thus, by the end of the eighteenth century, the territories of Latvia, Belarus, and most of Ukraine had been incorporated into the Russian empire and their populations were now subjects of the Russian Tsar.

The next major territorial revision in the region that we must consider is the re-drawing of boundaries following the First World War and the Russian Revolution of 1917 (Riasanovsky 2000, 487-88). On the Russian (now Soviet) side of the former imperial border, Russia conceded the Brest and Grodno (Hrodna) regions of western Belarus to the reconstituted Polish state as a part of the Treaty of Riga (1921) that brought the Polish-Soviet War of 1919-1921 to an end. More significant was the loss of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, which became independent republics as a result of the post-WWI settlement. This period of independence, brief though it was, would prove to be a crucial development for the nationalist movements in the Baltics. On the former Austro-Hungarian side of the border, the still dominantly Ukrainian Galicia region became part of interwar Poland.

This arrangement would only last two decades, as the onset of the Second World War produced the final territorial revision that our story depends on. As part of the secret protocol of the Treaty of Non-Aggression between Germany and the Soviet Union (often referred to as the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact for the foreign ministers that signed the treaty), Eastern Europe was divided into separate German and Soviet spheres of influence. The protocol agreed to the division of Poland between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union,

while also assigning the Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to the Soviet sphere (Riasanovsky 2000, 517).<sup>8</sup>

The destruction of Polish independence by the German invasion from the west and the Soviet invasion from the east in 1939 returned western Belarus to Soviet control. Significantly, it also brought Ukrainian Galicia under Soviet control, the first time in its history that this territory would be ruled by the successor to the Russian empire. In the Baltics, the Soviet Union forced mutual assistance pacts onto the governments in those countries, then engineered crises to demand the implementation of those pacts. In the summer of 1940 the Soviet Union occupied Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania under these pretexts, returning them to Russian control after two decades of independence. Though additional territorial modifications would take place at the end of the Second World War,<sup>9</sup> the postwar borders of Eastern Europe would remain stable until 1991. During that time, the national movements and even the national identities of the nations in the Soviet borderlands would experience important developments as a result of their incorporation into the Soviet empire ruled from the Moscow Kremlin, hundreds of miles away.

### Slavophiles, Westernizers, and the Russian National Idea

Before we turn to Russian imperial cultural policies in the western periphery of the empire, it is useful to briefly consider some of the underlying philosophies that informed those policies, buttressed the Russian imperial identity, and shaped Russian national identity. To this end, it is perhaps useful to begin with the famous report of 1832 on educational institutions in Moscow by Count S. S. Uvarov. The report, which made a strong impression on Tsar Nicholas I, contained the formulation of the philosophical underpinnings of the Russian empire that would remain a guiding precept of the Russian national idea (or at least the state's understanding of that idea) until the fall of the House of Romanov in

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<sup>8</sup>The agreement also granted the Soviet Union a free hand in claiming Bessarabia from Romania, which would become the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic.

<sup>9</sup>This includes the addition of the Transcarpathia region, formerly part of interwar Czechoslovakia, to the Ukrainian SSR in 1945. The northern portion of East Prussia including the city of Königsberg was also annexed in 1945 and incorporated into the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) under the new Soviet name "Kaliningrad."

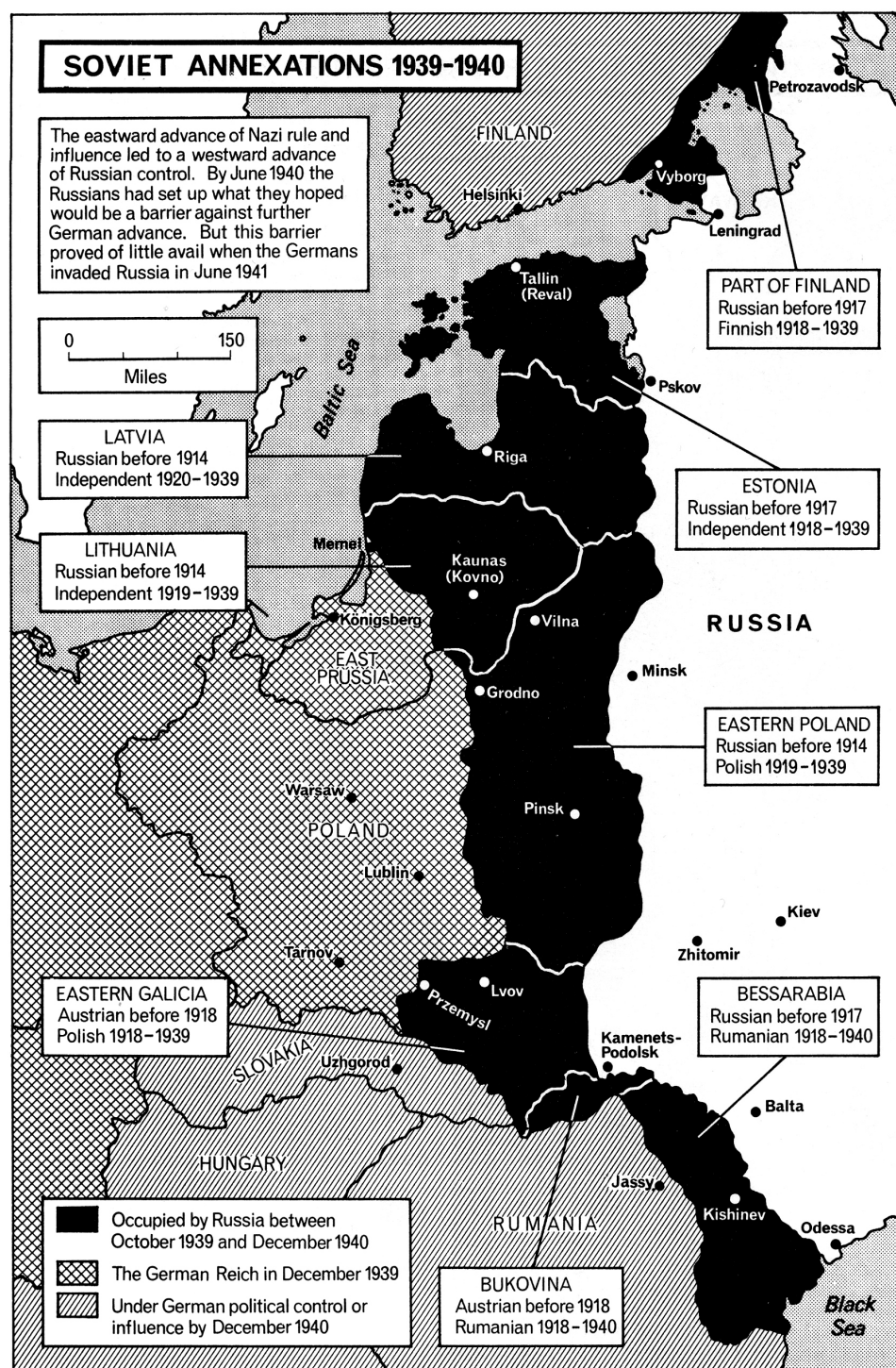


Figure 2.3: The Soviet Annexations of 1939-1940. Source: (Gilbert 2007, 116)

1917:

“Deep conviction and warm faith in the truly Russian saving principles of Autocracy, Orthodoxy, and the National Principle (*narodnost*)...constitute the sheet-anchor of our salvation and the most faithful pledge of the strength and greatness of our country”(Seton-Watson 1967, 220).

It was into this political-philosophical milieu that the cultural debate between the Russophiles and Westernizers took place during the 1840s–1860s and beyond in Russia (Seton-Watson 1967, 256-67). The Slavophiles, Riasanovsky writes, “were a group of romantic intellectuals who formulated a comprehensive and remarkable ideology centered on their belief in the superior nature and supreme historical mission of Orthodoxy and Russia”(Riasanovsky 2000, 362). Though Slavophilism was not a nationalist movement per se, its philosophy contained elements similar to those found in many definitions of nationalism and national identity: myths and memories of common ancestry, a shared public culture based on common characteristics like language and religion, and a historical homeland Smith (1994a, 381). The Slavophile ideology, as a well developed and comprehensive set of cultural, social, and political precepts, also contained prescriptions for how the Russian people were best governed:

“Given the sinful condition of man, [the Slavophiles] granted the necessity of government and even expressed a preference for autocracy: in addition to its historical roots in ancient Russia, autocracy possessed the virtue of placing the entire weight of authority and compulsion on a single individual, thus liberating society from that heavy burden; besides, the Slavophiles remained unalterably opposed to Western constitutional and other legalistic formalistic devices”(Riasanovsky 2000, 363).

Indeed, it was the Westernizers, a more diverse group of intellectuals who believed that Russia’s future lay in the integration with Western civilization, who were the main foes of the Slavophile movement. While the Westernizers believed the efforts of Peter the Great to Europeanize Russia to be positive step forward in Russia’s development, the Slavophiles believed that these westernizing reforms “proceeded to destroy or stunt the harmonious native development [of Russia]...The Russian future lay,” according to the Slavophiles, “in a return to native principles, in overcoming the Western disease. After

being cured, Russia would take its message of harmony and salvation to the discordant and dying West”(Riasanovsky 2000, 363). Ironically, the debate in Russia between east, west, and a Russian “third way,” has remained a persistent characteristic of Russian political and social discourse to this day. The orientation of Russia’s leaders and population at different historical moments has had tremendous effects on developments both within and outside Russia’s borders across the centuries.

### Russification and the Polish Uprising of 1863

Of course, belief in the superiority of Orthodoxy and Russia’s supreme historical mission had implications for how Russia ruled over the peoples living in the empire’s borderlands, as will be seen below. But Russification within the tsar’s empire was not just a moral or civilizational project, it could also be wielded at times as a pragmatic weapon for political control. This was true in the wake of the 1863 uprising in the Polish territories under Russian rule. Despite (or perhaps because of) Tsar Alexander II’s restoration of some Polish autonomy in 1862, Polish extremists were energized by the nationalistic spirit sweeping across Europe. Following a failed attempt to draft unruly elements into the Russian army where they could be more easily controlled, rebellion broke out in Poland in 1863. Eventually the revolt spread to parts of the Latvian, Lithuanian, and Belarusian lands and was not suppressed until May 1864 (Riasanovsky 2000, 379). In addition to losing its political autonomy, Poland (as well as well as part of Latvia and Belarus) were subject to Russification policies in an effort to eradicate Polish influence. Among other measures, Russian language instruction was introduced into schools and any Uniates that remained in Poland after the 1839 ban of the Uniate church were forcibly converted to Orthodoxy.<sup>10</sup> While these measures were mainly directed against the Polish population and elites, their effects were felt equally by the other nationalities in the region, including Lithuanians, Latvians, and Belarusians.

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<sup>10</sup>See discussion on page 2.3.4.

### Russification under Alexander III

Russification throughout the imperial borderlands accelerated during the reign of Tsar Alexander III (1881-1894). Alexander III, unlike his liberalizing father, Alexander II, fell squarely within the Slavophile camp. However, by the time he ascended to the throne, the tenets of Slavophilism and the philosophical foundation of the empire had evolved:

“A new basis of legitimacy was being claimed for government in addition to the old: loyalty was claimed in the name of the Russian nation as well as in the name of the autocrat appointed by God. A secular ideology of state, Great Russian nationalism, existed side by side with the ancient doctrine of the divine right of monarchy. Of Uvarov’s three principles, ‘national-mindedness’ was slowly gaining more weight than autocracy or Orthodoxy”(Seton-Watson 1967, 485).

Thus, the traditional principles of Slavophilism were being combined by the 1880s with a more aggressive nationalism that proclaimed the glory of the Russian nation, its culture, and language, and sought to impose those “gifts” on the non-Russian peoples under Petersburg’s rule. Thus, under Alexander III a strong Russification campaign was carried out throughout the empire, particularly in the western borderlands that had long been problematic for Russian rule. Riasanovsky writes, “[Russification] represented in part a reaction against the growing national sentiments of different peoples of the empire with their implicit threats to the unity of the state and in part a response to the rising nationalism of the Great Russians themselves”(Riasanovsky 2000, 394). In Poland, the Baltics, Ukraine, Belarus, and elsewhere, Russian was made the official language of government, the courts, and the police. It was also increasingly the language of education, as Russian language instruction was introduced into schooling throughout the region (Seton-Watson 1967, 485-505). The success of these policies, as measured in their effects on the populations targeted for Russification, will be discussed in the context of each target nationality’s nationalist development.

### 1905 and Late Tsarist Russification

Alexander III’s policies of Russification were more or less perpetuated by his son and the final Tsar of the Romanov Dynasty, Nicholas II. However, Nicholas was a weak



ruler during a time that the unity of empire was increasingly being strained by political, economic, social, nationalist, and internationalist forces. The Revolution of 1905, though it erupted in Petersburg, soon spread to other parts of the empire where local dynamics of the revolution took on nationalist characteristics, particularly within the Baltics. Forced to make concessions in order to quell the revolution, Nicholas eventually rescinded many of the reforms, including those granting greater autonomy in the borderlands, once his control was firmly reestablished. Erroneously believing that further Russification would strengthen his rule, Nicholas and his influential (and nationalistic) prime minister, Pyotr Stolypin, carried out a Russian nationalist counter-offensive after 1907 against the gains made by the nationalities in 1905 (Seton-Watson 1967, 663). What they failed to realize was that for many of the populations under question, already nationalized as Latvians, Estonians, or Lithuanians, “turning back the clock” or replacing one national identity with another was not possible. This fact would have immense consequences for the Russian and later the Soviet empire.

#### Early Soviet Nationalities Policy

When Lenin and the Bolsheviks came to power as a result of the October Revolution of 1917, they faced the same problematic national dynamics in the western periphery that had long bedeviled Russia’s tsars. In some respects they perhaps had an easier time of things, as the First World War, the Revolution, and the ensuing Polish-Soviet war resulted in the loss of some of the more problematic territories, particularly the Baltics and Poland. But other problems remained, including a budding Ukrainian nationalist movement in Soviet Ukraine, national movements in the Caucasus, not to mention the dozens (if not hundreds) of non-Russian ethno-national groups throughout Central Asia and other parts of Russia.

Lenin and his Commissar for Nationalities, a Georgian by the name of Iosef Dzhughashvili (better known to history by his pseudonym, Joseph Stalin), were savvy political strategists and recognized that the success of the Revolution and solidification of Bolshevik power would depend on the support of the non-Russian nationalities in the empire. Yet they

also had to contend with their own ideological dogma, which viewed nationalism of the nineteenth century European type to be an essentially bourgeois fiction and “philistine ideal”(Slezkine 1994, 417).

Ever adept at squaring the ideological circle, the Bolsheviks formulated the nationalist question in terms that were amenable to Marxism, elaborating the concept of “oppressor nationalism” and “oppressed-nation nationalism”(Slezkine 1994, 418; Martin 2001, 7). Just as the bourgeoisie had oppressed the proletariat, so too had “great power” nationalities oppressed smaller nationalities in modern history. The Bolsheviks committed themselves to eradicating both types of oppression through their radical political experiment. It was a shrewd piece of political tap dancing: by seeking to transform nationalism from an ideology that united classes within a nation (placing nation above class), Lenin and Stalin sought to align class and nation in parallel (nation overlapping with class) in the empire in order to harness the political power of nationalism in pursuit of their revolutionary goals (Martin 2001, 8). As such, they hoped to win the support and loyalty of the formerly “oppressed” nations, gaining crucial local allies in the consolidation of Bolshevik power throughout the vast empire (Slezkine 1994, 419).

Of course, this distinction drawn between the two types of nations and nationalism meant that one nation in particular would be labeled the “oppressor” nation in the empire: the Great Russian nation. Deeming Great Russian chauvinism to be the greater threat to society than local nationalism (in what became known as the “greatest danger principle”), Lenin and his colleagues sought to reverse the historical dominant position that Russians had held over the other nationalities in the empire. Bukharin summarized the position on the Russian nation and nationalism:

“As the former Great Power nation, we should indulge the nationalist aspirations [of the non-Russians] and place ourselves in an unequal position, in the sense of making still greater concessions to the national current. Only by such a policy, when we place ourselves artificially in a position lower in comparisons with others, only by such a price can we purchase for ourselves the trust of the formerly oppressed nations”(Martin 2001, 17).

Following from Stalin's definition of a nation,<sup>11</sup> the Soviet strategy entailed the creation of distinct territorial units for the national minorities that included "not just a dozen large national republics, but tens of thousands of national territories scattered across the entire expanse of the Soviet Union" (Martin 2001, 1). But Soviet nationalities policy went far beyond the creation of territorial "homelands" for the nationalities that lived there. The national language of each territory was declared to be the official language of government; where a written language did not yet exist, one was created. The Soviet state also promoted the production of books, journals, newspapers, films, museums, drama, musical groups, and other cultural content in the national languages. In other words, the Soviet state was instrumental in creating the content of national identity,<sup>12</sup> often in places where it had not existed before. It did so while also urbanizing and educating these populations that were primarily rural and illiterate prior to Soviet rule. This control over both the content of national culture, as well as control over the distribution of that culture through schooling, would have important consequences for nationalist movements throughout the Soviet era. Nations that were essentially created and filled with cultural content by the Soviets (especially in Central Asia) remained much more amenable to Soviet rule and the Soviet idea than were nations that had gained national consciousness earlier without Soviet "help" (such as the Baltics). It was no accident that the latter were the first to exit the Soviet Union in 1991 and the former were the last to reluctantly accept independence. Even where national identities existed in some form prior to Soviet rule (as in Belarus and Dniepr Ukraine), the dynamics and timing of national awakening, urbanization, and mass literacy would give the Soviet regime tremendous influence over the loyalties of those population (Darden 2009).

Early Soviet nationalities policy included not just the promotion of national languages and cultures, but also the promotion of national political elites. The 1920s policy of

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<sup>11</sup>"A nation is a historically evolved, stable community based on a common language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture" (Stalin 1954).

<sup>12</sup>Keeping, of course, with Stalin's famous prescription that Soviet national cultures should be "national in form, socialist in content" (Stalin 1940).

*korenizatsiia*<sup>13</sup> or “indigenization” required that “the affairs of all ethnic groups at all levels – from union republics to clan soviets – were to be run by the representatives of those ethnic groups. This involved the preferential recruitment of ‘nationals’ to party, government, judicial, trade union and educational institutions, as well as the preferential ‘proletarianization’ of mostly rural non-Russian populations”(Slezkine 1994, 433). Thus, the national minorities were granted leadership over their own territories, always under the watchful eyes of Moscow, however.

Finally, the introduction in the early 1930s of internal passports in the Soviet Union, in which an individual’s nationality was listed on the infamous “fifth line,” further solidified the salience of nationality in the Soviet Union. For, as Yuri Slezkine noted, nationality as recorded in one’s documents (and defined entirely by the nationalities of one’s parents) had an eternal quality to it: “One’s name and *propiska* [registered place of living] could be changed, nationality could not”(Slezkine 1994, 444).

#### Rolling back *Korenizatsiia* and Reviving the Russian Nation

As the 1920s progressed, Moscow became increasingly compelled to exercise greater control over the political affairs of the various republics and other national territories, in what eventually amounted to a significant revision of the *korenizatsiia* policy. The reasons for this revision were numerous but included resistance to Soviet collectivization of agriculture in Ukraine, among other things. A more thorough account can be found in Martin (2001, chapters 6-9). One consequence of the policy reversal was an assault in the late 1920s and early 1930s on republican cultural and political elites, particularly in Belarus and Ukraine.

Another significant result of the revision of the early Soviet nationalities policy amounted to the rehabilitation of the Russian nation during the 1930s. Martin is careful to note, however, that this did not involve a shift from nation-building to Russification of national minorities. Rather, “the reemergence of the Russians involved three main processes: first, the formation of a Russian national space through the Russification of the

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<sup>13</sup>коренизация

RSFSR; second, the elevation of the status and unifying role of Russian culture within the entire USSR; third, the integration of the newly central Russians into the preexisting Soviet national constitution through the metaphor of the Friendship of the Peoples”(Martin 2001, 394). While these policies did not constitute outright Russification, they did amount to the glorification of the Russian nation and its culture as “first among equals,” its language the language of mutual communication throughout the empire (Martin 2001, 455). Stalin’s cultural lieutenant, Andrei Zhdanov, proclaimed the new party line in 1938, the year that saw the study of Russian language made mandatory in all non-Russian schools:

“First, in a multinational state such as the USSR, the knowledge of Russian should be a powerful means for creating ties and communication between the peoples of the USSR, furthering their continued economic and cultural growth. Second, [it will] help the further perfecting of the technical and scientific knowledge of national cadres. Third, it is a necessary condition for the successful performance of military service in the Red Army by all citizens”(Martin 2001, 459).

Needless to say, it was not a far leap to policies promoting the spread that culture and language to the non-Russian populations of the USSR, something that would take place in the decades after the Second World War.

### **Russian Nationalism and the Second World War**

The war itself was a key development in the history of Soviet nationalities policy and Russian nationalism, as Stalin resorted to the appropriation of Russian historical heroes and events into the Soviet pantheon in order to rally the population in defense of the Motherland. Thus, pre-Soviet figures like Ivan the Terrible, Alexander Nevsky, Suvorov, and Kutuzov were posthumously made part of the Soviet historical tradition. In short, Soviet heroes were Russian heroes, further implying the elevated role of Russians in the historical development of the Soviet Union. In a November 1941 speech, Stalin famously berated the Nazis for attempting to destroy the Great Russian nation (not the Soviet Union!):

“[The Germans] have the impudence to demand the destruction of the Great Russian nation, the nation of Plekhanov and Lenin, of Belinski and Chernyshevski, of Pushkin and Tolstoy, of Glinka and Tchaikovsky, of Gorky and

Chekhov, of Sechenov and Pavlov, of Repin and Surikov, or Suvorov and Kutuzov”(Laitin 1998, 53).

Inspiration for the fight thus came from Russian figures and credit for the victory went accordingly to Russians, an attitude evident in Stalin’s famous toast to the Russians at the end of the war:

”I drink above all to the health of the Russian people because it is the most outstanding nation of all nations of the Soviet Union. I propose a toast to the health of the Russian people because it has merited in this war a general recognition as the guiding force of the Soviet Union among all the peoples of our country”(Zaprudnik 1993, 104).

### Russification in the Postwar Soviet Union

The Russian nation, “elder brother” to the other Soviet nationalities, “first among equals” in the “friendship of peoples,” and bearer of the language of Union-wide mutual communication, would retain its supremacy in the Soviet hierarchy until the empire’s collapse in 1991. Russification would continue in differing ways and with varying intensity throughout the Khrushchev and Brezhnev eras, even as Moscow allowed greater political and cultural control to republican cadres (Suny 1993, 117; Bilinsky 1981). At times this Russification was a deliberate policy, as Russian language instruction and instruction (of other subjects) in Russian was expanded in the non-Russian republics. In other ways it was less of a deliberate effort, as younger generations of non-Russians, seeking the upward social mobility and geographic mobility that was afforded by fluency in Russian, favored the center’s language over their native tongue. It was this geographic mobility that produced another facet of Russification, simultaneously deliberate and yet not so deliberate. As large concentrations of Russians and Russian-speakers migrated into the periphery (especially the Baltics, Ukraine, and Belarus), the urban and later rural populations became increasingly Russophone. The native reactions (or lack thereof) of the native populations to these forms of Russification will be discussed in the section below.

One other consequence of the post-1930 rehabilitation of Russian nationalism and the postwar era of Russification would be the gradual blending of Russian and Soviet

identities, wherein the Russians were increasingly identified with the Soviet Union as a whole. Increasingly the *Soveskiy narod* (“Soviet people”) were understood to be the Russian people and vice-versa. And so, while the long-term goal of Lenin’s nationalities policy was “that distinctive national identities would coexist peacefully with an emerging all-union socialist culture that would supersede the preexisting national cultures,” this did not turn out to in practice (Martin 2001, 13). Rather, the all-union culture became fused with Russian culture, both for those who lauded that culture and those who resented it. And so, Soviet rule in the Baltics and western Ukraine was always viewed first and foremost as Russian rule, the foreign occupation of one nation over another. These dynamics, I argue, had important consequences in shaping the national identities and political cultures of the nations who considered themselves to be under Russian occupation. They also were instrumental in bringing about the collapse of the Soviet Union, but that is a subject for another day.<sup>14</sup>

### 2.3.2 Nationalism and National Identity in Latvia

#### Territorial History of Latvia vis-à-vis Russia

The territory that comprises modern-day Latvia gradually came under control of the Russian empire during the 18th century. During Peter the Great’s execution of the Great Northern War, Russia conquered Swedish Livonia (also known as Livland), which today corresponds roughly to the Latvian region of Vidzeme.<sup>15</sup> Though the territory was annexed by Russia in 1710, it was not formally conceded by Sweden until the Treaty of Nystad was signed in 1721.

In 1772 under the First Partition of Poland, Polish Livonia (also known as the Inflanty Voivodeship, Latgalia, and present-day Latgale) was annexed from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth by Russia under Catherine the Great. This was followed in 1795 with the Third Partition of Poland, which added the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia (present day Kurzeme and Zemgale regions) to the Russian Empire. Thus, by the beginning of the

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<sup>14</sup>For the definitive account, see (Beissinger 2002).

<sup>15</sup>Russia also gained Estonia from Sweden at this time.



Figure 2.4: Historical regions of Latvia. Source: (Erestrebian 2006)

19th century, all of present-day Latvia has been incorporated into the Russian empire. Importantly, Russia's imperial rulers maintained the status and power of the Baltic German nobility that had and would continue to rule over the peasants in the Baltic region. Thus, the nationalism in Latvia would have to contend first with the cultural and political hegemony of the Baltic Germans and later with that of the Russians once Russification became part of Petersburg's imperial strategy.

Latvia would remain part of the Russian empire until 1920, at which time it gained its independence from the Bolsheviks in Russia. Its existence as an independent republic lasted until 1940, at which time it was occupied and annexed by the Soviet Union as part of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. These historical episodes will be discussed in greater detail below. Latvia, constituted as the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic, would remain under Soviet control until 1991.



## National Awakening and Birth of Latvian Nationalism

Certain conditions already present in Latvia at the start of the 19th century enhanced the development of Latvian nationalism even before we can truly speak of the presence of a national movement. Key among them was the abolition of serfdom in the Baltic provinces in 1816-1819, which came nearly 50 years before the emancipation of the serfs in the rest of the empire in 1861 (Plakans 1995, 80-81). Importantly, serfdom was maintained in Latgale until 1861, resulting in a later national awakening that was delayed until the beginning of the twentieth century, several decades after the awakening that took place throughout other parts of Latvia (Raun 1986, 69). White (1994) highlights the importance of these reforms:

“The Latvian and Estonian national movements were to a large degree the product of the agrarian reforms of the first half of the nineteenth century. These had created a class of relatively prosperous peasant farmers who were able to send their sons to university at their own expense... And whereas it had been normal until the end of the 1850s for young Latvians and Estonians who received higher education to lose their former nationality and enter the ranks of educated Germans, the new generation wished to acquire education and still retain its Latvian or Estonian identity”(White 1994, 21).

White’s quotation above highlights the important role that education played in bringing about the creation of nationalist elites in the early stages of the movements. While the establishment of several proto-nationalist societies, groups, and publications took place throughout the first half of the 19th century (Plakans 1995, 84-85), it was not until the 1850s that the “Young Latvians” movement, a group of Latvian students at Dorpat (Tartu) University, arrived on the scene as the driving force of Latvia’s national awakening (White 1994, 21; Bleiere et al. 2006, 32). Eventually several of the Young Latvians transferred their activities to St. Petersburg which, ironically, provided a better environment for the development of the Latvian national movement than did Latvia itself (Ģerānis 2007, 172; White 1994, 22; Spekke 2006, 280).

Raun (1986, 70) identifies the period from 1860-85 to have been the main period of national awakening, corresponding to Hroch’s (2000) “Phase B” of nationalist agitation; in this regard the 1870s were the most intensive period of awakening. The result, according to Plakans, was that “by the mid-1880s, then, a Latvian presence – an “awakened nation”

– had become a force to be reckoned with. Throughout this period and in the following decades, Latvia acquired several important markers of a developed nationalist movement, which are summarized conveniently by Raun (1986, 73): first native newspaper (1856), first political newspaper (1862), first daily newspaper (1877), first national song festival (1873), first literary-cultural organization (1868), first novel (1879), and major folklore publication (1894-1915).

When marking the development of nationalism and national identity, however, it is especially important to pay close attention to the issue of literacy among the population (Darden 2009). As Darden has shown, once a population has been nationalized through mass schooling and there is widespread literacy among the population, the national identities of that population become remarkably durable. Thus, the timing of literacy among a population – as well as the content of the education they receive – is immensely important in the development of national identities.

During the late 19th century, the Baltic provinces had the highest literacy rates in the Russian Empire, largely thanks to the historical role of the Lutheran Church (Raun 1986, 74). At the time of the 1897 imperial census, the Baltic provinces had a 91 percent literacy rate. This was significantly higher than literacy rates in other parts of the empire, including the imperial capitals (56 percent), Ukraine (23-33 percent according to region), Belarussia and Lithuania (35 percent), and other parts of Russia proper (16-38 percent according to region) (Kaiser 1994, 69). Thus, nearly the entire Latvian population was literate and had been educated during the height of the “national awakening,” a fact that helps explain the particularly strong Latvian national identity and nationalist movement that endured throughout the 20th century.

It is also important to point out that the Baltics were among the most urbanized regions of the empire, with urbanization reaching 33.1 percent (the highest in the empire outside the capital regions) by 1914, a 22.2 percentage point increase from 1858 (Kaiser 1994, 62). As Kaiser notes, this “rural to urban migration [was a] significant factor in the nationalization process...since it potentially represented not only the horizontal but also the vertical incorporation of the masses...The city was becoming a nationalistic as well

as (or perhaps even in opposition to) a cosmopolitan environment, and it was into this increasing nationalistic milieu that the rural indigenes were entering in increasing numbers between 1861 and 1914”(Kaiser 1994, 59). Thus, the higher migration rates of Latvian peasants into the cities during this period also helps to account for the strong national identities that were forged among Latvians. Later we will discuss the weak national identity that developed among Belarusians; for comparative purposes it is interesting to note that urbanization in Belarus increased only by 3.8 percentage points from 1867-1914 and remained at only 13 percent in 1914 (Kaiser 1994, 62).

### Russification Policies in the Baltics

Though there was friction between the emerging Latvian national movement and the Baltic German nobility, the former was nonetheless able to develop and flourish. It was also able to do so with minimal interference from Russia’s imperial rulers in St. Petersburg during the key phase of national awakening. This, however, changed significantly in the 1880s with the ascension of Alexander III and the cultural dominance of the Slavophiles, which set in motion a policy of Russification throughout the empire (Ābols 2002, 109)<sup>16</sup>. As White writes, “the reforms of the 1880s and 1890s were aimed at the full assimilation of the Baltic provinces into the Russian Empire, and involved the reorganization of the local administration, judiciary and education on the Russian model”(White 1994, 19).

Initially Russification in the Baltics was aimed at the Baltic German nobility, as many of the administrative changes noted above fell within their realm as the ruling elite (Spekke 2006, 283). However, as linguistic Russification progressed, it soon came to touch the Latvian population as well. Russian was decreed to be the official language of government administration, judicial institutions, and police institutions. In 1887 the use of Latvian was banned in primary schools and all classes were taught in Russian. These policies were extended to high schools a few years later (Ģerānis 2007, 184). Russian teachers were sent to Latvia to promote Russification and teacher training in Latvia (now conducted in

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<sup>16</sup>In fact, Russification began earlier in Latgale, starting in the mid-1860s as a reaction to the 1863 Polish rebellion in which Polish noblemen from Latgale had participated (Ģerānis 2007, 178).

Russian) was adjusted to reflect the new imperial education policies (Bleiere et al. 2006, 95). The imperial authorities also sought Russification through the Russian Orthodox Church, ordering mandatory conversions of partners of mixed marriages (Plakans 1995, 101).

### The Latvian Reaction to Russification

Jubulis reminds us of the importance of timing in the development of Latvian national identity: “Latvian national identity emerged only in the modern era, but significantly, it emerged *before* attempts to impose Russian or Soviet identities on the Latvians (Jubulis 2001, 33). Indeed, Alexander III’s Russification policies did not have the intended effect because they came after the Latvian national identity was already well developed and spreading to a significant portion of the population. The effectiveness of Russification was already questioned at the time even by impartial outsiders. One Austro-Hungarian diplomat observed that “people who are familiar with the Baltic doubt whether the Estonians and Latvians will allow anyone to Russify them. It is much more likely that once they gain in the battle against the [Baltic] Germans, they will take a stand against all that is Russian just as fiercely as the German barons” (Ģermanis 2007, 185). Indeed, as Plakans writes, “if anything, among Latvians coming of age in the 1890s, obligatory Russian in the education and judicial systems intensified their dislike of tsarist autocracy, which joined Baltic German socioeconomic hegemony as a target for a new generation of critics” (Plakans 1995, 101).

Kaiser sums up the folly of Petersburg’s Russification policy nicely, noting the unintended consequences of a backlash from the populations that were the target of the policy:

“The nationalization process as it occurred in the waning decades of the Russian Empire was not leading to the creation of one Russian nation-state, but rather to the formation of numerous nations living in what they considered to be their ancestral homelands. Attempts by the tsarist government to dampen the rise of non-Russian nationalism and even to promote the development of a Russian nation-state through a Russification policy proved counterproductive. . . Russification, a policy of forced acculturation pursued most intensely in areas where the indigenous nationalization process had proceeded furthest, was almost certain to produce a strong nationalistic reaction. . . *Russification was a centrist policy that had the unintended consequence of helping both to crystallize national self-consciousness and to activate a national territoriality that was*

*anti-Russian and increasingly anti-Empire*”(Kaiser 1994, 89).<sup>17</sup>

This anti-Russian and anti-Imperial backlash would continue to shape Latvia’s political relations vis-à-vis the center for the remaining years of the Romanov dynasty. Even the Revolution of 1905, whose broader causes and effects are outside the scope of this work, took on nationalist overtones in the Baltic republics, who used the Revolution to put forward national demands of cultural and political autonomy (Raun 1986, 72; Ģermanis 2007, 194). In particular, Latvian participants demanded the establishment of municipal authorities with greater Latvian representation; greater autonomy for Latvian language and culture; an end to Baltic German social, political, and economic privileges; and a reversal of other imperial Russification policies (Bleiere et al. 2006, 63). While some concessions were made by Tsar Nicholas II in order to appease the revolutionaries of 1905, these achievements were short lived. Within a few years Russification in the Baltics was again intensified, including measures to encourage migration of ethnic Russians into the region (Bleiere et al. 2006, 71).

### Independent Latvia

The first several decades of the 20th century brought about earth-shaking changes within Europe, the Russian Empire, and the Baltics. The constellation of forces at the conclusion of the First World War, the collapse of the Romanov Dynasty in Russia, the Bolshevik seizure of power in the October Revolution of 1917, and lingering hostilities between Bolshevik, German, Polish, and Latvian forces had enormous consequences for Latvian history. By 1920 Latvian forces had gained the upper hand, forcing a peace treaty with the Bolsheviks wherein the latter “unreservedly recognizes the independence and sovereignty of the Latvian State and voluntarily and forever renounces all sovereign rights which had belonged to Russia over the Latvian people and territory”(Bleiere et al. 2006, 139). The independent Republic of Latvia joined the League of Nations in September 1921 and was formally recognized in July 1922 by the United States, the last of the great powers to do so. At last, the goal of an independent Latvian state ruling over the Latvian nation was achieved.

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<sup>17</sup>Italics added for emphasis

The first decade and a half of Latvia's existence were characterized by a messy but functional democratic political system. It was this "seed" of democracy that took on special importance within the national myth of Latvia as it developed during the Soviet occupation, providing a key point of differentiation between the constructed political cultures of the occupied Latvians and their Russian occupiers. It also provided a reference point for the elaboration of Latvia's future in the event that it would one day be an independent nation again, free to return to the European path of development that it had been on.

However, the socioeconomic conditions within Latvia and the pressures of the global economic depression were too much for Latvian democracy to bear. Like many other European democracies at the time, democracy in Latvia fell victim to an authoritarian coup in May 1934. While the leader of the coup, Kārlis Ulmanis, is revered by many today for his efforts in establishing Latvia's independence and his early role in the Republic's political development, his position as a Latvia's authoritarian president in the late-1930s is more controversial. While some view his rule as the "golden age" for Latvia, members of the nationalist-democratic movements that emerged in the late Soviet era were critical of his seizure of power and authoritarianization of Latvia. Importantly, Latvia's authoritarian period in the 1930s is generally glossed over by those seeking to promote the pro-European, pro-democratic national myth that drew the cultural-political boundary between Latvia and its Soviet occupiers.

Not surprisingly, the development of Latvian nationalism continued throughout the interwar period, as it was finally able to develop in a sovereign Latvian nation-state. This was true for the democratic period as well as the authoritarian period of the Republic's history. Bleiere et al. write, "The most important aspect of the authoritarian ideology was the idea of a national state that lay at its core. . . and the creation of a state with a distinctly Latvian character. . . The idea of national unity had an important place in the authoritarian ideology. The concept of a unified Latvian people sharing the same goals. . . was an oft-repeated mainstay of this idea. The unity of the people was seen as a necessary precondition for accomplishment in various fields and as the only guarantee of freedom, welfare and a bright future"(Bleiere et al. 2006, 180). Thus, while Latvia spent the last 6 years of its 20

years of independence under authoritarian rule, the strengthening of Latvian nationalism continued throughout the entire interwar period.

### **Soviet, German, and Soviet Occupations**

Things rarely turn out well for those countries caught at the intersection of geopolitical competition. Such has been the fate of many Eastern European countries, Latvia included. When the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany signed the non-aggression pact on August 23, 1939, they also signed a secret protocol dividing spheres of influence in Eastern Europe. In addition to dividing Poland between the two powers, the protocol granted control over the independent Baltic countries to the Soviet Union. Thus, at the outset of the Second World War, Stalin was set to regain the Baltic countries that the Bolsheviks had given up in 1920. As a first step toward occupation, Moscow forced Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to sign mutual assistance agreements in the fall of 1939, allowing the Soviet Union to introduce its military forces into those countries. Through careful scheming, Moscow engineered conflicts within the Baltic countries in the summer of 1940 that gave them the justification for the full-scale invasion of the Balts. On June 16, 1940, Ulmanis conceded to Moscow's ultimatums and resigned, and on June 17 Soviet forces entered Latvia en masse. On July 30, a carefully-selected delegation from the Latvian parliament traveled to Moscow to "request" the admission of Latvia to the Soviet Union, a request that Stalin was more than happy to fulfill. Thus, the first occupation of Latvia was complete (Bleiere et al. 2006, 243-262).

Russification of the key administrative posts – and, importantly, of the state security organs – began almost immediately, as did a series of deportations from the Baltics that were intended to purge the territories of opposition and bring about the economic, political, and social Sovietization of the region quickly. While these measures, the secret protocol of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, and the occupation itself are fascinating in their own right, for our purposes it is important to note that these events formed a cornerstone in the foundation of anti-Russian animosity among Latvians throughout the remainder of the 20th century. Indeed, these brutal actions carried out throughout the Baltic region guaranteed

that Soviet rule would never be viewed as organic, but rather something imposed by an outside, foreign occupier.

The first Soviet occupation was short lived, as the German invasion of the USSR in June 1941 redrew boundaries throughout Eastern Europe once again. The invasion of Latvian territory began on June 22 and proceeded with lightning speed; by July 8, 1941, the German army had occupied the entire territory of Latvia (Bleiere et al. 2006, 264). Initially the Germans were welcomed by some in Latvia because anything was thought to be better than Soviet rule. But this initial optimism soon wore off as it became clear that Latvia's aspirations for the restoration of independence were equally unlikely under Berlin's rule. The turning of the tides in the war eventually brought Soviet forces back into Latvia, something that was not at all welcomed by most Latvians. Bleiere et al. write, "The Soviet regime and its emissaries were perceived as the representatives of a foreign power, whose presence one must learn to accept, yet they were neither wanted nor welcome. . . . The attitude of most farmers was expressed by a farmer from the Aglona parish, 'I don't want anything from the Soviet powers, and I'd like it if they didn't ask anything of us either'" (Bleiere et al. 2006, 331).

#### **Sovietization and Russification of Latvia**

The second Soviet occupation of Latvia at the end of WWII picked up where the first had left off. Somewhat ironically, the Soviets themselves also perceived Latvia as an occupied and hostile territory, dealing with the population there accordingly (Bleiere et al. 2006, 332). Central to the renewed Sovietization of the republic was the strengthening of the Latvian Communist Party and the state bureaucracy. This consisted largely of importing reliable personnel from the Slavic republics of the USSR, especially from Russia. In fact, Latvians were a minority in the Latvian Communist Party throughout the Soviet era, a fact that was a reflection both of the early efforts to Sovietize the party with reliable elements as well as the lesser appeal of party membership for many Latvians. As was the case during the first occupation, officials imported from other parts of the USSR were placed in charge of the security organs in Latvia as well.



Tragically, continued deportations and repression were central to Stalin's postwar Sovietization strategy for the Baltics. This included the deportation of March 1949, in which approximately 45,000 Latvians were arrested and sent to Siberia without trial. During the first decade of Soviet rule, an estimated 300,000 people in Latvia were deported and persecuted, a policy that effectively brought active resistance to the occupation to an end (Ģermanis 2007, 341). However, passive resistance to Soviet rule would continue throughout the entire Soviet period.

Moscow's cultural policies in Latvia were consistent with the approach toward national cultures in other parts of the multiethnic empire: "national in form, socialist in content" (Stalin 1940). Thus, existing expressions of Latvian culture that fell outside the Soviet ideological orthodoxy (virtually all of pre-Soviet Latvian culture) was repressed. Those artists, authors, and other cultural figures that remained in Latvia were encouraged to look to the culture of their "elder brother," Russia as a source for inspiration (Jubulis 2001, 52-53). The infusion of socialist content into national forms included activities such as traditional folk choirs in national costume replacing their Latvian repertoire with Soviet music (Bleiere et al. 2006, 264).

However, the main efforts in the Sovietization and Russification of the postwar Baltics were focused on demographics and linguistics. The second half of the 20th century witnessed the massive migration of ethnic Russians (and to a lesser degree Ukrainians and Belarusians) into Latvia. This migration, which Latvians considered and still consider to be colonization by the Russians, was a deliberate effort to settle reliably Soviet citizens among the unreliable Latvian population. Between 1935 and 1989, there was a net increase of approximately 737,000 Russians in Latvia (Jubulis 2001, 47). During that same period, the ethnic Latvian population experienced a net decrease of 79,000, largely the result of war, deportations, and declining birth rates. These population flows turned the demographic balance of Latvia on its head and generated strong resentment among the Latvian population: while Russians constituted 8.8 percent of the population in 1935, by 1989 they constituted 34 percent of the population. The Latvians felt they were being crowded out of their own homeland.

Some of these Russian "colonists" were military forces. A large contingent of Soviet

forces were located on Latvian territory at the end of WWII, and Latvia became the headquarters of the Baltic Military District, one of the key outposts of Soviet military power in northern Europe that included the Kaliningrad region (formerly East Prussia) (Bleiere et al. 2006, 347). Retired and decommissioned servicemen were also considered to be loyal Soviet citizens, and were therefore welcomed by Soviet authorities to resettle in Latvia (Nollendorfs and Oberlander 2005, 230). The allure of available apartments (which were in severely short supply in major Russian cities) and higher living standards added to the appeal for ex-servicemen. These conditions also made Soviet Latvia a desirable place for non-military migrants from Russia, who were dubbed “economic colonists” by some Latvians (Nollendorfs and Oberlander 2005, 218, 231). Thanks to the further industrialization of Latvia, there were many state enterprises in need of labor, labor which was largely imported from Russia.

Linguistic Russification was just as serious a threat to Latvia’s national culture as was demographic Russification. As the language of imperial administration, Russian was adopted throughout party and state institutions in Latvia with the imposition of Soviet rule (Nollendorfs and Oberlander 2005, 240-241). Russian language teaching and use was also expanded in Latvian schools, the age at which Russian was first taught was lowered, and courses taught in Russian at institutions of higher education were increased (Bleiere et al. 2006, 413). These policies were intensified in the 1970s during Brezhnev’s rule, almost 100 years after Alexander III’s unsuccessful attempt at the Russification of the Baltic provinces. Smith writes:

“From the late 1970s Moscow began reinstituting policies aimed at greater cultural standardisation. . . For the first time during Soviet rule, Russian was being taught in the first grade of native language schools. Such policies did much to heighten concerns over the likely future role of the local languages and cultures as reflected in growing dissident activities during the early 1980s connected with issues of linguistic Russification”(Smith 1994*b*, 126).

#### Latvian Reaction to Soviet Rule and Russification

The Latvian response to Soviet occupation, Russian immigration, and linguistic Russification was one that could have been predicted by the experience of the 19th century.

Though armed resistance to Soviet rule was eradicated by 1956 (Ģermanis 2007, 341), it continued in other, more passive forms throughout the decades of Soviet rule. The situation was succinctly summarized by Plakans, who writes:

“At the same time there were feelings of uneasiness, particularly with respect to the balance of and relations among Latvians and non-Latvians in the republic, as Latvians felt increasingly hemmed in by Russians in their home republic and dominated by Russians in the larger Soviet Union. This could not help but be an important psychological factor in Latvian attitudes toward the *Soviet* state and *Soviet* culture”(Plakans 1995, 162).

Latvians experienced a similar reaction to Moscow’s language policies, coming to resent the assault on their native tongue. Adding insult to injury, few Russians bothered to learn even rudimentary Latvian despite living for years in the republic (Jubulis 2001, 50).

Expressions of Latvian nationalism, resistance to Russification, and outright dissidence to Soviet rule were severely constrained thanks to the repressive capacity of the Soviet state and its destruction of horizontal networks of communication and civil society (Jubulis 2001, 57). While semi-public yet passive forms of dissidence took place throughout the Soviet era, including the continued celebration of Latvian festivals, gathering at the Warriors’ Cemetery on All Souls’ Day, and placing candles on the graves of Latvian Republican leaders, these actions were never carried out on a large scale (Bleiere et al. 2006, 413). Rather, expressions of dissidence were largely expressed in private (Jubulis 2001, 57; Bleiere et al. 2006, 368). While this hidden dissidence was powerless to halt the policies imposed on Latvia by Moscow, it was instrumental in keeping alive something that was ultimately far more powerful: memory. By preserving the memory of an independent Latvia, the idea of what it means to be Latvian, and the core of the Latvian identity, Latvian language, generations kindled the flame of Latvian nationalism and passed it along to their children. In a telling passage, Plakans writes:

“By the late 1950s most Latvians holding responsible positions were of an age to remember the independence period, which meant that those who were ostensibly loyal to the new regime could still make silent comparisons. Moreover, although children did not remember, their parents certainly did – not to mention their grandparents’ generation; not enough time had passed, in other words, for memories to have disappeared.”(Plakans 1995, 162).

In fact, those memories did not disappear even with the passage of time, thanks to the efforts of older generations handing down those memories and the myths embedded in them to the young, a process that would have important consequences for Latvia in the late Soviet period. In fact, as I argue in the following chapter, the preservation and transmission of national identity and its cultural content continues to shape the political beliefs of citizens in post-Soviet Latvia.

### Latvian Nationalism and the End of the Soviet Era

Smith notes that the conditions necessary for nationalism to emerge as a potent political force were already present in the Baltic republics by the 1980s: a rich pantheon of pre-Soviet national symbols; memories of national statehood; highly urbanized and educated societies; a native cultural intelligentsia; and a host of grievances toward Moscow, particular with regards to cultural survival and control over local political affairs (Smith 1994*b*, 121-2). While Smith also elaborates on the conditions that prevented nationalism from threatening the Soviet regime in the Baltics prior to the 1980s, he and others agree that the key catalysts in unleashing the power of nationalism were the liberalizing reforms of Mikhail Gorbachev (Smith 1994*b*, 122, 128; Zaslavsky 1992, 106). Beissinger (2002) has done an impressive job of documenting and illuminating the role that nationalist mobilization played in bringing about the collapse of the Soviet Union, beginning with the “first movers” in the Baltics. Though a fascinating story, I will not repeat it here. However, it is worthwhile to point out that nationalist movements in the Baltics were tightly linked to the ideology of democracy and liberalism, for “the struggle for independence was simultaneously a struggle for national and democratic self-determination”(Jubulis 2001, 1).

We must also take note of the cultural content of Latvian national identity that emerged during the “third awakening”<sup>18</sup> of Latvian nationalism after nearly 50 years of underground incubation. To be sure, the cultural content, the attributes of “Latvianness,” and the myths of national identity had evolved during that period. I argue that they came to

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<sup>18</sup>The “first awakening” being that of the late 19th century and the “second awakening” taking place under the interwar Republic of Latvia.

reflect the cultural dichotomization between “us” (the Latvians) and “them” (the Russians) along a variety of attributes of identity. This includes political characteristics – “we” are a democratic people, “they” are authoritarian – as well as civilizational characteristics: “we” are civilized and European, “they” are barbaric and Asiatic. I argue that this national mythology, developed as a result of Soviet occupation, came to shape the political beliefs and regime preferences of Latvia’s citizenry by the time the country regained independence in 1991.

Victor Zaslavsky, writing in 1992, offers an incisive summary of the situation:

“[The Baltic Republics] share with postcommunist Eastern Europe a new nationalist myth which unites and animates both the leaders and the rank-and-file members of these nationalist movements. It is the myth of belong to European culture, the myth of return to real or imaginary European roots, the myth of normal development brutally interrupted by the Bolshevik experiment or the Russian aggression or both”(Zaslavsky 1992, 110).

“Rejoining” the European community to which they once belonged included adherence of the values that distinguished Europe (the West) from the Soviet Empire (the East) that had kept them trapped for so long. And so, a return to Europe meant the restoration of democracy and the affirmation of democratic values as part of the Latvian political culture. This self-ascribed democratic culture, this belief that Latvians are culturally suited for democratic rule as a European nation – forged as a reaction to foreign occupation – would play an important role in shaping democratic support in post-Soviet Latvia, as I will demonstrate in the next chapter.

### 2.3.3 Nationalism and National Identity in Ukraine

#### Territorial History of Ukraine: One People, Two Empires

Many authors have utilized Ukraine’s regional divide and the cultural divide it encompasses as a key explanatory variable when explaining a variety of political outcomes. Before we review that literature, it is perhaps helpful to review some basic Ukrainian history. At the risk of some over-simplification, Ukraine’s territorial position vis-a-vis the Russian/Soviet empires can be divided into four periods. (1) Much of Ukraine’s territory

that now lies to the east of the Dniepr river (referred to as Left Bank Ukraine due to the fact that the Dniepr flows southward) came under Muscovite control as a result of the Treaty of Pereiaslav in 1654 and the resulting Russo-Polish War (Magocsi 1996, 212-16; Gilbert 2007, 31). (2) Ukrainian territory west of the Dniepr (Right Bank Ukraine) was added to the Russian Empire from 1762-1795 by Catherine the Great, largely through the Partitions of Poland which occurred in 1772, 1793, and 1795 (Magocsi 1996, 300-2; Gilbert 2007, 41-43). During those partitions, the Ukrainian lands of Poland were divided between the Russian and Austrian Empires, with ethnic Ukrainians living on each side of the imperial border. Importantly, the area known as Galicia which roughly corresponds to the present-day Ukrainian oblasts of Lviv, Ternopil, and Ivano-Frankivsk came under Austrian control. Other Ukrainian lands under Hapsburg rule included the Transcarpathian region (present-day Zakarpatska oblast) and portions of present-day Chernivtsi oblast, both of which were part of the Hungarian portion of the Hapsburg Empire. (3) This division of Ukrainian lands remained until the interwar period, at which time Austria-Hungary's Ukrainian lands became part of newly independent Poland. Russia also lost part of the Volyn region in western Ukraine (roughly present day Volyn and Rivne Oblasts) to Poland at this time. (4) The territories traditionally known as Galicia, Zakarpatska, and Volyn were added to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic between 1939-1945 and remained a part of the USSR and independent Ukraine from that time.

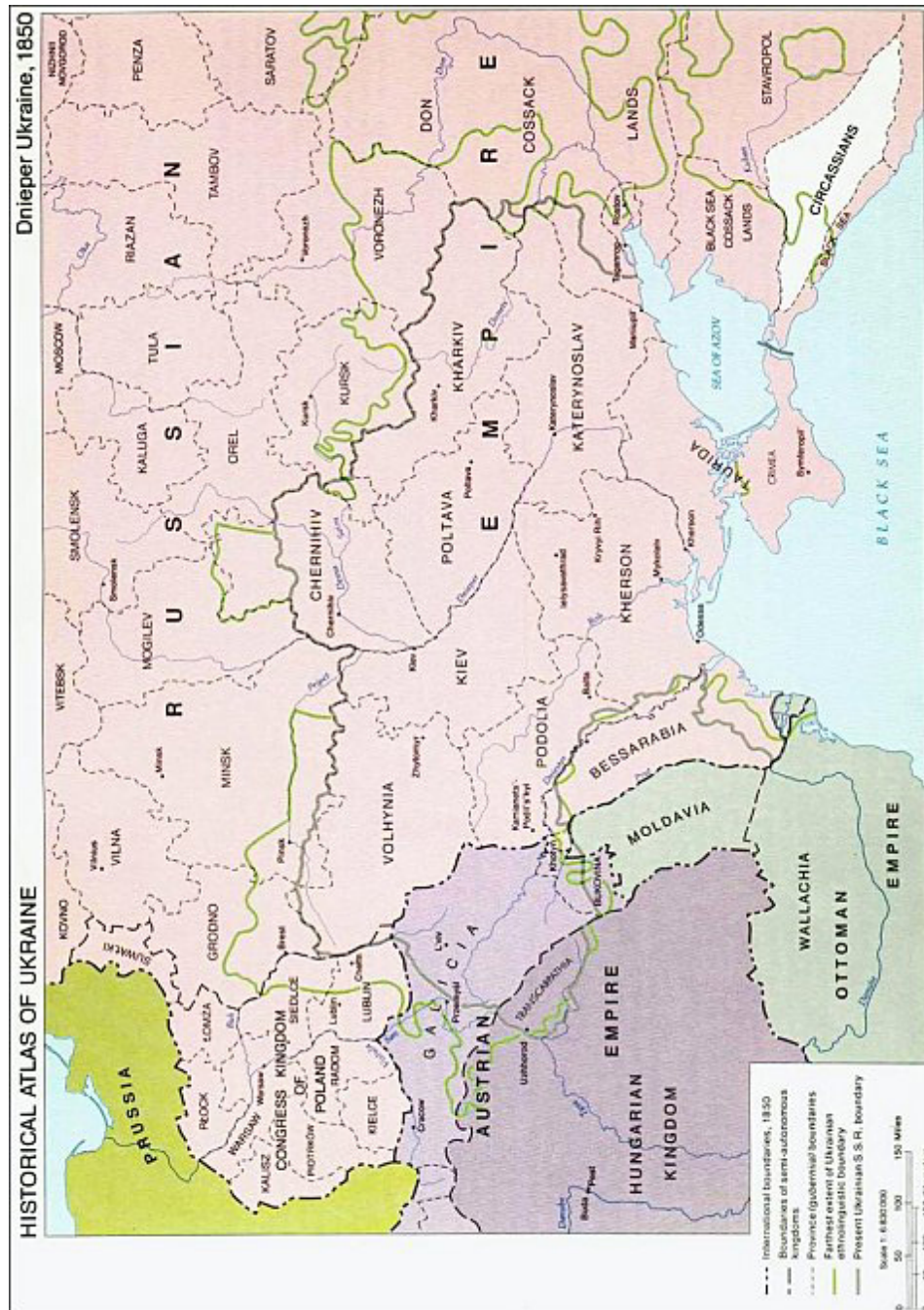


Figure 2.5: Ukrainian lands in 1850. Source: (Magocsi and Matthews 1985)

The historical treatment received by the inhabitants of the Ukrainian lands at the hands of either the Austro-Hungarian or Russian/Soviet empires (and later interwar Poland) has been the basis of much discourse on Ukraine's political development and regional characteristics. Such discourse has extended into the realm of political science and public opinion, as Ukrainian regional variation has been used to explain several politically relevant contemporary outcomes. These include regional variation in electoral outcomes and party support (Birch 2000, 1995; Kubicek 2000; O'Loughlin 2001), variation in levels of social capital (O'Loughlin and Bell 1999; Aberg 2000), processes of statebuilding, state identity formation, and regional polarization (Liber 1998; Kubicek 2000), and foreign policy preferences, particularly with regard to Russia and the West (Munro 2007; Hesli 1995). This study contributes to this rich literature by examining regional variation in support for democracy and authoritarianism with a particular focus on the division between the former Hapsburg lands and those lands traditionally controlled by Moscow.

#### **Political Institutions and Borders**

But what exactly are the key historical treatments applied on each side of the former Imperial border and how do they relate to modern-day political beliefs in Ukraine? One important difference is the wide gap in political rights and representative institutions between the Hapsburg and Russian portions of Ukraine. Whereas Ukrainians living in the Russian empire were subjected to the unyieldingly autocratic rule of the Tsar, representative institutions were introduced in the second half of the nineteenth century throughout the Hapsburg empire (including in Ukrainian lands) at the local, provincial, and national levels (Magocsi 2005, 10). As Birch has noted, elected representative institutions were established in 1861 in the Austro-Hungarian empire, including the Reichsrat in Vienna, local diets in the provinces, and communal councils in Galicia and Transcarpathia (Birch 2000, 1021). During the interwar period elections in the former Hapsburg lands continued, including elections to the Polish Sejm in 1922, 1928, 1930, 1935, and 1938 in Galicia and Volyn (previously part of the part of the Russian empire prior to the end of WWI). By contrast, citizens living in Russia's Ukrainian lands did not experience any form of electoral



representation until indirect Duma elections between 1905 and 1917 and the formation of *zemstvos* in 1911 (Birch 2000, 1022).

Birch argues that it is the more extensive and more recent experience with competitive elections that explains why we should expect to see higher support for democracy (and indeed better-functioning democracy) in Ukraine's former Hapsburg lands. While prior experience with democracy is an important factor in explaining future democratic performance, we must question the causal link between the two. In fact, I argue that it is not the actual experience of participating in democratic elections in the past that has the greatest impact on contemporary democratic values in western Ukraine. This is for the simple reason that very few people are alive today who would have participated in that pre-Soviet democratic experience. Of the 1,000 respondents surveyed in Ukraine for this research, the oldest resident interviewed in former Hapsburg territory was only 16 years old in 1940. Thus, neither she nor any of the other individuals surveyed participated in electoral democracy prior to Ukrainian independence in 1991. As such, comparatively stronger pro-democratic values found today in western Ukraine would have had to have been developed and transmitted across generations to those who had not experienced electoral institutions themselves. This transmission vehicle, I argue, was nationalism and national identity in western Ukraine.

### Ukrainian Nationalism and Borders

Indeed, the development of Ukrainian national identity is the main historical difference between the Russian and Austro-Hungarian treatments of Ukrainian lands. Magocsi summarizes the situation on Russian territory succinctly:

“The vast majority of Ukrainians in the Russian Empire were unaware of their Ukrainianness as such. This situation was in large part the result of imperial politics, which denied the existence of Ukrainians. . . Ukrainians in the Russian Empire had no schools in their own language, no Ukrainian newspapers and no Ukrainian cultural organizations. Furthermore, Ukrainians belonged to an Orthodox Church that denied their nationality, and they lived under a regime that promulgated decrees (in 1863 and 1876) banning the publication or importation

of materials in the Ukrainian language”(Magocsi 2005, 13-14).<sup>19</sup>

Thus, he writes, “by World War I the vast majority of Dnieper [Russian territory] Ukrainians, unaffected by Russian or other nationalist ideology, were ready to be molded into whatever a government in control of the educational system might wish” (Magocsi 1996, 374). The result was that Ukrainians in these territories were Sovietized and Ukrainianized from above following the imposition of Soviet rule (Hrytsak 2005, 198). Needless to say, commitment to democratic values was not part of the indoctrination program in Soviet Ukraine. Similar to Belarus, urbanization in Dniepr Ukraine throughout the 20th century – the migration of peasants into the increasingly Russophone cities – resulted in the linguistic and cultural Russification of those Ukrainians living within the borders of the Russian and later Soviet empires (Kaiser 1994, 62). As a result, the cultural distance between Russians and Ukrainians in these lands was greatly reduced or even eliminated.

By sharp contrast, Ukrainian national identity was allowed to flourish in Hapsburg Ukraine during the second half of the nineteenth century, often with the support or at least acquiescence of Vienna who, at various times, sought to create a bulwark against Russian influence in the Ukrainian borderlands (Snyder 2003, 124) or limit the influence of the Polish nobility in Galicia (Magocsi 2005, 14)<sup>20</sup>. The result was such that “the peoples of Galicia were for virtually the entire Habsburg period exposed to the ideology of nationalism, whereby self-designated leaders encouraged them to learn about and to value their national distinctiveness”(Magocsi 2005, 10).

No doubt the predominant institution promoting the nationalization of Hapsburg Ukrainians was the Greek Catholic Church (Himka 1999; Jepsen 2005, 71), which was supported by Vienna as part of Austria’s wider Catholic bulwark along its border with Russia (Snyder 2003, 124). But more important than Vienna’s stance on the Church was the fact that the Greek Catholic Church took an active role in the creation and transmission of Ukrainian national identity, opening hundreds of schools in Galicia during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, most of which taught in the Ukrainian language and were

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<sup>19</sup>Also see Magocsi (1996, 371) and Potul’nyts’kyi (2005, 87)

<sup>20</sup>See Magocsi (1996, 397-400) and Magocsi (2002)

increasingly national in their orientation (Snyder 2003, 125). Ukrainian national consciousness in Galicia was further developed and spread through the *Prosvita* (enlightenment) Society, founded in Lviv in 1868. During the next several decades, Prosvita carried out its mission of adult education, literacy promotion, and the publishing of textbooks and works of Ukrainian literature, all in the Ukrainian language. By 1906, the Society had spread throughout eastern Galicia, boasting 39 branches, 1,700 reading rooms, and 10,000 members. By 1914 it had published 82 titles in Ukrainian (Magocsi 1996, 422).

The result was a deeply rooted Ukrainian national identity and sense of distinctiveness that persisted in the residents of Galicia into the interwar and Soviet eras despite both regimes' efforts to eliminate that identity (Magocsi 2005). Nonetheless, the Soviet regime soon discovered that they could not simply reshape western Ukrainian identity in the way that they and their imperial predecessors had developed Ukrainian national identity to the east. As Darden has persuasively argued, once national identities and loyalties are formed, a process which takes place largely through schooling, they become incredibly durable and difficult to change (Darden 2009). On a societal level, this durable national identity formation occurs when a significant majority of the population becomes literate, a process that took place in Galicia under Hapsburg rule. And so, a population in western Ukraine that had been strongly nationalized prior to coming under Soviet control in 1945 was fiercely resistant to Moscow's efforts at Sovietization.

Rather than weakening Ukrainian nationalism in western Ukraine, I argue that the foreign occupation of this territory by the Soviet Union had the opposite effect of intensifying nationalism, leading to efforts to create identity-based distinctions between the occupied "self" (western Ukrainians) and the hegemonic "other" (Russian/Soviets). This process of cultural delineation was largely carried out through the use of national myths. Recall Smith's quote cited earlier in the chapter:

*"Myths of national character and myths of the other are therefore a vital means of delineating a separate past and providing boundary markers to distinguish the eponymous nation from its neighbors. The three most common character myths in... [Ukrainian] historiography are that their [nation is] democratic, demotic, and European... It is argued that natural intercourse with (the rest of) Europe was rudely and unnaturally severed by Russian occupation. [Ukrainiophiles]*

therefore see themselves at the dawn of the twenty-first century as returning to Europe and to their associated democratic traditions. These myths also constitute boundary markers to distinguish Ukrainians... from Russians, the main traditional other, who are portrayed as natural despots and imperialists” (Smith 1998, 25-26).

Thus, I argue that if we see signs of pro-democratic and anti-authoritarian beliefs in contemporary western Ukraine, it is due largely to the creation, development, and transmission of these national myths among the nationalized Ukrainian population of former Hapsburg territory. Such myths, and in fact any version of Ukrainian national identity that fell outside the officially-sanctioned Soviet version could not have been transmitted through the Soviet Ukrainian educational system or other official structures. Rather, they would have been passed across generations through families, as the other main engine of west Ukrainian nationalism – the Greek Catholic church – was heavily persecuted after 1945. The transmission of the Ukrainian national identity in western Ukraine areas and the meaning of what it means to be Ukrainian (namely, democratic and western) is key to explaining contemporary adherence to democratic values. To that end, western Ukraine’s history of electoral participation constitutes an important part of the national myth and so influences current values rather than through the experience of having directly participated in such activities.

#### 2.3.4 Nationalism and National Identity in Belarus

##### Territorial History of Belarus vis-à-vis Russia

Part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and then the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth until the end of the 18th century, the territory known today as Belarus came under Russian imperial control as a result of the Partitions of Poland by Catherine the Great. The eastern portion of Belarusian territories, including the cities of Gomel (Homel), Mogilev (Mahiloŭ), Vitebsk (Vitsyebsk), and Polotsk (Polatsk) were annexed in 1772 during the First Partition of Poland. This was followed in 1793 by the annexation of central Belarus, including the city of Minsk during the Second Partition. Finally, the Third Partition of 1795 witnessed the addition of western Belarus to the Russian empire, including the cities



Figure 2.6: Regions of Belarus. Source: Golbez (2006)

of Grodno (Hrodna) and Brest.<sup>21</sup>

The entire Belarusian territory remained under Russian control until the 1921 Treaty of Riga, which ended the Polish-Soviet War of 1919-1921. The treaty divided the Belarusian lands between Poland and the Soviet Union, granting a wide swath of western Belarus (including Grodno and Brest) to Poland during the interwar era.<sup>22</sup> Thus, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic (BSSR) was greatly reduced in size, a condition that was partially amended in 1924 and 1926 when the eastern Belarusian ethnographic area, including Vitebsk, Mogilev, and Gomel, were transferred from the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) to the BSSR. Western Belarus returned to Soviet control with the division of Poland by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union as part of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact in 1939. Soviet incorporation of western Belarus into the BSSR, begun in 1939 and interrupted by German occupation from 1941-1944, was resumed following the Second World War. The Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic remained an integral part of the Soviet Union until the latter's collapse and the creation of the independent Republic of Belarus in 1991.

### Belarus' Weak National Identity

Most observers agree that for most of its history, including the present day, Belarus and Belarusians have had a weak sense of nationalism and national identity (Ioffe 2003*b*, 1022; Ioffe 2003*a*, 1257; Titarenko 2007, 79; Zaprudnik 1993, 107-8; Martin 2001, 261). Among the reasons cited for this weakness of national identity include linguistic, cultural, and geographic proximity to Russia; the Orthodox religion, which Belarus also shares with

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<sup>21</sup>At the time of the Third Partition of Poland, a small sliver of western Belarus was taken by Prussia. This area would come under Russian control as a result of the creation of Congress Poland at the end of the Napoleonic wars. Under this arrangement, Congress Poland was ruled as a semi-autonomous personal union by the Russian tsar.

<sup>22</sup>Despite the fact that western Belarus and Galicia were both part of interwar Poland, Abdelal notes that "Belarus's Brest and Hrodno provinces were no Galicia, the stronghold of Ukrainian nationalism in the western regions of the republic" Abdelal (2001, 131). This is because Galicia had been part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire prior to Polish rule, a condition that allowed space for the development of a Ukrainian nationalist movement. By contrast, western Belarus was part of the Russian Empire until 1921, and was therefore "had not been separate from Russian political authority and cultural influence during the nineteenth century, when nationhood was becoming the dominant idiom of world politics" (Abdelal 2001, 132).

Russia; topography that was conducive to Russian imperial incorporation; a lack of nationalist elites; urbanization and mass literacy trends; and Belarusian personality traits of “resignation, tolerance and susceptibility to outside influences”(Ioffe 2003*b*, 1022).<sup>23</sup> Several of these conditions will be discussed below.

### Religion and Belarusian Identity

The 1569 Union of Lublin joined the Grand Duchy of Lithuania with the Commonwealth of Poland, creating the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In 1596 the political union was followed by a religious union, enacted in Brest, that gave birth to the Uniate Church (also referred to as the Eastern Catholic or Greek Catholic Church). Following the religious union, which recognized the authority of the pope while preserving the Eastern-rite liturgy, the population living within the Belarusian and Ukrainian territory under Polish rule (previously Orthodox in faith) converted to the new faith, sometimes forcibly as a means to detach the population from the influence of Orthodox Russia to the east (Zaprudnik 1993, 38). In 1839, by which time three quarters of the Belarusian population adhered to the Uniate Church, the new Russian imperial rulers of Belarus enforced a reverse-conversion from the Uniate faith to Orthodoxy for the same geopolitical reasons that had compelled the original conversion (Zaprudnik 1993, 40). In an effort to enhance Russian control over the region, an imperial decree in 1839 banned the Uniate Church, mandated the conversion of Belarus’ population to Orthodoxy, and banned the name “Belarus,” replacing it with the term “West Russia.” Ioffe notes the effect on Belarusian identity that some experts attribute to the religious conversion: “Most residents of Belarus belonged to the Uniate

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<sup>23</sup>This characteristic, known as *pomiarkounasts* (памяркоўнасць in Belarusian) is described by Ioffe as follows: “Literally, ‘*pomiarkounasts*’ means moderation and self-restraint, but its actual contextual reading also spans patience, resignation, tolerance and susceptibility to outside influences.”

Ioffe goes on: “*Pomiarkounasts* is widely and persistently referred to in informal discussions about the language and identity of Belarusians. The following popular joke makes sense of this myth. ‘A Russian takes a train, he enters a carriage, walks to his seat, and lands on a nail sticking out from it. With indignation and disgust, he pulls the nail out of his body and throws it out of the window. Now, a Ukrainian takes a train and also lands on a nail. He also pulls it out with disgust and pain but stops short of throwing away the nail because it is imprudent, as the nail may be put to use in the household. Now, it is time for a Belarusian to undergo the same ordeal. When a Belarusian realises he is sitting on a nail, it hurts him just like his counterparts, but what he thinks is; ‘Well, who knows, maybe this is what’s meant to be’. With this in mind, he continues to sit still. . .”(Ioffe 2003*b*, 1022).

Church from 1569 to 1839. Belarusian nationalist writings suggest that its collapse more than anything else undermined the Belarusians' sense of being different from the neighboring ethnic groups"(Ioffe 2003*a*, 1242). Thus, religion was an important characteristic that brought the Belarusian population culturally closer to their fellow eastern Slavs, the Russians.

### **Imperial Russification and Language Policy**

Alexandra Goujon writes of the beleaguered contemporary nationalist movement in Belarus, "for Belarusian nationalists, language represents, both symbolically and ethnically, the nation. 'National unity' is then intrinsically linked to language"(Goujon 1999, 661-2). In this respect, Belarusian identity is similar to the other national identities that we have discussed in this chapter, as the development and use of the national language was been central to the Latvian and Ukrainian national awakenings. However, the political-cultural environment in Belarus differed significantly from that in Latvia and Galicia, hindering the emergence of language as the nucleus of a 19th century Belarusian nationalist movement.

As noted above, the first imperial assault on Belarusian culture came in 1839 with the banning of the name "Belarus" from official use and publication. From then on the area would officially be referred to as the North-Western Province, Western Russia, or simply Russia (Zaprudnik 1993, 50). Despite the emergence in the mid-1800s of the beginnings of a native Belarusian literature, this literature – and the potential national awakening it represented – was stunted by Russian imperial policies that banned the publishing of works in the Belarusian language since Belarus was (according to the imperial worldview) a "Russian" territory (Zaprudnik 1993, 53; Goujon 1999, 662). The Polish Uprising of 1863, which spread to Belarusian territory, prompted additional measures aimed at the Russification of the area. These policies, which were intended to solidify loyalty to Russia in the region, prompted an outpouring of ethnographic, linguistic, and historical publications that sought to substantiate the Russian nature of "Western Russia" (Belarus) (Zaprudnik 1993, 58). For a population that believed itself as belonging to the Russian culture was surely more loyal than a population that considered itself Belarusian or Polish. In 1864, Tsar



Alexander II transferred control of all primary schools to the Orthodox Church and banned the use of the Belarusian language in schools, requiring that Russian be the sole language of instruction (Zaprudnik 1993, 61). These policies, continued under Alexander II's successors, thus ensured the linguistic and cultural Russification of the literate population of Belarus before any kind of Belarusian "national awakening" was allowed to take place.

### Urbanization, Literacy, and Identity

Compounding the difficulty of establishing a Belarusian national identity distinct from Russian identity was the pattern of urbanization that took place in Belarus in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. As of 1914, 13 percent of the population of Belarus and Lithuania lived in cities, up from 9.2 percent in 1858 (Kaiser 1994, 62). While this is a fairly small amount, what is important to note is that the cities into which rural Belarusians were migrating were already significantly Russified in language and culture. Thus, Kaiser writes, "In addition to the various 'Russian' groups entering the cities and becoming further Russified, Belorussians, Ukrainians, and non-Slavic peasants were also undergoing this process of acculturation toward the Russian *narod*<sup>24</sup> during the latter half of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries" (Kaiser 1994, 62). Thus, the cities were a key place of Russification as peasants – arguably the true bearers of Belarussianness – adopted the language of imperial communication. Aiding this linguistic shift and thereby hindering the development of a unique Belarusian national identity is the fact that Belarusian is linguistically extraordinarily close to Russian. Indeed, a Russian and a Belarusian speaking their respective native tongues would understand each other with little difficulty thanks to the similarities of the language (in fact, some Russian nationalists throughout history have considered Belarusian and Ukrainian to be simply dialects of the Russian language). As a result, adopting Russian in an urban environment was not particularly difficult for a Belarusian speaker, a fact that facilitated the easy Russification of the Belarusian population.

It should also be noted that the majority of the Belarusian population, remaining in the villages, did not conceive of themselves as part of a larger Belarusian nation even though

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<sup>24</sup>In Russian, *народ*, meaning "people" or "nation."

Belarusian was the language of rural Belarus. Rather, their predominant geographical identity was framed in local terms (Pershai 2008). One Belarusian scholar of nationalism writes that “simple folk who lived [in the Belarusian territory] called themselves *tuteishyja*,<sup>25</sup> which literally means ‘people from here,’ unable to define in any other way who they were (and probably not interested in a name as they had no political project of their own)” (Gapova 2002, 642). This attachment to one’s local identity and not a larger national “imagined community” (Anderson 1983) would persist among the Belarusian masses until the top-down Belarusianization that took place in the 1920s under Soviet rule (Ioffe 2003*a*, 1244).

The Belarusification of Belarus in the 1920s will be discussed below. But before we conclude this discussion of the effects of urbanization, it should be made clear that even with the policy of *korenizatsiia*, the dominance of Russian language and culture in the cities of Belarus made further urbanization in the Soviet era an inherently Russifying (and Sovietizing) phenomenon.<sup>26</sup> Thus, Marples writes, “though Belarusians outnumbered all other migrants [into Belarusian cities], the process of Sovietization that had begun in the 1930s signified that Belarusians did not Belarusify their capital; rather their capital Sovietized the Belarusian migrants (Marples 1999, 568). The denationalizing effect of the urban environment continues to this day. Writing of the modern era, Marples notes, “paradoxically when the population in the cities is almost exclusively Russophone, ethnic distinctions between Russians and Belarusians become blurred” (Marples 1999, 574). In fact, the phenomenon that Marples identifies is not such a paradox when viewed in as part of a trend that has taken place in Belarus for over a century.

Darden (2009) has argued that mass schooling and literacy are a crucial element – indeed *the* crucial element – in the nationalization of populations. As noted above, primary education in Belarus remained firmly in Russian hands throughout the nineteenth century, and the use and teaching of Belarusian language in schools was banned since the 1860s. According to the 1897 census, 35 percent of the population of Belorussia and Lithuania were literate (Kaiser 1994, 69). However, even this literate minority has been educated in

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<sup>25</sup>In Belarusian, тутэйшыя

<sup>26</sup>It should be noted that the same can be said for Ukraine during the Soviet era.

Russian schools under imperial Russification programs. Mass literacy – and any hope for national consciousness – would not come until well into the Soviet period, by which point a new empire, the Soviet empire, was well in control of the educational content in Belarusian schools.

### The Problem of Nationalist Elites

The importance of elites – both political and cultural – in promoting the “national awakening” and spread of nationalism to the masses is well known (Smith 2001; Hobsbawm 1992; Hroch 2000). The imperial policies and structural conditions described above were instrumental in hindering the development of a Belarusian nationalist elite during the second half of the 19th century, a period that can be considered the “golden age of nationalism” in other parts of Europe. To be sure, some cultural strides were made during this period by intellectuals and literary figures, but they remained marginal (Zaprudnik 1993, 62). Ioffe summarizes the problem:

“A middle-class intelligentsia that ‘would invite masses into history’ was late in coming. As a result, at the beginning of the twentieth century, residents of Belarus had the least discernible sense of separate ethnic identity, and Belarusian nationalists did not seem to have much following among predominantly peasant Belarusian masses. Most importantly, no sense of shared identity between the social classes had been forged in Belarus before the communist revolution in the Russian Empire”(Ioffe 2003*a*, 1246).

He goes on:

“[T]he most eminent promoters of the Belarusian national idea became finally convinced that they were Belarusians only in the late 1890s and were unable to sway more than a couple of hundred of their fellow countrymen prior to the commencement of the Soviet era”(Ioffe 2003*a*, 1251).

### Soviet Nationalities Policy and Belarusification

Indeed, it was Lenin and Stalin’s nationalities policies of the 1920s that did more to encourage the national consciousness of Belarusians than any indigenous efforts up to that point. As part of the policies leading to what Martin (2001) labels the “affirmative action

empire,” the status of the Belarusian language and its use as an official administrative language in the BSSR was expanded greatly from 1921-1929 (Ioffe 2003*b*, 1025). This was accompanied by a flowering of cultural creativity in Belarusian culture, albeit within the accepted limits of Soviet socialism. Even after this “golden era” of Belarusian culture came to an end at the end of the 1920s, the later introduction of internal passports, which included the bearer’s official state-recognized nationality, was an important means of nationalization of the population (Ioffe 2003*a*, 1250). The role that the Soviet regime played in creating a sense of nationhood among Belarusians cannot be understated. Ioffe writes:

“The words ‘Belarus’ and ‘Belarusian’ were embraced by most indigenous people of the area only in the wake of the formation of the Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic... Among other things, this effectively means that the Soviet period was the longest time span of the Belarusians’ nationally conscious existence”(Ioffe 2003*a*, 1244).

This fact would have immense consequences for the ultimate development of Belarusian national identity.

The “golden age” of Belarusian nationalism came to an end in the late 1920s as Stalin consolidated his control over the Soviet polity. Though he was the primary architect of Soviet nationalities policy in the 1920s, by the end of the decade there were new imperatives, namely the industrialization of the country, the collectivization of agriculture, and the broader transformation of Soviet society following the tactical retreat of the New Economic Policy (NEP) era. Haunted by the staunch resistance to collectivization that took place in Ukraine, Stalin began to rethink the empowerment of national elites through *korenizatsiia* (Martin 2001, chapters 6-7). The anti-national purge came to Belarus in 1929, when a significant portion of national political and cultural elite was purged, dealing a further setback to the development of a Belarusian national identity (Martin 2001, 260-69; Marples 1999, 566).

### Linguistic Russification in Soviet Belarus

As the Soviet “affirmative action empire” evolved into the “friendship of peoples” in which the Russian people, culture, and language played the central unifying role, linguis-

tic Russification continued unabated. Of course, Russification was not always a deliberate state-run cultural policy during the post-WWII era (Ioffe 2003*b*, 1022). As discussed above, urbanization tended to produce Russian language speakers in Belarus, a process that continued throughout the Soviet period. Similarly, service in the Soviet military and professional or political upward mobility depended on the ability to speak the language of imperial administration.

However, other policies fostering Russification seem more deliberate. For example, postwar western Belarus (Grodno and Brest, which had been part of interwar Poland) was deliberately Russified in order to produce a *cordon sanitaire* on the Soviet Union's western border; newspapers were printed only in Russian and state administration was thoroughly Russianized (Zaprudnik 1993, 108). Schooling in Belarus was also further Russified in the postwar Soviet Union, where Russian language instruction began in kindergarten (Marples 1999, 525). By 1960, there were practically no Belarusian-language schools in Belarus except a few in the Mostovsky region and Grodno (Eke and Kuzio 2000, 525). Thus, Belarusian language receded farther and farther from mainstream official use. Even where it did continue to be used, there emerged a linguistic mix between Russian and Belarusian known as *trasyanka* (трасянка) that has been blamed for the further erosion of pure Belarusian (Goujon 1999, 668; Ioffe 2003*b*, 1015).

### Acceptance of Soviet Historiography

Unlike Russification policies in the Baltics and western Ukraine, Russification in Belarus was not met with strong resistance by the titular nationality. While some might attribute this fact to the Belarusian characteristic of passivity (see footnote 23 on page 72), I argue that the lack of resistance was due to the weakness of Belarusian national identity when it encountered cultural and linguistic Russification.

This lack of resistance to Russification and Sovietization therefore meant an openness to the cultural "content" that Moscow was providing to Belarus. Lacking the hostility that characterized the Latvian nationalist attitude toward Sovietization, Belarusians were much more easily and much more completely Sovietized. They more or less accepted the postwar

Soviet historiography, which was embodied in Stalin's toast to the Russian people at the end of the war, quoted above on page 47.

More specifically, the new "historical myth" that Soviet historiography sought to propagate emphasized the superiority of "Great Russians" as cultural leaders and the "elder brother" of other Soviet nationalities (especially Belarusians and Ukrainians); the lack of ethnic hostility between Russians and non-Russians; the reunification of Soviet territory (as opposed to the conquering of those territories); and the desirability of a centralized state unified by the Russian nation as part of the "friendship of peoples" (Kuzio 2002, 245-6). Thanks to the success in Russification and de-nationalization of the Belarusians, the people of Belarus were perhaps the most accepting of this Soviet historiography aside from "Great Russians." The result, Goujon writes, was that "the notion of Belarusian identity, symbol of the 'nationality' (*natsional'nost*), appeared as secondary in relation to the first identity affiliation, 'Soviet citizenship' (*sovetskaia hramadzianstva*), which symbolized membership of the 'Soviet people' (*sovetskii narod*)" (Goujon 1999, 663).

The more or less wholesale acceptance of Soviet historiography in Belarus continues to be visible today, as Kuzio notes: "If the former colony, as in the case of Belarus, believe that they were not a colony in the Soviet era, then there is *no* reason to replace traditional Soviet historiography which lauded the Russian 'elder brother' and, like its Tsarist counterpart upon which it drew, denied any right to Belarusians or Ukrainians to a separate existence" (Kuzio 2002). And so, contemporary Belarus, particularly the Lukashenko regime, continues to abide by the Soviet version of Belarusian history and identity, a fact that manifested itself in Lukashenko's desire throughout the 1990s and early 2000s to form a union state with Russia.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Unfortunately, space does not permit an extensive discussion of Belarusian nationalism and language policy in the post-Soviet era, as it is not central to the theoretical argument I make about the relationship between nationalism and democratic support in the formerly occupied territories of Latvia and Western Ukraine. However, readers may consult works by Brown (2005), Goujon (1999), Ioffe (2003*b*), Marples (1999), Titarenko (2007), and others for a discussion of the Lukashenko regime's policy on language and nationalism. In short, Lukashenko and his policies have been remarkably hostile toward Belarusian national symbols that evoke alternatives to the Soviet historiography, as well as unsupportive (and even hostile) toward the promotion of the Belarusian language.

### Belarusian “Nationalism” at the end of the Soviet Era

To sum up the state of Belarusian nationalism and identity at the end of the Soviet era, the Belarusian nation consisted primarily of a people that had experienced its first “national awakening” during Soviet rule, primarily spoke Russian as a result of over a century of passive and active linguistic Russification, was made literate by the Soviet regime, and accepted the Soviet formulation of the “friendship of peoples,” including Belarus’ position as “Little Russians,” the younger brothers of the “Great Russian” nation.

Given this state of affairs, it is no wonder that Belarus did not witness the nationalist mobilization that characterized other parts of the Soviet periphery in the late 1980s and early 1990s. While a national movement – the Belarusian Popular Front (BPF) – did emerge during perestroika, it was destined to wither in soil that was ill-suited for the growth of nationalism. Abdelal writes:

“Nowhere in the former Soviet Union was there a larger gap than in Belarus between the beliefs of a society’s nationalist movement and the beliefs of a society as a whole about the political meaning of a collective identity. Belarusian nationalists offered a set of proposals for the content of national identity, but Belarusian political elites, as well as most Belarusians in general, rejected them”(Abdelal 2001, 134).

And so, while the BPF tried to propagate a national myth centered around Belarus’ “return to Europe,” their message to the Belarusian people fell on deaf ears. The foundation that supported the pro-European, pro-democratic myth in the Baltics and Galicia – the historical fact that these countries’ European develop was interrupted by Soviet occupation in 1940 – simply did not exist for Belarus. As noted above, Belarusians simply did not consider themselves to be an occupied or colonized nation, a fact that prevented the antagonistic dichotomization of “us” versus “them” that characterized relations between the titular nationalities and Russians in the Baltics and Ukrainian Galicia. Lacking such dynamics of nationalism and national identity, I argue, Belarusians never developed a self-conception as a “democratic nation” in opposition to the authoritarian Russian/Soviet empire. Rather, they conceived of themselves as an offshoot of the Russian nation and members of the broader Soviet *narod*. Their political culture was affected accordingly. Hancock echoes this

interpretation:

“The Belarusians, like citizens in many other newly independent states in the former Soviet region, had no experience with democracy. Unlike the Baltic states in the interwar period, Belarusians had never been independent or lived by democratic rules. Without long-standing norms favoring democracy. . . Belarusian citizens appeared at least agnostic about the benefits of democracy. Mostly, they focused on a desire to improve their economic lives. Whatever form of government would best supply that security would be their government of choice. The strongest indicator of Belarusian apathy on this point was the poor showing of those political parties that emphasized democracy and other Western institutions.”(Hancock 2006, 125).

## 2.4 Chapter 2 Conclusion

In this chapter I have made a theoretical argument for why, at the end of the Soviet period, support for democracy should have been highest among the Latvians of Latvia and the Ukrainians of Galicia: having developed strong national identities prior to their inclusion in the Soviet Union, they viewed that incorporation as foreign occupation. In an effort to delegitimize Soviet rule and increase the cultural distance between “us” (the occupied) and “them” (the occupier), these nationalities came to emphasize those characteristics in their self-understanding that distinguished them from the Russians/Soviets. In looking back to their more liberal pasts as part of the European community, the Baltic nationalities and Galician Ukrainians constructed a national myth of their people as fundamentally western, European, civilized, and democratic, in contrast to the eastern, Asiatic, and authoritarian occupiers, the Russians. This myth of identity was passed through families and informal networks, too dangerous to be aired out in the open but too precious to let die. Handed down over time, these aspects of national identity help account for the high level of democratic support among these populations as the Soviet Union was brought to its knees.

A very different story took place in Belarus and Eastern Ukraine, territories that had long been a part of the Russian and later Soviet empire. In these lands nationalism had come late and where it did begin to emerge it was harshly suppressed by the imperial center. Subject to repeated waves of linguistic and cultural Russification, these populations were more likely to accept the imperial and Soviet version of history emphasizing the harmonious



coexistence of the three “Slavic brothers,” Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus. Taught that they were all branches of the same tree, the Belarusians and eastern Ukrainians lacked the animosity that characterized Baltic and Galician attitudes toward Russian rule. They therefore lacked the motivation to put as much cultural distance between themselves and the Russians, and therefore failed to develop salient national myths emphasizing a democratic culture. In many respects this was characteristic of Russia itself as well. Of course, as the center of the empire, it had no distant rulers against which to define itself as did the borderlands. Simply put, Russia was Russia, with its own long history of cultural development that evolved into the Russian national idea. While that idea and identity is not the focus of this work, it should suffice to note that a Russian democratic tradition had never been a part of the Russian national myth prior to the founding of the Russian Federation in 1991. This lack of a democratic myth among Russians, I would argue, helps explain why her citizens were not more supportive of the democratic waves that swept over their lands at the end of the 20th century.

The current chapter has presented the theory as well as the historical processes that inform it. The following chapter will test these claims using a combination of qualitative interviews and quantitative survey data from Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and Latvia.

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### National Identity and Regime Preferences II: Empirical Evidence

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Does the occupation of populations with strong national identities shape both the identities of occupied peoples and their political values and preferences? This is the central question to be addressed in this chapter. The previous chapter detailed the development of national identity in Latvia, Ukraine, and Belarus during the pre-Soviet era, providing a historical narrative of how the Latvians and Ukrainians of Galicia developed strong national identities prior to their inclusion in the Soviet Union in 1939-1940. Similarly, chapter 2 explained why the populations of Belarus and Eastern Ukraine failed to develop a strong sense of national identity that demarcated fundamental differences between themselves and their Russian brethren. These divergent historical legacies of national identity formation produced markedly different reactions to Soviet rule: the Baltic peoples and Galician Ukrainians perceived themselves to be in a state of illegitimate foreign occupation by an alien hegemon; the peoples of Belarus and Eastern Ukraine continued to be ruled by their Slavic brothers in Moscow, as they had been for centuries.

I argue that this interaction of national identity development and Soviet occupation shaped the political beliefs, values, and preferences of the occupied populations over the course of the next 50 years. Because they considered Moscow's rule to be fundamentally

illegitimate, they sought to delegitimize that rule where possible. Such dissent in public was dangerous even after the post-Stalin thaw and relaxation of terror. Thus, dissent became private as families kept alive the memory of pre-Soviet independence, passing down national histories and national identities from parents to children. That content of national identity - what it means to be a Latvian, what it is that makes Ukrainians unique - was central to the passive resistance of the Soviet occupation. For as long as “we” resisted becoming “them,” then the restoration of an independent self-governed nation might one day be possible.

This dichotomization between “us” and “them” had a great transformative effect on the national identities of occupied peoples during the Soviet era, for those who were occupied sought to strengthen the existing identity boundaries while building new boundaries that distinguished “us” from “them.” Despite the Soviet Union’s multinational character, Soviet rule was always considered to be Russian hegemony: “they” were always Russians. “We,” the Latvians, Lithuanians, Estonians, or Galicia Ukrainians, were therefore not like the Russians because we are the people native to this land and they are the foreign invaders. It was this dichotomization of identities that produced new identity attributes among occupied nations in dialectic fashion, gradually changing the content of national identity. If “we” partly define ourselves as “not them,” then “our” characteristics will become the opposite of “theirs.”

It is beyond the scope of this project to explore all of the realms in which identity boundaries were built between occupied and occupier. Given that national identity can consist of multiple types of culture - ethnic, linguistic, religious, social, political, etc. - there are many aspects of occupation-influenced identity change that warrant further study. The purpose of this chapter is to explore how the political culture of the occupied peoples was shaped by Soviet occupation, and in particular whether the dichotomization of national identities can lead to popular support for democracy among the occupied.

I argue that such an outcome was achieved among the Baltic and Western Ukrainian nationalities as they sought to distinguish themselves from their authoritarian occupiers. Although the pre-Soviet democratic traditions in these areas were weak, there was a kernel of truth to the idea that “we,” the occupied, were suited for democracy by virtue of their

brief experiences with pre-Soviet democratic rule. Equally important, these nations could each claim a European historical heritage that was distinct from the Eurasian heritage of Russia. Thus, in the face of Soviet rule by the Russians from the authoritarian East, the occupied peoples came to understand themselves as closer to the cultural traditions of the democratic West. The relevant distinction was simple: we are Western, European, and democratic people; they are Eastern, Asiatic, Authoritarian people. As I will demonstrate, these characterizations of one's own nationality in contrast to Russians remain strong to this day.

If it is true that certain nationalities come to understand themselves as fundamentally democratic and western, we should expect to see greater support for democracy among these groups, especially prior to independence. Throughout this chapter I will present several comparisons that confirm these expectations using data from a 1990 survey of the European USSR. Within Latvia and the Baltic states, I will compare the political beliefs of the Baltic nationalities with those of the Baltic Russian populations, showing that Latvians, Lithuanians, and Estonians did indeed have higher support for democracy than the Russians living in the Baltic republics. Such a comparison allows us to vary nationality while holding constant regime. In Ukraine I will hold regime and nationality constant, comparing the support for democracy among Galician Ukrainians and non-Galician Ukrainians, demonstrating that the former had higher support for democracy than the latter as predicted by my theory. Finally, I will use Belarus as a counterpoint: because the non-confrontational relationship between Belarusians and Russians did not produce a strong dichotomization, we should not expect support for democracy to be higher among Belarusians compared to Russians in Belarus.

I will also demonstrate that these political cultures are strong but not static. Through similar analyses of survey data collected in 2007-2008, I will show that evidence remains of cultural dichotomization by Latvians and Galician Ukrainians. I will also show that differences remain in the levels of democratic support among the relevant comparison groups. However, the gap in democratic support between Latvians and Russians in Latvia and Galician and non-Galician Ukrainians has narrowed and in some cases become insignifi-

cant (both statistically and substantively). This suggests that important shifts in political culture and democratic support have taken place since 1991. However, discussion of these broader trends will be postponed until chapter 5.

This chapter proceeds as follows: section 3.1 presents evidence from open-ended field interviews with residents of Latvia, Ukraine, and Belarus that demonstrates the strong dichotomization of identities among some populations but not others. Section 3.2 presents evidence that suggests that in fact democratic political culture has become part of the national identity of the occupied nations under consideration. In section 3.3 I link national identity to popular support for democracy prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union and independence, while in section 3.4 I show how the relationship between national identity and democratic support has evolved in the post-Soviet era. Section 4.4 concludes, and statistical tables are presented in the appendix that begins on page 138.

### 3.1 The Dichotomization of Identity

The dichotomization of identity and the differentiation between “us” and “them” is readily apparent among populations that considered themselves to have been occupied by the Soviet Union and colonized by Russians during the Soviet era. During the course of field interviews, subjects in Latvia, Ukraine, and Belarus were asked the following question: “Many people believe that each nationality has its own national characteristics, which could be either positive or negative. Please name three national characteristics of Latvians.”<sup>1</sup> They were then asked, “now please give three national characteristics of Russians.” The purpose of these questions was to see what attributes people used characterized the two dominant nationalities in each country: the titular nationality and Russians. While the responses of the Russian population of these countries provide interesting information, our main focus is on the responses of members of the occupied titular nation. Thus, what kind of attributes do Latvians use to describe themselves and what attributes do Latvians use

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<sup>1</sup>Interview subjects of all nationalities were asked to give characteristics for the country’s titular nationality (Latvians in Latvia, Ukrainians in Ukraine, and Belarusians in Belarus), as well as characteristics for Russians.

to describe Russians? How do Ukrainians in Galicia describe the Ukrainian nationality vs. the Russian nationality? By comparison, how do Ukrainians in Eastern Ukraine describe each group? Similarly, in what terms do Belarusians speak of themselves and Russians?

Asking interview subjects to use their own words to describe these nationalities lends great insight into the historical relationships between groups. For our purposes it also pointedly demonstrates the lengths that individuals of the formerly occupied nation will go to distinguish themselves from Russians. Because these were open-ended interviews, subjects were prompted for three characteristics each but were allowed to answer freely. Many gave the requested number of characteristics, but many subjects also discussed at greater length the national characteristics of each group, often becoming emotional in their responses. To be sure, these questions tap into deeply rooted beliefs and historical memories, beliefs that continue to manifest themselves today in the political preferences of citizens. Before proceeding, I should simply point out that the descriptions and attitudes toward particular national groups that I report below are not my own. Rather, I seek to reproduce the subjective cultural portraits of various national groups, as painted by members of different – and often hostile – nationalities.

### 3.1.1 National characteristics of Latvians and Russians in Latvia

Identity boundaries separating the occupied from the occupier are most apparent in Latvia, where ethnic Latvians rarely used similar words to describe themselves and Russians. Characteristics attributed to Latvians included patient, not aggressive, orderly, honest, inquisitive, and strong communities. By contrast, Russians were described by many Latvians as being chauvinists, unconstrained, patriotic, and inclined to think that they're heroes. Besides these collective generalizations, individual respondents often drew contrasting pictures of Latvians and Russians. According to a 67-year old Latvian woman living in a working-class neighborhood of Riga, Latvians are "hard working, proud, and clever." Russians, she asserted, are "simple and brutal" by contrast (Riga #2, 9/9/08). One respondent, a 40-year old Latvian man working as a driver, pithily declared, "Latvians work with their brains, Russians work with their muscles"(Riga #5, 9/10/08). Another

respondent, a well-off director of a construction company, commented on work habits as well, stating that “Latvians are practical: they earn money but buy only what they need. Russians, on the other hand, work hard for their money, but then they buy things they don’t need and waste their last [penny]”(Riga #29, 9/12/08). Several respondents commented on what it was they assumed the Russians to be doing with their wages: “Russians are not good workers and they drink lots of vodka”(Riga #28, 9/12/08). By contrast, many Latvians claimed that their own nationality enjoys working and does it well.

Conceptions about politics and the relation to power emerged in several interviews. A 35-year old female accountant living in central Riga asserted that Russians are patriots “but authoritarian [patriots]”(Riga #19, 9/12/08). Another Latvian claimed that “Russians have an open soul but need a controlling authority”(Riga #23, 9/12/08). When asked whether he thought that Russians were culturally suited for democracy, one man responded, “it depends, some people are and others are not. Historically, [Russians] are more inclined to authoritarianism,” suggesting that their suitability to live under democracy was somewhat dubious (Riga #4, 9/10/08).

Not surprisingly, one does not have to scratch deep in order to reveal lingering mistrust and raw feelings about Latvia’s former imperial occupiers. When the driver quoted above was asked whether Latvia’s future lies with the West or with Russia he lamented, “If Russia comes to Latvia, then our future will be with Russia,” hinting that in his opinion another Russian invasion was always possible (Riga #5, 9/10/08). Another respondent, a 66 year-old man with a secondary technical education, was more blunt: “Latvians don’t always know what they want, but they work a lot. Russians are thieves, they take people’s money and other things. They like to be the boss, they’re controlling, the worst people in the world. They occupied our country and we couldn’t breathe in Latvia. Russians are the cause of all problems in Latvia”(Riga #25, 9/12/08). When asked whether he believed that Latvians were culturally suited for democracy, he answered “yes.” Not surprisingly, when asked the same of Russians, he responded with an emphatic “NO!”

These responses are just a sampling from the 30 open-ended interviews on national identity and political preferences conducted with residents of Latvia in 2008. While we

treat them with the usual care given a small sample size, the fact that Latvian respondents consistently described themselves and their cultural characteristics in starkly different terms than they described Russians is suggestive of the identity boundaries that have been erected between the two groups. Furthermore, we should note that Latvians don't simply describe themselves and Russians differently, but they often dichotomize their descriptions, using positive attributes to describe themselves and negative attributes to describe Russians. While it is not surprising that members of a given nationality would describe themselves positively, it is the demonization of Russians that stands out. Though there is insufficient space to present interview responses of Russians in Latvia, it should be pointed out that while Russians often used critical descriptors of Latvians, they were on whole more generous in their descriptions of Latvians than vice versa. This suggests that the perceived cultural gap between Latvians and Russians appears much larger to the formerly occupied (Latvians) than to the former occupier (Russians). Below I will present survey evidence that supports this conclusion, as well as evidence suggesting that this dichotomization of identities has influenced mass beliefs about democracy as well.

### 3.1.2 National characteristics of Ukrainians and Russians in Ukraine

It is perhaps not surprising that we should see evidence of a perceived cultural divide between Latvians and Russians, as the two are distinct nationality groups that do not share a common linguistic or religious heritage. In other words, some might argue that even without the experience of occupation, Latvians would still seek to distance themselves from Russians on identity terms because they are simply a different nationality. In order to untangle this issue we require two groups that share a common national identity but differ in their experience of foreign occupation. Such a situation can be found in Ukraine when we compare the beliefs of Galician Ukrainians, who experienced the "national awakening" under Hapsburg rule prior to Soviet occupation in 1939, with the beliefs of the Ukrainians of Eastern Ukraine, who were long subjects of the Russian (and later Soviet) empire. By controlling for nationality as we do, it is possible to observe differences in how each group of Ukrainians defines their own nationality as well as how they define Russians.



My theory predicts that Galician Ukrainians will be more likely to differentiate themselves from Russians than will Eastern Ukrainians, a prediction that was supported by the field interviews.

### **Ukrainians in Galicia**

As expected, Ukrainians interviewed in the city of Lviv (the largest city on the modern-day territory of Galicia) described their own nationality in starkly different terms than they described Russians. Among the characteristics they attributed to Ukrainians were welcoming, tolerant, courageous, hard-working, responsible, individualistic, and (tellingly) “not Russian.” By contrast, Russians were described by Galician Ukrainians with such words as stubborn, imperial, chauvinistic, patriotic, chaotic, and arrogant. There were also described as having no respect for their elders, being heavy drinkers, and prone to such vices as lewd behavior and hoarding with little self-control.

In addition to these general distinctions, individual respondents drew sharp contrasts when describing the cultural characteristics of Ukrainians and Russians. Indeed, one respondent found the difference so obvious that it was enough to reply that “Ukrainians are Ukrainians, Russians are Russians”(Lviv #3, 7/17/08). For this 36 year-old driver, comparing Russians to Ukrainians was like comparing apples to oranges. A retired teacher was more concrete in her assessment: Ukrainians are “loyal, practical, and they care about friends and family.” Russians, on the other hand, “have anger towards their neighbors, they’re uncultured, and alcoholics”(Lviv #20, 7/19/08). Another respondent, a 51-year old office worker in the energy sector, asserted that “Ukrainians are industrious, kind, open, and generous. I have a hard time accepting Russians; they don’t like us, they don’t recognize the famine”(Lviv#9, 7/18/08).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>The latter comment refers to the famine in Ukraine of 1932-33 at the height of Stalin’s collectivization of agriculture. The tragedy is a persistent source of friction between Ukraine and Russia in general, and Russians and Ukrainians in particular due to the fact that many Ukrainians (especially those with nationalist sympathies) view the event as the attempted genocide of Ukrainians. For most of the Soviet era, the occurrence of the Ukrainian famine was officially denied by Soviet authorities. In the post-Soviet era the argument has shifted from that between those who denied its existence and those who accepted it, to a conflict between those who claim that it was explicitly anti-Ukrainian and those (including many Russians) who assert that it was a time of general suffering not aimed at any particular nationality.

When discussing Russians' attributes many Galicians referenced Russia's tendency toward domination. One middle-aged resident of central Lviv stated in no uncertain terms that "Russians are imperialists - they think that Ukraine is not a state, that it belongs to them"(Lviv #5, 7/17/08). Another woman, highly educated with a comfortable material situation, was even more blunt, declaring that the main goal facing the country is "to get rid of the Russians and become an independent country"(Lviv #8, 7/18/08). For, she asserted, "Russians have claim to the whole world." Thus, the binds that tied Ukraine and Russia during the Soviet era (and earlier) were unnatural and based on force. As one interviewee stated, "the brotherhood of nations [the idea that Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus all belonged to a natural Slavic brotherhood] is a myth"(Lviv #6, 7/18/08). And so the dissolution of those ties was a fundamental turning point in the development of the Ukrainian nation, as understood by the residents of Western Ukraine: "If the Soviet Union had stayed together, our future would have been tied with Russia, but now it lies with the West"(Lviv #1, 7/17/08).

As was the case in Latvia, political distinctions also entered the discussion of cultural characteristics of Russians and Ukrainians. A 49-year old public transport dispatcher, when asked whether Ukrainians were culturally suited for democracy, replied that "democracy suits Ukraine, but not all parts of Ukraine," referring to the heavily Russian eastern portion of the country(Lviv #4, 7/17/08). Another respondent, acknowledging the rocky path that has beset Ukraine's democracy, remarked that "even compared to us [Ukrainians], Russians are still far from [being suited for] democracy. Their president is like their Tsar"(Lviv #7, 7/18/08). A 41-year old heating system specialist flatly stated that "Russians aren't suited for democracy... Look what kind of government they have"(Lviv #5, 7/17/08).

The picture painted by the Ukrainians of Galicia is a stark one: there is very little that Ukrainians and Russians have in common, for the latter are uncultured, domineering imperialists who have little capacity for democratic rule, in contrast to the good-natured Ukrainian people.

### Ukrainians in Eastern Ukraine

The picture painted by Ukrainians in the eastern Ukrainian (and heavily Russian) city of Donetsk is very different from the one described above. Russians and Ukrainians have lived side by side in the Donbass region (Ukraine's coal-producing region) for centuries. While Ukrainians in Donetsk do acknowledge cultural differences between Russians and Ukrainians, most of the vitriol for Russians found in Galicia is absent in the East. Rather than viewing Russians as foreign invaders, the Ukrainians of Eastern Ukraine view them as Slavic brethren with whom they share many important cultural traits.

In fact, it proved difficult to obtain different lists of cultural characteristics for Ukrainians and Russians when interviewing Ukrainians in Donetsk, as most interview subjects simply answered that Russians and Ukrainians shared similar traits. A young Ukrainian woman working as an advertising manager believed that "Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine should be closely integrated," noting that all three cultures are closer to the traditions of the East rather than the West (Donetsk #5, 8/20/08). When pressed for cultural traits, she stated that "Ukrainians and Russians drink a lot and they're not punctual. But Ukrainians and Russians are practically the same culturally." An elderly pensioner attributed traits of kindness, friendship, and mutual understanding to Ukrainians. As for Russians, she said, "Russians are the same. We lived together as brothers for a long time"(Donetsk #7, 8/21/08). Another interviewee, a 54-year old miner with a secondary technical education, expressed his belief that Ukraine's future was with Russia "and ONLY with Russia. We need to live with Russia like we used to"(Donetsk #13, 8/22/08). Such a shared fate is natural, he reasoned, because "there aren't any real differences between Russians and Ukrainians." These views were echoed by many respondents, including a female factory worker, who asserted that "Russians are just like us"(Donetsk #15, 8/22/08). When asked about Ukraine's orientation toward the West vs. Russia, she replied, "our closest friends are Russia and Belarus. Three brothers that can't be torn apart."

The contrast between Ukrainians in Galicia and Ukrainians in Eastern Ukraine is sharp.<sup>3</sup> While the former seem to want nothing to do with Russians (both literally and cul-

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<sup>3</sup>Some may wonder where the middle of Ukraine falls on this question. Interviews in the central Ukrainian

turally), the latter view Russians as closely related relatives with whom they easily coexist. The absence of hostility between Ukrainians and Russians in Donetsk suggests that Eastern Ukrainians have not engaged in the kind of identity boundary demarcation that took place in Western Ukraine as a result of the Soviet occupation of 1939. While the Galician Ukrainians sought to distinguish themselves (as western, European, and democratic people) from the authoritarian and Asiatic Russians, similarly strong distinctions are absent among Ukrainians farther east. I argue that the consequence of this difference is that a sense of “democraticness” became embedded in the national identity of Western Ukrainians but not Eastern Ukrainians. Survey evidence of this claim will be presented below.

### 3.1.3 National characteristics of Belarusians and Russians in Belarus

As was the case in Eastern Ukraine, in Belarus it is difficult to find Belarusians eager to emphasize cultural differences between themselves and ethnic Russians. There is little evidence of a strong cultural boundary between the two major nationalities of Belarus, unlike the fortified cultural boundaries perceived by Latvians and Galician Ukrainians in their respective territories. The perceived similarities between Russian and Belarusian national identities can be traced to Belarus’ long history as part of the Russian empire dating from the end of the eighteenth century. As was the case with Ukrainians in Eastern Ukraine, Belarusians, not considering the Russians living among them to be occupiers or colonizers, were also amenable to the Soviet-era emphasis on the “Slavic brotherhood” of the Russian, Ukrainian, and Belarusian people. Thus, throughout interviews with residents of Minsk, Brest, and Vitebsk, respondents were much more likely to identify cultural similarities than differences.

Some Belarusian interview subjects did, of course, draw distinctions between them-

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city of Vinnytsia revealed that views are mixed, with some approximating the Galician perspective while others are close to the Eastern perspective. Thus, one respondent answered that “Russians are like dictators, they tell others what to do”(Vinnytsia #12, 8/28/08), while another asserted that “in principle there’s no difference - we’re all Slavic, no more, no less”(Vinnytsia #4, 8/27/08). Given central Ukraine’s place in the Russian empire since the late eighteenth century, we would expect views to tend more toward accommodation between Ukrainians and Russians. However, influences from Western Ukraine are inevitable, as evidence by the varied responses collected in Vinnytsia. Because of the small sample size, no reliable generalizations can be made about the balance of identities in central Ukraine.

selves and Russians, though interestingly these tended to be concentrated in Minsk.<sup>4</sup> One resident of a working-class neighborhood of Minsk, a 57-year old female, drew the following distinction: “Belarusians are hardworking, love to work on the land, not emotional, tolerant, and calm”(Minsk #7, 7/23/08). As for Russians, “I think they’re lazy. I see this right away. They like to brag, like to command.” However, this woman was in the very small minority who spoke about Belarusians and Russians in such different terms. Most were quick to highlight similarities. One resident of Vitebsk, when asked to list the national characteristics of Belarusians, answered that they are “happy, hard working, and sympathetic”(Vitebsk #1, 8/7/08). When asked to name characteristics of Russians, she replied, “Russians are the same people, exactly the same adjectives for them too.” Another Vitebsk resident, a 33-year old man, stated that “Belarusians don’t protest, they shut up inside themselves, and are peace-loving. Russians are brave, and also all the things I said about Belarusians”(Vitebsk #10, 8/7/08). A pensioner in Brest answered that Belarusians are “hard-working, patient, and friendly” and that when it comes to Russians, “we are all the same”(Brest #12, 8/19/08). Indeed, it was a commonly repeated theme: “We are a mixed people, we are all the same”(Minsk #2, 7/23/08)... “We are the same as Russians”(Brest #3, 8/19/08)... “Russians are the same as us”(Brest #11, 8/19/08).

Thus, while Russian and Belarusian are distinct officially recognized nationalities with unique languages and cultural traditions, they are perceived by Belarusians and Russians alike as being as similar as closely related cousins or even brothers. This mutually accepted similarity has prevented the dichotomization and boundary building that has occurred in Latvia and Galicia between the titular nationalities of those locations and Russians precisely because the Belarusians do not consider Soviet rule to have been an occupation. Rather than something imposed by advancing armies in 1940, Soviet rule was simply the continuation of a long history of Russian rule, in which Russians and Belarusians had long lived together peacefully. There is minimal evidence of the kind of mistrust of Russians that

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<sup>4</sup>We might expect stronger distinctions to be drawn in the western city of Brest, given its proximity to Poland and its history as part of interwar Poland. But such an expectation is not borne out, as residents of Brest uniformly have positive things to say about Russians. This would suggest that Polish rule over Brest between the World Wars was not sufficient to overcome the legacy of 125 years of Russian imperial rule prior to that.

is prevalent among Latvians and Galician Ukrainians thanks to this harmonious history.

Lacking the motivation to distinguish “us” from “them,” I argue, Belarusians did not seek out, establish, and cultivate cultural divisions in an effort to distinguish their national identity from Russians. While Latvians looked to the West and its example of democratic rule to define themselves, Belarusians were more inclined to look eastward to their Russian brethren. This failure to ingrain a sense of democraticness into the national identity of Belarusians, I argue, would have a lasting impact on the political culture and regime preferences of the people of Belarus.

### 3.2 National identity boundaries and cultural differences: survey evidence

The data from qualitative field interviews presented above offers compelling evidence of Latvians’ and Galician Ukrainians’ instinct to widen the cultural divide between themselves and the Russians that they perceive to be former colonial occupiers. Similarly, we have seen evidence that in parts of the former Russian and Soviet empire that were not occupied after the emergence of strong national identities (Eastern Ukraine and Belarus), this hostility is absent and cultural similarities are professed by most respondents. But do these observations from an admittedly small sample of individuals in a handful of locations represent the views of the broader societies in which they live?

In order to address this question, statistical analyses were performed on the responses to two survey questions that address the cultural differences of interest. These questions are given in table 3.1

#### 3.2.1 National cultural traditions: looking east or west?

The first set of question addresses the cultural traditions to which particular nationalities are closer. For example, Latvians were asked whether Latvia is closer to the cultural traditions of the East or the West.<sup>5</sup> Then they were asked whether Russia is closer to the cultural traditions of the East or West. The same procedure was followed in Ukraine and

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<sup>5</sup>“Neither East nor West/both East and West” was not read by survey interviewers but was coded as a middle option between East and West if given by the respondent.

Table 3.1: Culture, National Identity, and Democracy (2007-2008)

Question	Answer Set
Q42-43. Is Russia/ Belarus/ Ukraine/ Latvia closer to the cultural traditions of the West or the East?	-1) West; 0) West and East equally; 1) East
Q38-41. Russians/ Belarusians/ Ukrainians/ Latvians are suited for a democratic political system	1) strongly disagree; 2) disagree; 3) agree; 4) strongly agree

Belarus, using the appropriate titular nation in the first part of the question and always asking about Russia in the second part of the question. Respondents of all nationalities were asked both parts of the question in order to compare the differences among nationalities. Thus, for the nationality groups in question, we emerge with a picture of where they place their own cultural tradition as well as the cultural tradition of the other major nationality in the country. It is therefore the distances between these placements that is of interest to us as we attempt to observe the perceived cultural gaps and identity boundaries between nationalities in these former Soviet countries.

The main independent variable of interest varied depending on country. In Latvia, our key variable is a dummy variable for Latvian nationality. For the analyses presented in this chapter, respondents were coded as “Latvian” if they reported their nationality as Latvian and gave both parents’ nationalities as Latvian. While this excludes children of mixed marriages from being coded as Latvian, the distinction allows us to isolate those of pure Latvian descent who are most likely to carry a stronger sense of Latvian national identity. It also allows us to weed out those who, for contemporary instrumental reasons, might be inclined to report their nationality as Latvian even though their parents were not Latvians. In any case, the empirical distinction is not large, with 533 out of 1,000 respondents coded as “Latvian” under this more restrictive definition, compared to 626 that give their nationality as Latvian. Regressions run with each measure are similar, with slightly larger effects found for “pure” Latvians, as would be expected. Due to space

constraints, only the results for the more restrictive definition of Latvian are presented here. In Ukraine, we limit the analysis to individuals reporting their nationality as Ukrainian, thus allowing us to compare the residents of Galicia to other residents of Ukraine while holding nationality constant. Thus, the key independent variable of interest is a dummy variable for Ukrainians living in Galicia who report that they or their ancestors have lived in the region for over 50 years. The latter condition helps us identify those who have the deepest roots in Galicia and are most likely to be bearers of the pre-Soviet Ukrainian national identity due to longer family histories in the region. Finally, in Belarus our independent variable of interest is a dummy variable for Belarusian nationality, as reported by the respondent.<sup>6</sup>

The dependent variables – whether a particular country is closer to the cultural traditions of the East or the West – are regressed on these key explanatory variables and on control variables: gender, urbanization, age, education, household material situation, employment status, and the regional level of economic development.<sup>7</sup> Some of these variables will be the focus of later chapters and will not be addressed here. All models were estimated as ordered logit models using five multiply-imputed data sets; estimates include corrections for survey design effects appropriate for multistage cluster sampling methods.

Regression results are presented in table 3.10, which appears on page 141 of the statistical appendix to this chapter. A total of six regressions are carried out, as respondents in each country (Latvia, Ukraine, and Belarus) are asked about the cultural tradition of the country in which they live as well as the cultural tradition of Russia. Because the substantive results of ordered logit regressions are not easily interpreted and to aid in the concise presentation of key results, figures 3.1 - 3.3 present graphs of predicted probabilities based on the regression results.<sup>8</sup> These graphs present the predicted probability that a respondent will answer that a country (whether their own or Russia) is closer to the cultural

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<sup>6</sup>Unfortunately in Belarus and Ukraine we do not have data about the nationality of the respondent's parents. Nonetheless, it is not likely that this fact affects the regression results in a significant way.

<sup>7</sup>As measured by average oblast/regional monthly wages (2000 USD) in 2007.

<sup>8</sup> Predicted probabilities are calculated by varying the key independent variable of interest (Latvian, Galician, or Belarusian depending on which country is being analyzed) while setting control variables at reasonable values. For all calculations of predicted probabilities in this chapter, continuous and ordinal variables like age, education, material situation, and regional economic development are held at the national mean. Binary variables for gender and urbanization are set to represent female city-dwellers.



traditions of the West. Each figure consists of two charts: one plotting probabilities for members of the titular nationality (top) and one plotting probabilities for ethnic Russians (bottom). Each chart plots two quantities: probabilities of answering that the country of residence is close to the West (left) and probabilities of answering that Russia is close to the West (right). Thus, we are able to compare how ethnic Latvians view the cultural traditions of Latvia and Russia (top graph of figure 3.1) and how ethnic Russians in Latvia view the cultural traditions of Latvia and Russia (bottom graph of figure 3.1).

Turning to the top graph in figure 3.1, we see that ethnic Latvians have a 73 percent probability of answering that Latvia is closer to the cultural traditions of the West. But only 12 percent of Latvians would attribute Western cultural traditions to Russia, instead seeing the latter as embodying a non-Western cultural heritage. This difference in how Latvians characterize Latvia and Russia's national cultures – a numerical difference of 61 percentage points – is an indicator of the cultural divide perceived by Latvians between themselves and Russians. The distinction that Latvians make is clear: Latvia belong to western cultural traditions, while Russia belongs to a different cultural tradition altogether. Thus, Latvians believe that they share few cultural similarities with the Russians of the East who once occupied and colonized their country for 50 years.

Interestingly, the former “occupiers” who remained in Latvia after the collapse of the Soviet Union also perceive a wide cultural difference between Latvia and Russia, though this gap is not as wide as that perceived by Latvians. Examining the lower graph in figure 3.1, we see that Russians have a 68 percent probability of answering that Latvia is closer to western cultural traditions (slightly lower than the .73 probability calculated for Latvians). But ethnic Russians in Latvia are rather more inclined to place Russia among western cultures (probability = 0.26) than were their Latvian countrymen (probability = 0.12). Thus, Russians seem to perceive a smaller cultural divide between Latvians and Russians than do Latvians, a result that is consistent with my theory of national identity-based boundary building among the occupied nationality.

We see similar evidence of national identity dichotomization when we examine results from Ukraine, which are presented in figure 3.2. The top chart shows predicted probabilities

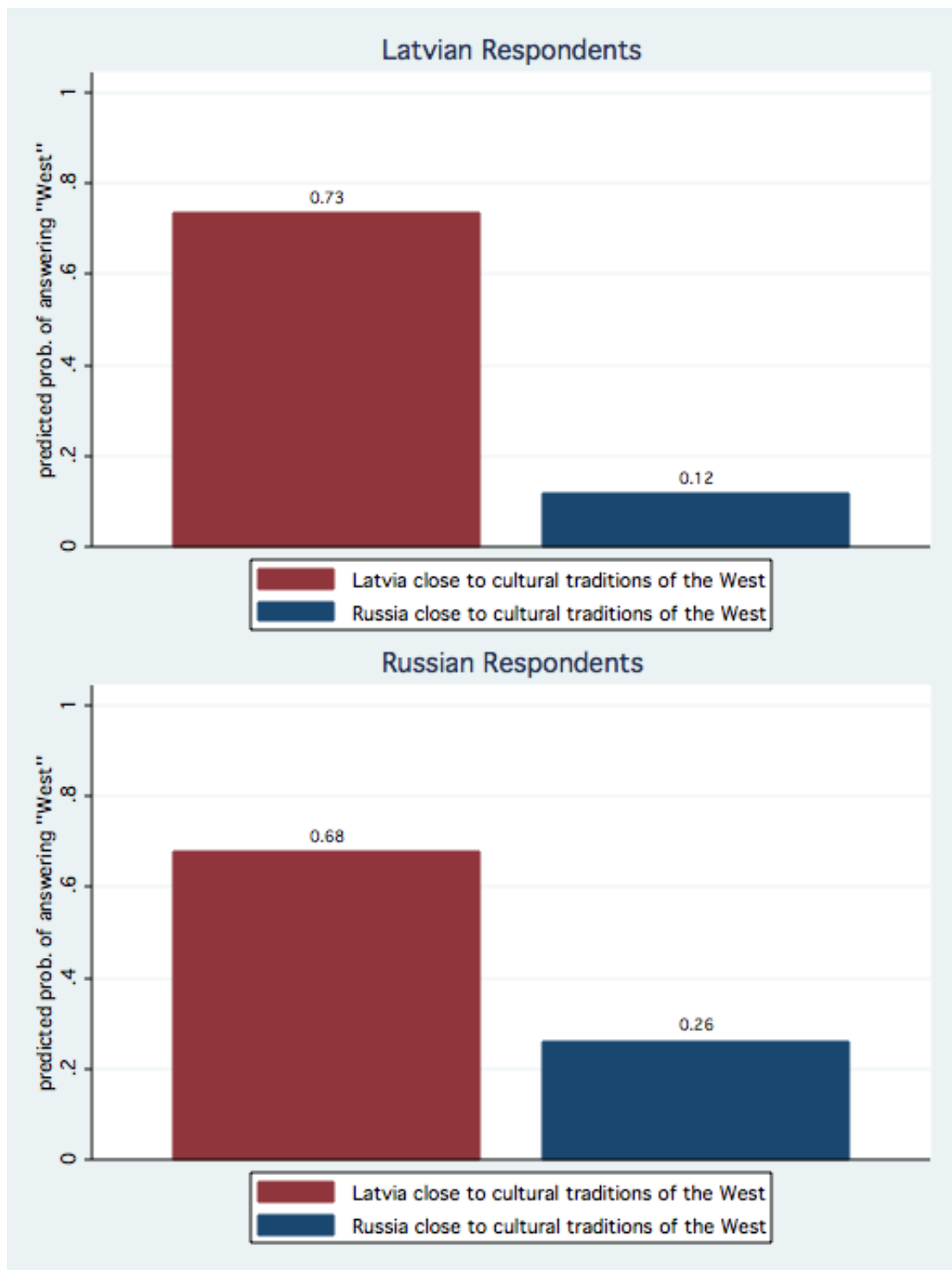


Figure 3.1: Q42-Q43 Latvia: Is Latvia/Russia closer to the cultural traditions of the East or the West?

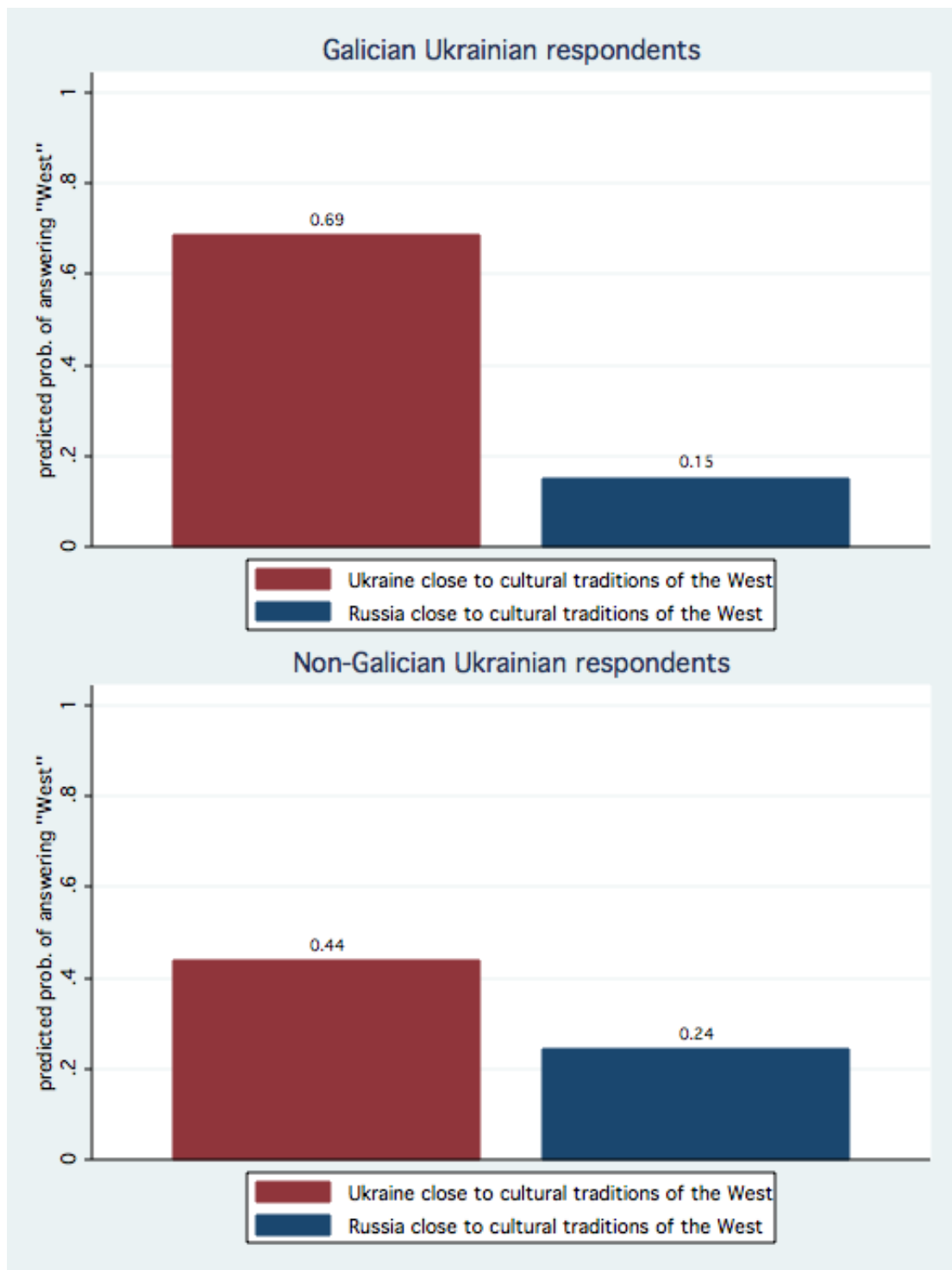


Figure 3.2: Q42-Q43 Ukraine: Is Ukraine/Russia closer to the cultural traditions of the East or the West?

for Galician Ukrainians; the bottom chart displays predicted probabilities for non-Galician Ukrainians. Again, the perceived gap between “our” Ukrainian cultural traditions and “their” Russian cultural traditions is large in Galicia. Ukrainians in Galicia (top chart) are highly likely to place Ukraine within the sphere of western cultural traditions, with a predicted probability of 69 percent. By contrast, their probability of attributing western cultural traditions to Russia is only 15 percent, a difference of 54 percentage points. The implication is clear: the Ukrainians of Galicia, whose ancestors experienced the national awakening and blossoming of Ukrainian national identity under Hapsburg rule, consider themselves to be firmly rooted in western culture, unlike the Russians who came from the East to rule over them beginning in 1939.

Shifting to the lower chart of figure 3.2, which illustrates the national cultural beliefs of Ukrainians outside of Galicia, we see evidence of a much narrower perceived gap between Ukrainian cultural traditions and Russian traditions. As was seen in the qualitative evidence presented above, Ukrainians residents of territories long ruled by the Russian empire are less likely to draw the sharp distinctions and identity boundaries than are their Galician conationals. This narrower gap is the result of two dynamics: Ukrainians outside Galicia are less likely to assert that Ukraine is closer to the cultural traditions of the West, with a predicted probability of 0.44. At the same time, they are more generous in their evaluations of Russia, answering that the latter is tied to western cultural traditions with a predicted probability of 24 percent. Thus, the gap for non-Galician Ukrainians is only 20 percentage points, less than half of the perceived gap for Galician Ukrainians. As expected, the cultural and identity differentiation among the Ukrainians of Galicia is much stronger than among other Ukrainians.

This brings us to the results for Belarus, where we do not expect to find strong evidence of a perceived cultural gap between Belarus and Russia due to the historic harmony between these two “Slavic brothers.” Predicted probabilities from the analysis of Belarusian survey data are presented in figure 3.3, with the top panel displaying results for Belarusian respondents and the bottom panel displaying probabilities for Russian respondents in Belarus. What is striking about the results from Belarus is the fact that while there

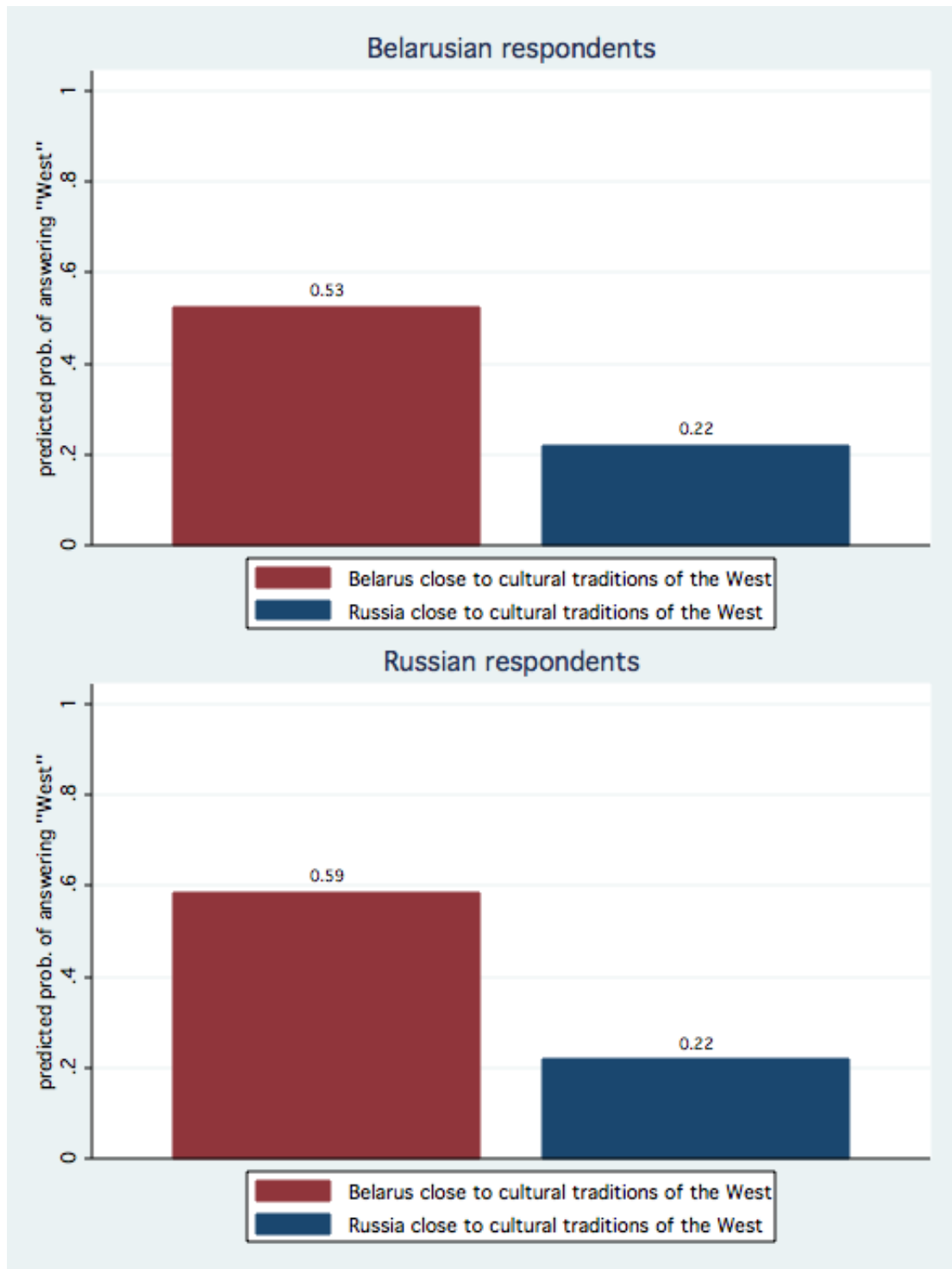


Figure 3.3: Q42-Q43 Belarus: Is Belarus/Russia closer to the cultural traditions of the East or the West?

is somewhat of a perceived gap between the cultural traditions of Belarus and Russia, the results for Belarusians and Russians are practically identical. Belarusians have a 53 percent probability of claiming a western cultural tradition for Belarus, while Russians are slightly more likely to make the same claim (probability = 0.59). Both groups are identical in their assessment of Russia's cultural traditions: Belarusian and Russian respondents each claim that Russia is closer to the cultural traditions of the West with a predicted probability of 22 percent. Thus, while Belarusians are somewhat more inclined to see Belarus as belonging to the Western tradition than they are to see Russian culture in western terms, the gap is considerably smaller than that found among Latvians and Galician Ukrainians. It is important to note, however, that there is virtually no disagreement between Belarusians and Russians, as each group comes to similar conclusions regarding the cultural traditions of Russia and Belarus. This suggests, as predicted, that there is not a strong dichotomization of identities that separates Belarusians from their Russian countrymen.

As further evidence of the dynamics I've described in this section, all qualitative interview subjects were asked whether their country's future should be more closely tied with the West or with Russia. The pattern of responses was predictable. In Latvia, Latvians saw their future with the West while Russians hope that Latvia's future will bring it closer to Russia. In Ukraine, residents of Galicia proclaimed that Ukraine's future should be with the West "and ONLY with the West," according to one interviewee. Ukrainians in Eastern Ukraine, however, were much more likely to see Ukraine's future as tied to Russia. Similar dynamics appeared in Belarus, where respondents of both nationalities favored a future in which Belarus was tied more closely to their great neighbor Russia.

### 3.2.2 Cultural divides and suitability for democracy

The qualitative and quantitative evidence presented above makes a strong case for the tendency of certain national groups – Latvians and Galician Ukrainians – to assert major cultural differences between themselves and the ethnic Russians that live among them, the majority of whom appeared during the Soviet era following the occupation of the Baltics and Western Ukraine in 1939-1940. But are political characteristics, particularly a cultural

suitability for a particular kind of political system, among the characteristics that these populations use to distinguish themselves from Russians? In other words, is a democratic political culture one of the dimensions that is used to separate “us” from “them?”

The qualitative evidence presented above suggested that a nation’s political culture is a frequent point of differentiation, based on the tendency of Latvians and Galician Ukrainians to identify Russians as being “authoritarian,” “controlling,” and in need of a strong hand or Tsar to rule them. These findings are mirrored in survey results whereby respondents were asked their degree of agreement with the statement that “Latvians/Ukrainians/Belarusians/Russians are suited for a democratic political system” (see table 3.1).<sup>9</sup> As with the question of western vs. eastern cultural orientations, respondents were asked to evaluate the titular nationality’s suitability for democratic rule and Russians’ suitability for democratic rule. Respondents were able to strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree that “[Ethnic] Russians are suited for a democratic political system.”

Of course, it is natural for us to wonder what it is that makes a particular nationality or culture “suited” for democracy. While an interesting question in its own right, any objective cultural traits or conditions that enhance a group’s ability to sustain democracy are not central to the current line of inquiry. Rather, it is the subjective perception that one’s own culture is ideally equipped to handle democratic rule that matters, even if individuals are unable to articulate more specific characteristics that support the broader perception. For example, an American off the street can believe that the entrepreneurial spirit of the American Dream is part of Americans’ national character without being able to put his finger on more specific characteristics of optimism, determination, and strong work ethic that make achieving that dream possible. Nor must he be able to give a well-reasoned discussion of the structural and institutional factors in the modern American economy that influence a business’ chances of success in order to believe that commitment to the American Dream is part of the basic national culture of Americans. So too should we understand the idea of

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<sup>9</sup>It is important to note that the wording of questions in the various languages was selected so as to refer explicitly to the ethno/national groups under question, not to the country itself. Thus (for example), respondents were asked whether ethnic Russians (русские) are suited for democracy, not whether Russia itself or Russian citizens (россияне) are suited for democratic rule, thereby attempting to tap into perceptions about the ethno-national group itself.

cultural suitability for democracy. Respondents might not be able to pinpoint exactly what it is that makes certain nationalities suited for democracy; after all, we as scholars also struggle to achieve this goal. Indeed, it is possible that there are no objective traits that are particular to entire national groups that make them more likely to sustain democracy. But what is more important for the argument I make is the fact that members of certain nationalities *believe* that theirs is especially suited for democratic rule, something that distinguishes them from other nations. It is this *belief* that “democraticness” is embedded in one’s own national identity, I argue, that bolsters popular support for democracy among certain nations.

Returning to the empirical results, full ordered logit regression results are presented in table 3.14 on page 144 of appendix 3.6. Predicted probabilities that respondents will agree or strongly agree with the statement that “X are suited for a democratic political system” are presented in figures 3.4 - 3.6.

In the top panel of figure 3.4, we see that Latvians are much more likely to agree that their own national group is suited for democratic rule ( $p=0.76$ ) than they are to agree that ethnic Russians are suited for democracy ( $p=0.41$ ). This, I argue, is evidence that Latvians are inclined to believe that suitability for democracy is a cultural trait embedded in their national identity. Russians and their national culture, they suggest, are not amenable to democratic rule. Not surprisingly, Russians in Latvia view the situation somewhat differently. While they are very likely to agree that Latvians are suited for democratic rule with a probability of 0.74, they are also very likely to agree that they themselves are suited for democracy ( $p=0.63$ ). A familiar pattern emerges: Latvians are inclined to draw sharper distinctions between their national identities and those of Russians, including when it comes to perceptions of national political culture: “we” are a democratic people, “they” are not.

Similar results obtain in Ukraine, predicted probabilities for which are graphed in figure 3.5. Among the Ukrainians of Galicia we find the expected results: they are inclined to agree with a probability of 78 percent that Ukrainians are suited for democratic rule. However, they are only 45 percent likely to say the same for ethnic Russians, evidence of the



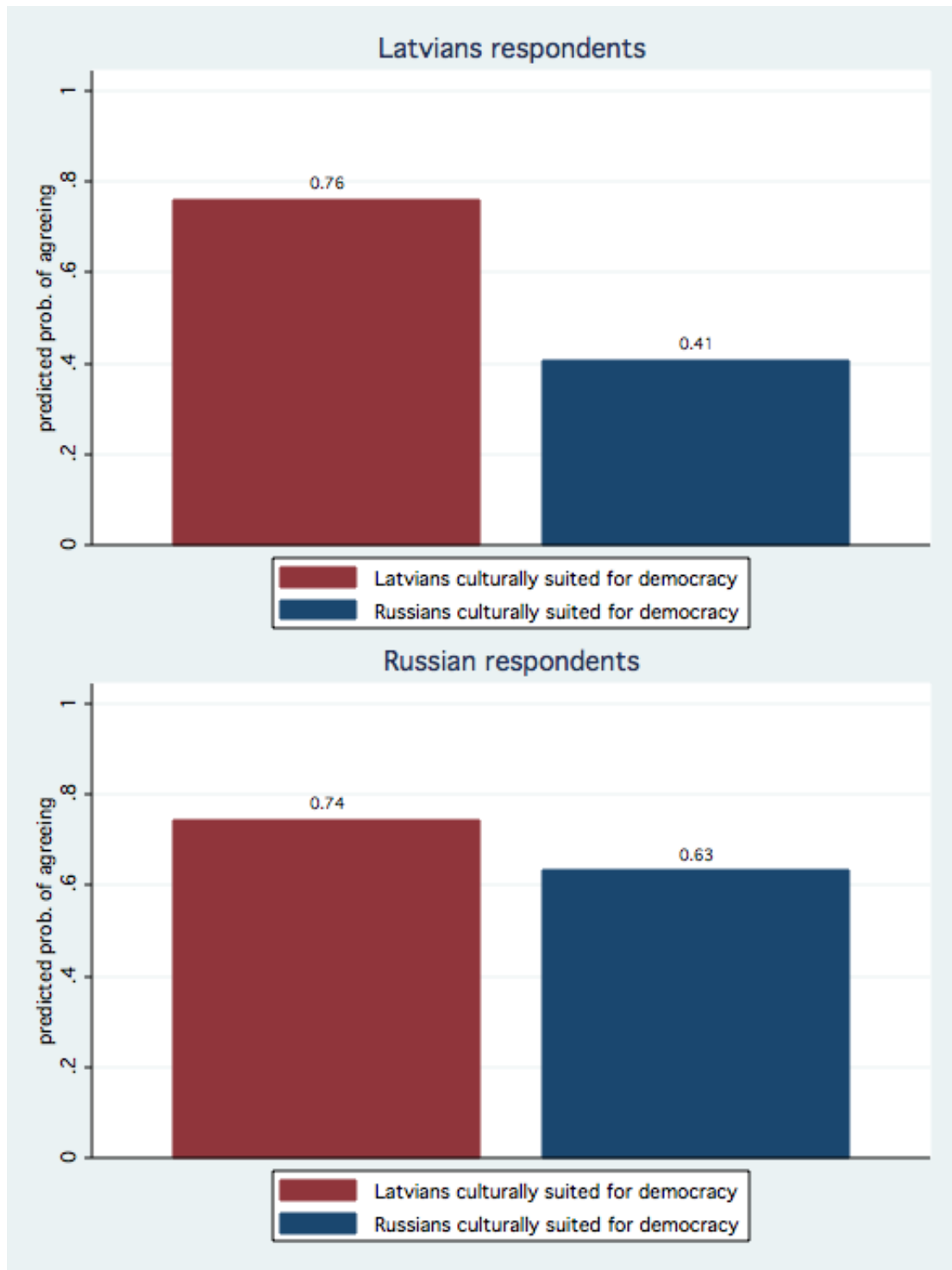


Figure 3.4: Q38-Q41 Latvia: Latvians/Russians are culturally suited for democracy

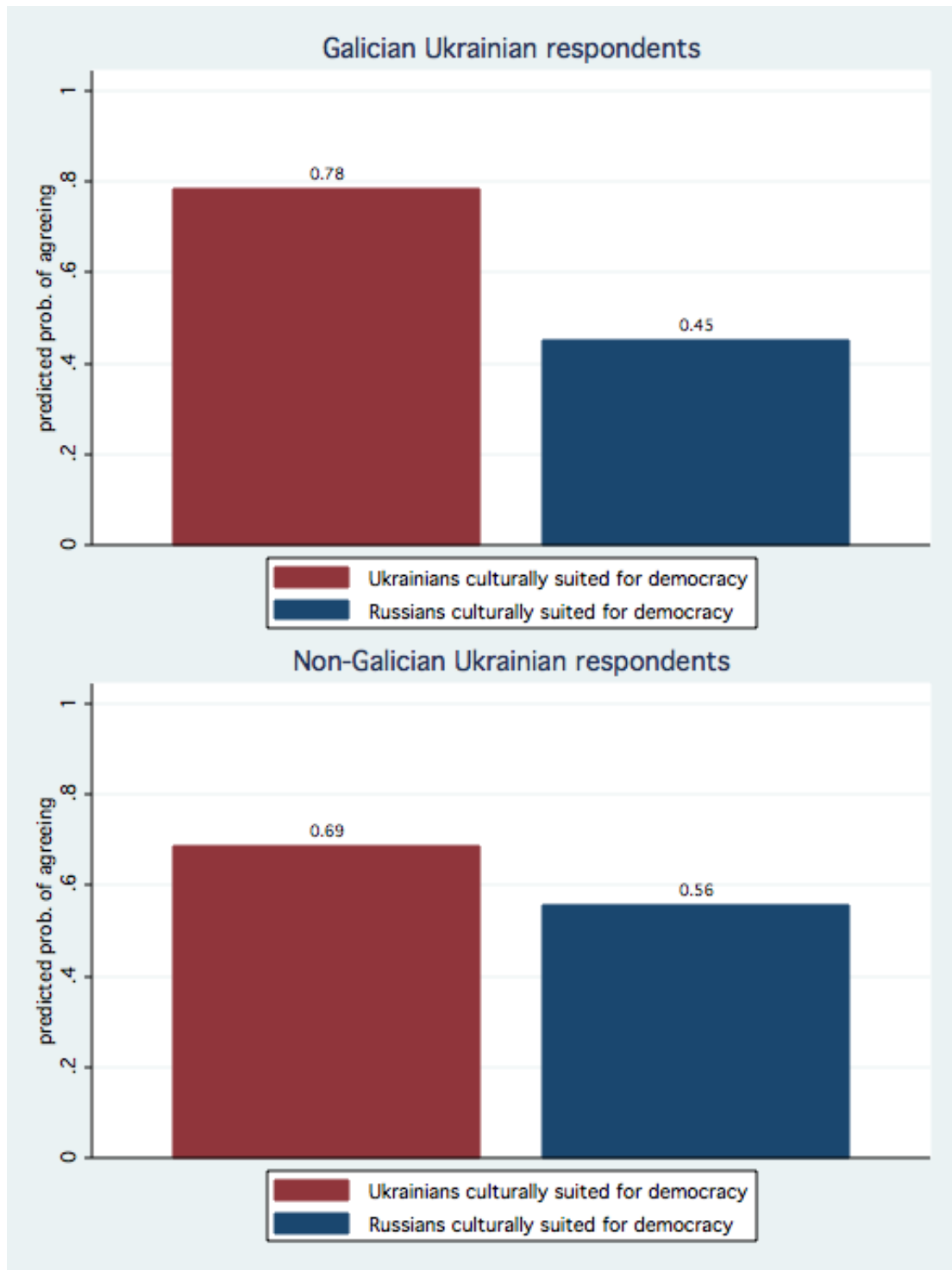


Figure 3.5: Q38-Q41 Ukraine: Ukrainians/Russians are culturally suited for democracy

perceived boundary between “us” and “them.” Ukrainians outside of Galicia, predictably, do not see such a wide gap between the political cultures of Ukrainians and Russians. They are 69 percent likely to agree that Ukrainians are suited for democracy and 56 percent likely to agree that Russians are suited for democracy as well. Thus, democratic political culture appears to be a much more salient identity boundary among Galicians than among other Ukrainians, as predicted by my theory.

Finally, figure 3.6 presents results from Belarus. Reflecting the lack of antagonism between Belarusians and Russians, the former are equally optimistic about democracy as a culturally appropriate form of rule for both nationalities: they agree with a probability of 0.74 that Belarusians and Russians are suited for democratic rule. The Russians in Belarus are similarly accommodating, agreeing with a probability of 0.78 that Belarusians are suited for democratic rule and making the same judgement on their own political culture with a probability of 0.69. Thus, the distinction between a democratic “us” and an authoritarian “them” that is clearly defined among Latvians and Galician Ukrainians simply does not appear as a salient component of Belarusian national identity.

Throughout this chapter I have attempted to present evidence supporting my theory that nations that come under foreign occupation after they have developed strong national identities (such as Latvia and the Ukrainians of Galicia) are prone to building cultural barriers between themselves and members of the occupying nationality by emphasizing differences – in national identity terms – between the groups. This struggle to delegitimize the occupation by highlighting the foreignness of “them” and their rule over “us” results in the increased salience of a variety of dichotomous identity attributes. Under occupation, Latvians and Galician Ukrainians were thus inclined to emphasize their attachment to western cultural traditions, in contrast to the eastern cultural traditions of their Soviet/Russian occupiers. Similarly, I have argued, these nations developed a belief that members of their ethno-national group were culturally suited for democratic rule, as befits a western, European nation. This trait, they suggest, is one of the many that distinguishes their own nationality from Russians, who are believed to be inherently ill-suited for democracy. On the other hand, we have explored parts of the former Russian and Soviet empires where

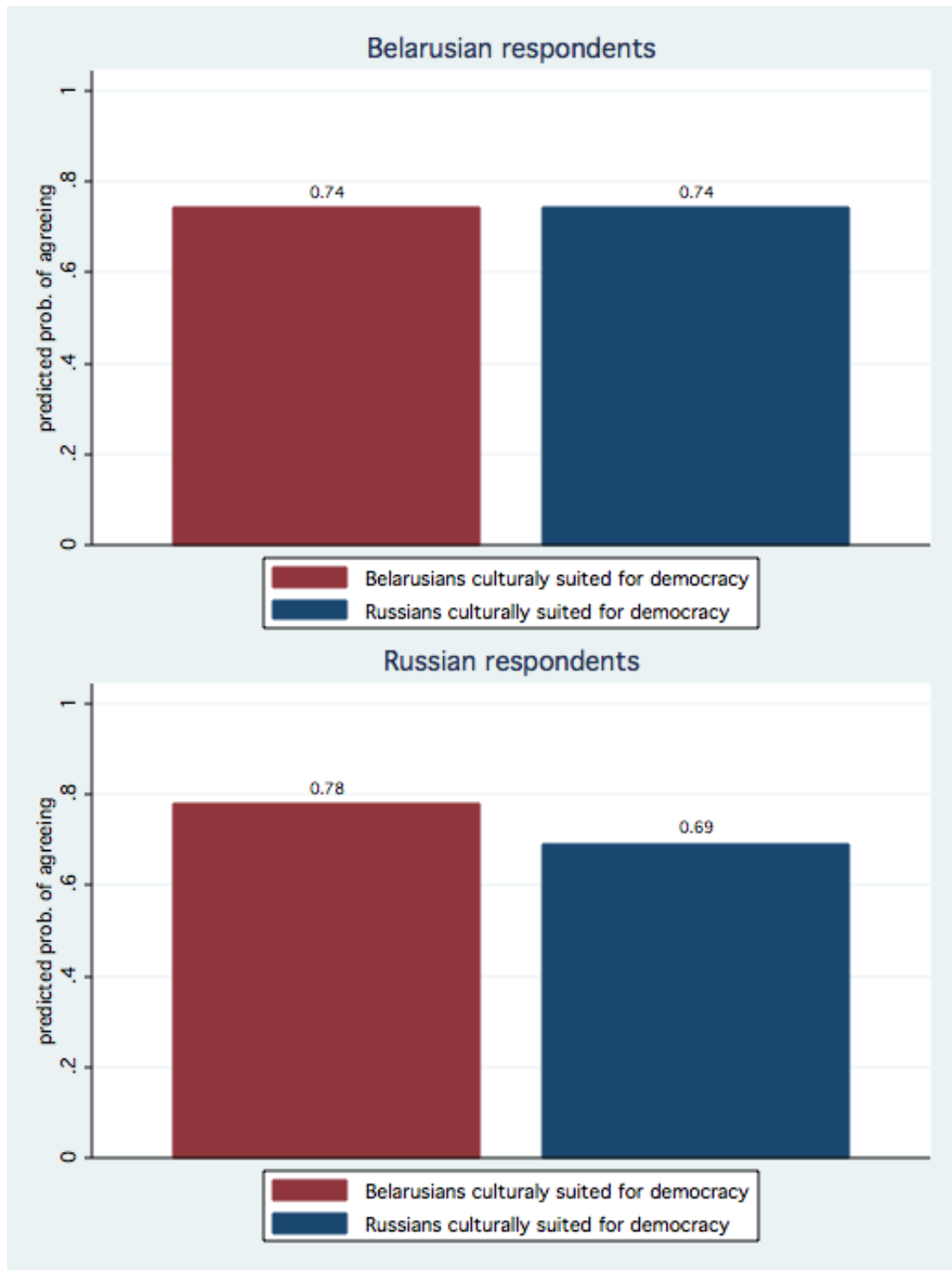


Figure 3.6: Q38-Q41 Belarus: Belarusians/Russians are culturally suited for democracy

national identity was not strongly established prior to their inclusion in the empire. Thus, when Belarusians and the Ukrainians of Eastern and Central Ukraine experienced the “national awakening” during the golden age of nationalism in the nineteenth century, they did so already integrated into the political structure of the Russian empire. They were never thought to have been “occupied” by Russians in the traditional sense, for the Russians had arrived before there was a strong sense that “they” were different from “us.” Perhaps more importantly, when the national awakening among the Belarusians and Ukrainians of Imperial Russia did occur, the reins of mass culture, publication, and education were firmly in the hands of imperial authorities. These authorities, like their Soviet successors, were inclined to emphasize the cultural similarities between the three “Slavic brothers,” resulting in national identities that did not seek to draw sharp distinctions and build cultural barriers. Lacking this impetus to separate “us” from “them,” I argue, Belarusians and Eastern Ukrainians have not developed a democratic cultural myth as part of their national identities. In short, the idea that “we” are fundamentally democratic is not one that is deeply ingrained in these people’s national identities. The remainder of this chapter will explore the modern implications of these dynamics.

### 3.3 National ID and Democratic Support - Before Transition

I argue that it is this national myth that “we” are a western, European, and democratic nation that explains higher support for democracy among populations that bear such a myth. The theory presented in chapter 1 suggests that this link between national identity and support for democracy should be strongest prior to major political transition. In other words, we should expect support for democracy to be highest among occupied populations while they are still under foreign occupation. This is because the occupation itself is a fact of everyday life, and residents are constantly reminded of the metropole’s rule through the omnipresence of non-native “colonizers” living and working among them. After gaining independence, it is possible that the memory of occupation and, perhaps, the instinct to draw sharp distinctions between “us” and “them” will slowly fade.

Furthermore, we should expect the link between national identity and democratic

support to be highest prior to transition because citizens in such a situation do not have firsthand experience with democracy.<sup>10</sup> Thus, any information they have about the desirability of democracy is “second hand,” and subject to revision in the post-transition period should democratization take place. Citizens’ revision of assessments of democracy (particularly under conditions of post-transition economic collapse) will be taken up again in chapter 5. But for the time being, let us accept that prior to transition citizens in authoritarian countries without a democratic past – whether members of an occupied territory or not – have limited first-hand information about democracy.

Thus, the positive association with democracy that has become embedded in certain national identities as described above becomes an influential factor in shaping preferences for democracy. Without direct experience to prove otherwise, citizens under the conditions I’ve described have little reason to doubt that the democracy they see thriving in the West is good and desirable. Of course, authoritarian states may seek to counter the idealization of democracy and its western origins, a subject that we will consider in chapter 4, but it is likely that members of occupied nations will be resistant to political socialization by the occupying state. Instead, they will be more likely to accept the wisdom handed down through families and informal social networks about the nation and what it means to be a member of the nation.

### 3.3.1 Nationality and support for democracy in the late Soviet Union

The implication of this argument is that prior to the political transition that tore apart the Soviet Union in 1991, we should see higher support for and evaluations of democracy among Latvians as compared to the Russians living in Latvia, who do not share the democratic national myth. Similarly, we should find higher democratic support among the Ukrainians of Galicia when compared to Ukrainians in Central and Eastern Ukraine. Finally, my theory would predict that Belarusians should *not* show higher support for democracy compared to Russians living in Belarus, as a national sense of “democraticness”

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<sup>10</sup>Recall from chapter 1 that the scope of the argument is limited to those populations in which the vast majority of citizens do not have experience living under democratic rule. As such, citizens who gain democracy following a major political transition are experiencing it for the first time.

has not developed as part of the Belarusian identity myth during centuries of Russian and Soviet rule.

A representative survey of the European USSR carried out in 1990 by Gibson and Duch (1990) allows us to test these arguments. By regressing the key variables of interest – Latvian vs. Russian in Latvia; Galician Ukrainian vs. non-Galician in Ukraine; and Belarusian vs. Russian in Belarus<sup>11</sup> – on several survey questions that address support for democracy and certain liberal freedoms, we are able to see how nationality shaped regime preferences in the late Soviet era. The dependent variables of interest are presented in table 3.2. Summary statistics for these variables appear in the statistical appendix of this chapter.

The first question (A25) that we will consider can be regarded as a fairly direct measure of democratic support: “There is too much democracy in the Soviet Union today,” giving respondents the opportunity to agree or disagree with this statement. As political scientists it is tempting to overanalyze what “too much democracy” means, let alone how to measure it. However, from the perspective of ordinary survey respondents, such a question asked in 1990 would have implied support for the political liberalization and opening of political competition carried out by Gorbachev. For those individuals who believed that liberalization and competition had gone too far in upsetting the status quo of communist political control, there would have been “too much democracy.” Individuals pushing for greater political reforms than what Gorbachev had offered would be inclined to disagree. Thus, this remains a reasonable measure of democratic support among a population with strong and diverse opinions about the democratizing reforms being carried out at the time.

Ordered logit regression results are presented in table 3.16 on page 146 of the appendix. The first column of table 3.16 presents combined results for the Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Because the 1990 survey was representative of the European USSR, the relatively small populations of the Baltics means a relatively small number

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<sup>11</sup>For this analysis, data on the nationality of respondents’ parents was not available. Thus, nationality is simply coded based on what respondents gave as their nationality. The Galicia variable was coded based on a respondent’s place of residence because information about the respondent’s ancestry or length of residence in the region was not included in the survey.

Table 3.2: Questions about Democracy and Freedom (1990)

Question	Answer Set
A22. There is currently too much criticism in Soviet newspapers and magazines.	1) disagree strongly; 2) disagree; 3) uncertain; 4) agree; 5) agree strongly
A25. There is too much democracy in the Soviet Union today.	
A35. It is better to live in an orderly society than to allow people so much freedom that they can become disruptive.	
A36. Free speech is just not worth it if it means that we have to put up with the danger to society of extremist political views.	
A114. Are you in favor of democratic government even if that may lead to a certain amount of insecurity and disruption, or are you in favor of strong government control even if that may lead to a certain amount of regimentation and loss of individual expression?	0) Democratic government; 1) Strict government control

of respondents from each country. Since there were too few respondents from Latvia alone to conduct a meaningful analysis, respondents from all three Baltic nations were combined and analyzed together. The “baltic\_nat” variable measuring nationality is thus coded 1 if an individual is a member of one of the three titular Baltic nationalities, 0 otherwise. The theory predicts similar dynamics for all of the Baltic nations; expanding the analysis to include Estonians and Lithuanians is therefore consistent with our objectives.

The second column of table 3.16 gives regression results for Ukraine, and the third column shows results for Belarus. While the views of Russians vs. non-Russians *within Russia proper* is not central to the arguments made in this chapter, results from Russia have been included for completeness and for those who are curious to see differences between republics. In the meantime, the relevant differences remain between Latvians vs. Russians in Latvia, Galician vs. non-Galician Ukrainians, and Belarusians vs. Russians in



Belarus. In order to aid in the interpretation of regression results, predicted probabilities that respondents agree or strongly agree have been calculated and plotted in figure 3.7 according to the methods described in footnote 8 on page 97. Within-country regressions where the key independent variable is statistically significant (i.e., Latvian nationality is a statistically significant predictor of the dependent variable) are plotted in color. Regressions where nationality is not statistically significant are plotted in grayscale. In other words, while there may appear to be a difference in the predicted probabilities for the two groups appearing in a grayscale graph, statistically speaking the difference is indistinguishable from zero and should not necessarily be taken as evidence of differences between nationalities. Such results, though not statistically significant, are nonetheless plotted for completeness.

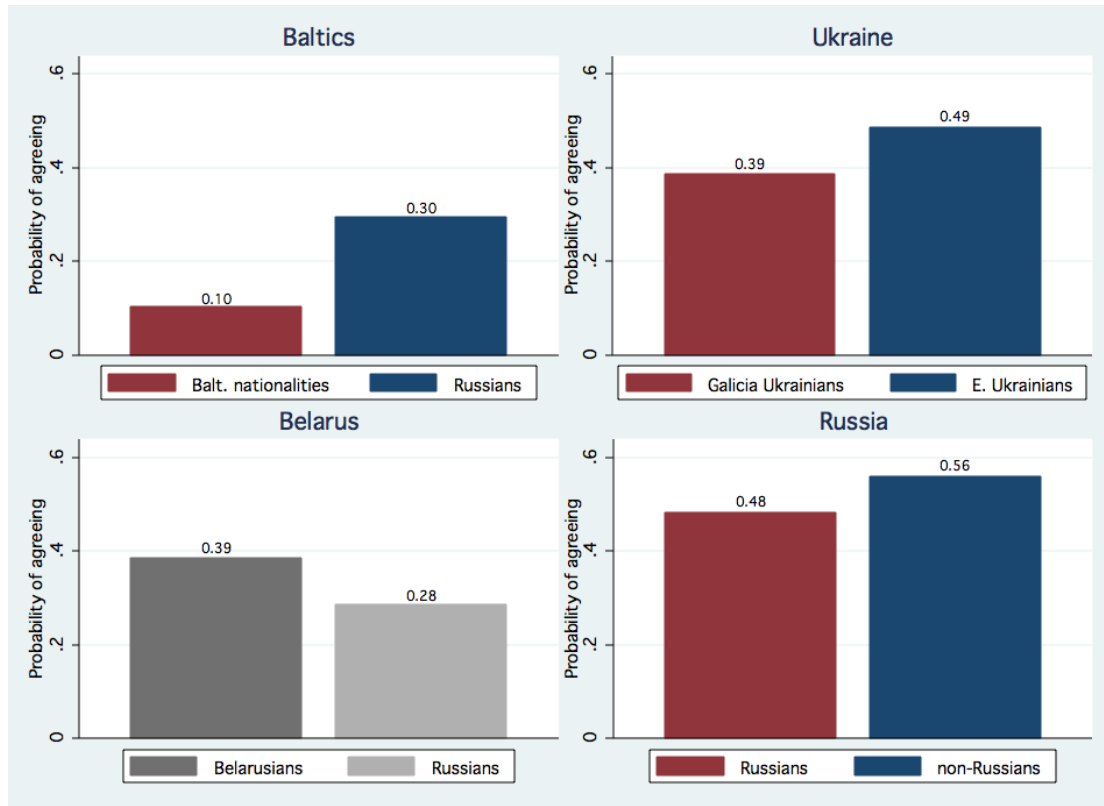


Figure 3.7: A25: There is too much democracy in the Soviet Union today (1990)

In figure 3.7 we see that national identity did appear to play a role in shaping mass preferences for democracy in late Soviet period. In 1990, Estonians, Latvians, and

Lithuanians in the Baltics were likely to agree that there is too much democracy in the Soviet Union with a probability of 10 percent. For the vast majority of Balts, democratization had not gone far enough. By contrast, ethnic Russians in the Baltics were likely to agree with a probability of 30 percent that there was too much democracy in the USSR, a difference of 20 percentage point. This suggests that while support for further democratization among Russians in the Baltic republics was strong, it was not as strong as among the native titular nationalities, a fact that is consistent with the theory I propose.

We also observe a statistically and substantively significant difference in democratic support between the Ukrainians of Galicia and Ukrainians in the rest of Ukraine. Galician Ukrainians' predicted probability of agreeing that there is too much democracy was 39 percent in 1990. Ukrainians outside of Galicia were more skeptical of democracy, with a higher probability ( $p=0.49$ ) of answering that democratization had gone too far. Thus, support for democracy gets a 10 percentage point boost among Galicians, for whom we expect such results.

Finally, there is the counterpoint of Belarus. Our theory predicts no meaningful difference in democratic support when we compare Belarusians to Russians within Belarus. As implied by the grayscale of the chart and indicated by the regression results in table 3.16, our expectations are confirmed: there is no significant difference between the two subpopulations of Belarus when it comes to the degree of democratization in the USSR in 1990. While predicted probabilities for Russians and non-Russians are also presented in figure 3.7 and analyses throughout the rest of this chapter, it bears repeating that our main focus in this chapter is the role that national identity plays in shaping the regime preferences of nations on the periphery of the empire. A cross-national comparative analysis of regime preferences that includes Russia will be presented in chapter 5.<sup>12</sup>

Figure 3.8 presents results for a 1990 survey question (A114) in which respondents were asked, "Are you in favor of democratic government even if that may lead to a certain

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<sup>12</sup>While results from Russia are presented in the current presentation for completeness, they will not be discussed in detail here. It should also be pointed out that given the multiethnic character of the expansive Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (later the Russian federation), it is difficult to draw meaningful conclusions about the category of "non-Russians."

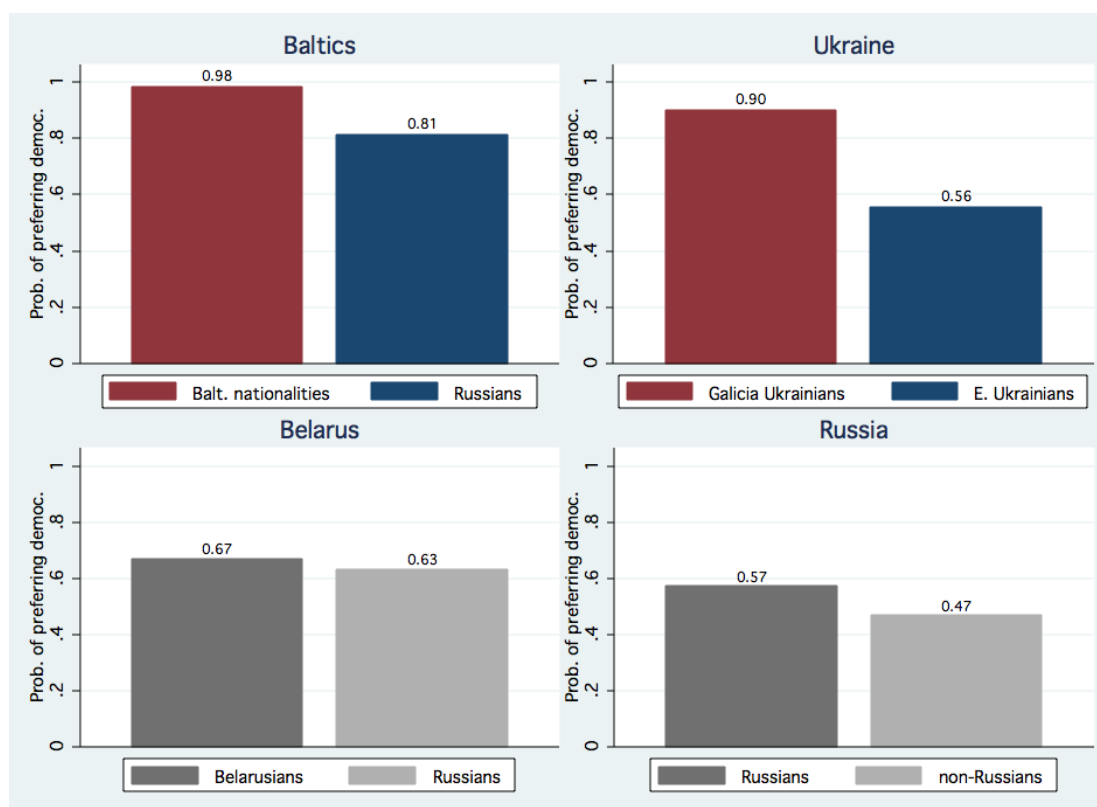


Figure 3.8: A114: Are you in favor of democratic government even if that may lead to a certain amount of insecurity and disruption, or are you in favor of strong government control even if that may lead to a certain amount of regimentation and loss of individual expression? (1990)

amount of insecurity and disruption, or are you in favor of strong government control even if that may lead to a certain amount of regimentation and loss of individual expression?"

This question taps into the oft-perceived tradeoff between democracy and freedom on one hand, and the security and stability of nondemocratic rule on the other.<sup>13</sup> Table 3.18 on page 148 shows complete regression results, while figure 3.8 presents predicted probabilities that respondents of the specified nationalities will answer that they prefer democratic

<sup>13</sup>This is not to say that democracy objectively leads to instability and authoritarian rule guarantees security, order, and stability. However, democracy is associated with instability in many transitioning societies as the predictable political, economic, and social institutions give way to new institutions. Such conditions can lead to a high level of uncertainty and disorder, a fact that was universal across much of the post-communist world before, during, and after the political transition. The relationship between instability and democratic support will be taken up in greater detail in chapter 5

government over strong government control.

The results confirm our hypothesis that the Baltic nationalities will have higher support for democracy than Russians living in the Baltics. Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians had a strikingly high 98 percent probability of favoring democratic rule over strong government control. In other words, support for democracy (as measured through this survey question) in 1990 was nearly universal for the indigenous people of the Baltic states. The Russians living among them, while supportive of democracy, did not display the same degree of universal agreement that democracy was favorable to strong control. Their predicted probability of preferring democracy was 81 percent, 17 percentage points lower than the probability for the Baltic nationalities.

The results in figure 3.8 also confirm the expectation that democratic support will be higher among the Ukrainians of Galicia, who in 1990 were likely to prefer democratic rule to strict control with a probability of 0.90. This is a sharp contrast with Ukrainians elsewhere in Ukraine, who are predicted to prefer democracy with only a probability of 0.56. This large difference between Ukrainians on either side of the former Imperial boundary between the Hapsburg and Russian empires, a difference in probabilities of 0.34, provides strong support for my theory.

As expected, figure 3.8 confirms that the dichotomization and resulting variation in democratic support between titular and Russian nationalities did not occur in Belarus. Regressions on this survey question confirmed that Belarusians were no more or less likely to prefer democracy than Russians.

The next several questions that we will consider do not address democracy directly, but rather capture public opinion about liberal freedoms like free speech and free press. Of course, freedom is not the same thing as democracy, but it cannot be denied that the two are tightly interwoven. Whether we believe that individual and group freedoms and rights are a necessary condition for democracy or an inevitable byproduct of democratic political competition, freedom and democracy tend to go hand in hand. This was certainly case in Gorbachev's Soviet Union, where democratic political competition was introduced alongside a liberalization of individual freedom. While the questions discussed below do

not explicitly use the word “democracy,” they address the freedoms and liberties that are inseparable from democratic reforms in the late Soviet context. As such, I argue that they are useful measures of public opinion toward the type of liberal democracy advocated by some reformers in the USSR and abroad.

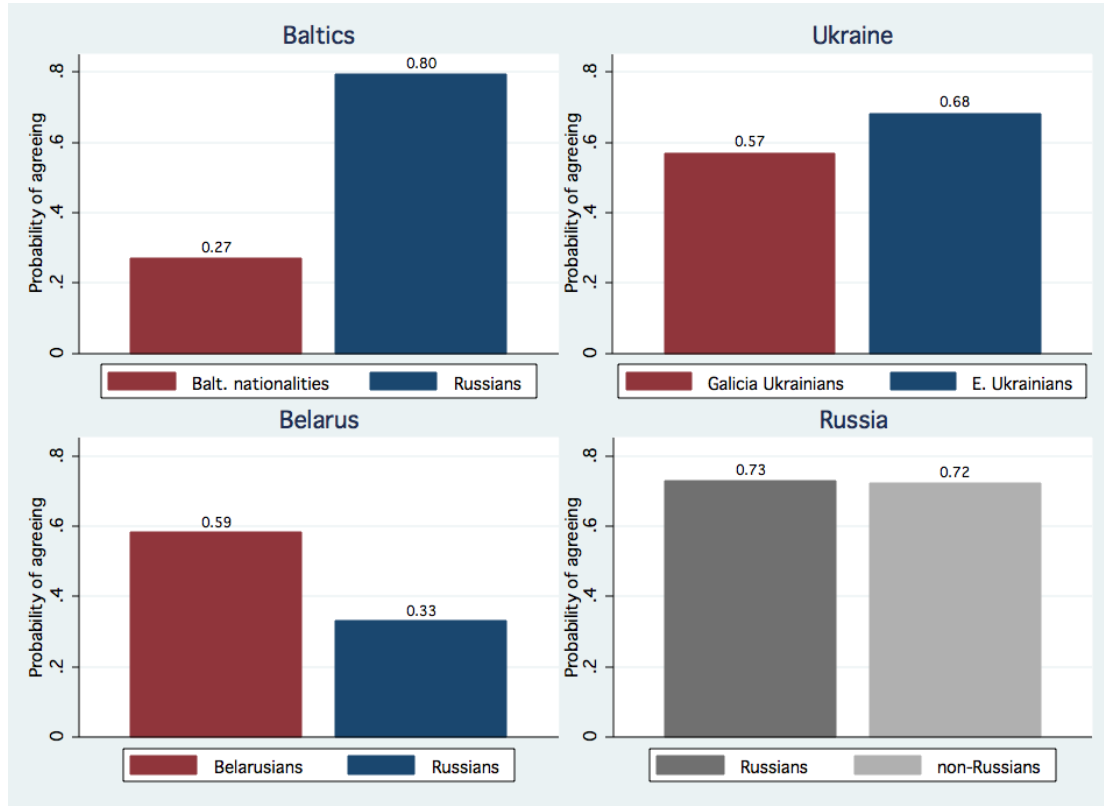


Figure 3.9: A22: There is currently too much criticism in Soviet newspapers and magazines (1990)

The question analyzed in figure 3.9 addresses freedom of the press, asking respondents to agree or disagree with the statement that “there is currently too much criticism in Soviet newspapers and magazines” (A22) After decades of tight party control over the Soviet mass media, the relaxation of censorship and tolerance for independent publications critical of the Soviet state and party leadership was a major liberalizing event. Full regression results appear in table 3.20 on page 150 of the appendix.

We should expect the occupied peoples of the Baltics to be supportive of a free press

and the ability of that press to criticize the Soviet state that occupied their territory for 50 years. Not surprisingly, Estonians, Lithuanians, and Latvians in 1990 were likely to agree or strongly agree with a probability of only 27 percent that there is too much criticism in the Soviet press. This contrasts sharply with the much higher probability ( $p=0.80$ ) that Russians in the Baltics would agree that the press was too critical. The division was clear: for the titular nationalities of the occupied nations, freedom and the press and the criticism it brought had not gone far enough. For the Russians living in the region, an increasingly free press critical of Moscow's rule had already gone too far.

We see a similar division of public opinion in Ukraine, where Ukrainians outside of Galicia were more likely to agree ( $p=0.68$ ) that there was too much criticism by a (statistically significant) margin of 11 percentage points compared to Galician Ukrainians ( $p=0.57$ ). Although this difference is not on the scale that it was in the Baltics, it is consistent with predictions that residents of Galicia are more supportive of the political opening that eventually led to separation from Soviet rule.

Somewhat surprisingly, figure 3.9 reveals a difference in Belarus in public support for a critical press. The difference between Russians and Belarusians is statistically and substantively significant, with the former agreeing that there is too much criticism with a probability of 0.33, and Belarusians agreeing with a probability of 0.59. These results, while unexpected, do not necessarily invalidate the theory I've offered. More troubling for my argument would be the case where Belarusians demanded greater freedom than Russians, for it might suggest that Belarusians chafed under Moscow's control after all. Had that been the case, my theory would have predicted higher support for democracy among Belarusians, not the lower support obtained in this instance. Thus, while the results are puzzling – Belarusians in 1990 were much more likely to agree that criticism in the media had gone too far than were Russians in Belarus – they do not falsify my theory.

Regression results appear in table 3.22 on page 152. Figure 3.10 presents public opinion on free speech, plotting probabilities that individuals would agree or strongly agree that “free speech is just not worth it if it means that we have to put up with the danger to society of extremist political views”(A36). This question presents respondents with the

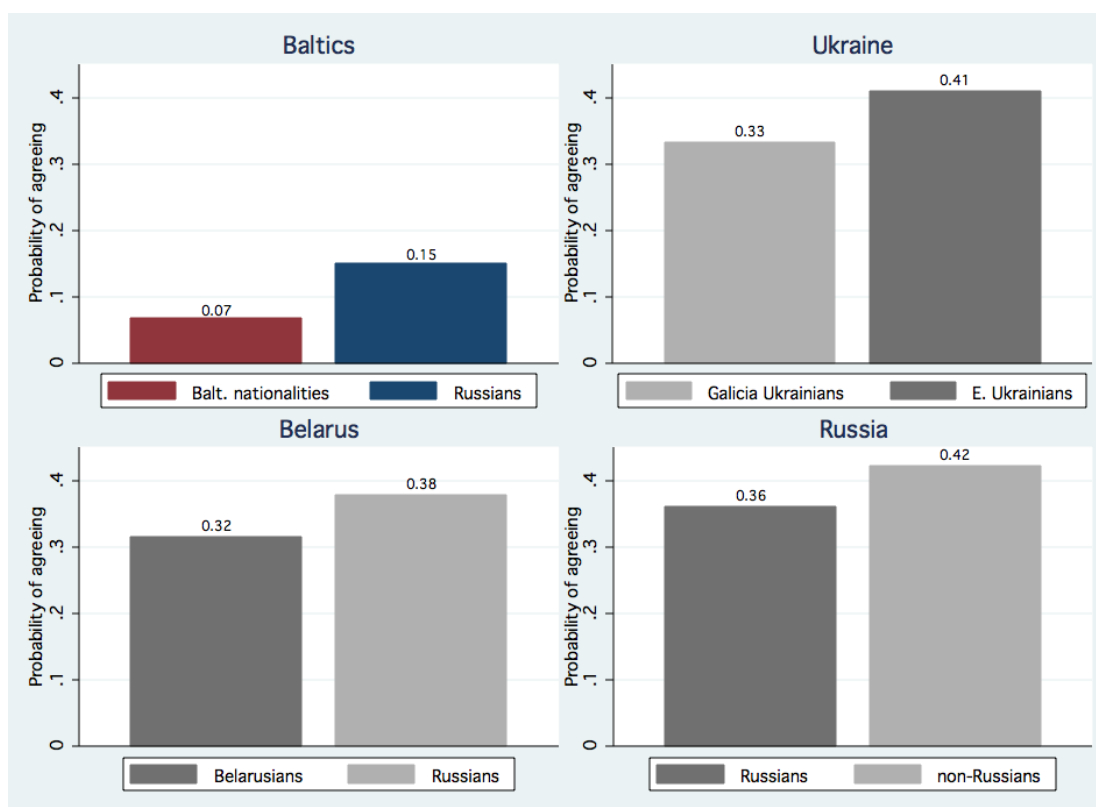


Figure 3.10: A36: Free speech is just not worth it if it means that we have to put up with the danger to society of extremist political views (1990)

double-edged sword that is inherent in true freedom of speech: allowing free speech means allowing all viewpoints to be expressed, not just the views we support and find agreeable. Indeed, it is perhaps an indicator of the liberal maturity of a population, as it requires that the principle of freedom be placed above often unpleasant and distasteful expressions of that freedom.

The Baltic republics are the only area analyzed where nationality has a statistically significant effect on one's answer to this question: Russians in the Baltics are more likely to agree that free speech is not worth the risk of extremist views ( $p=0.15$ ) than are Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians ( $p=0.07$ ). In other words, the titular populations in these republics were more tolerant of free speech, despite its risks, than the Russians living among them. This, of course, is consistent with our hypothesized difference between the titular

and Russian populations.

While we expect a statistically significant difference between the Ukrainians of Galicia and those outside the region, the Galicia dummy variable fails to reach statistical significance for this question, with a p-value of 0.148. However, the sign of the regression coefficient and resulting difference in predicted probabilities is in the expected direction, with Galician Ukrainians seemingly less skeptical of free speech than others in the country. Finally, we see no meaningful difference in the opinions of Belarusians and Russians in Belarus, as predicted by my theory. One difference that does stand out in this and other questions is the degree to which public opinion differs among ethnic Russians in different republics. In particular, the Russians of the Baltic republics tend to be more liberal than Russians in other republics. While these differences among Russians are not the focus of this study, it does suggest an interesting line of inquiry to be pursued in future research.

The final question from the 1990 survey of the Soviet Union to be discussed here returns to the supposed tradeoff between freedom and order, asking respondents to agree or disagree with the following statement: “It is better to live in an orderly society than to allow people so much freedom that they can become disruptive” (A35). Thus, it presents respondents with the idea that freedom sometimes comes at a cost, including greater uncertainty and sometimes disorder. Regression results for this variable are presented in table 3.24 on page 154. Predicted probabilities are graphed in figure 3.11.

We see a large difference in the predicted responses of the Baltic nationalities vs. Baltic Russians. The natives of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are only 22 percent likely to agree or strongly agree that “it is better to live in an orderly society than to allow people so much freedom that they can become disruptive.” Russians in 1990 appear to be much more wary of freedom that comes at the expense of order, agreeing with a probability of 0.58. This large gap of 36 percentage points is symptomatic of the broader cultural gap between the titular and Russian nationalities, a gap that I argue produced significant variation in support for democracy.

A similar gap appears in Ukraine between Ukrainians in Galicia, who were forcibly included in the Soviet empire in 1939, and Ukrainians that had lived under Russian and



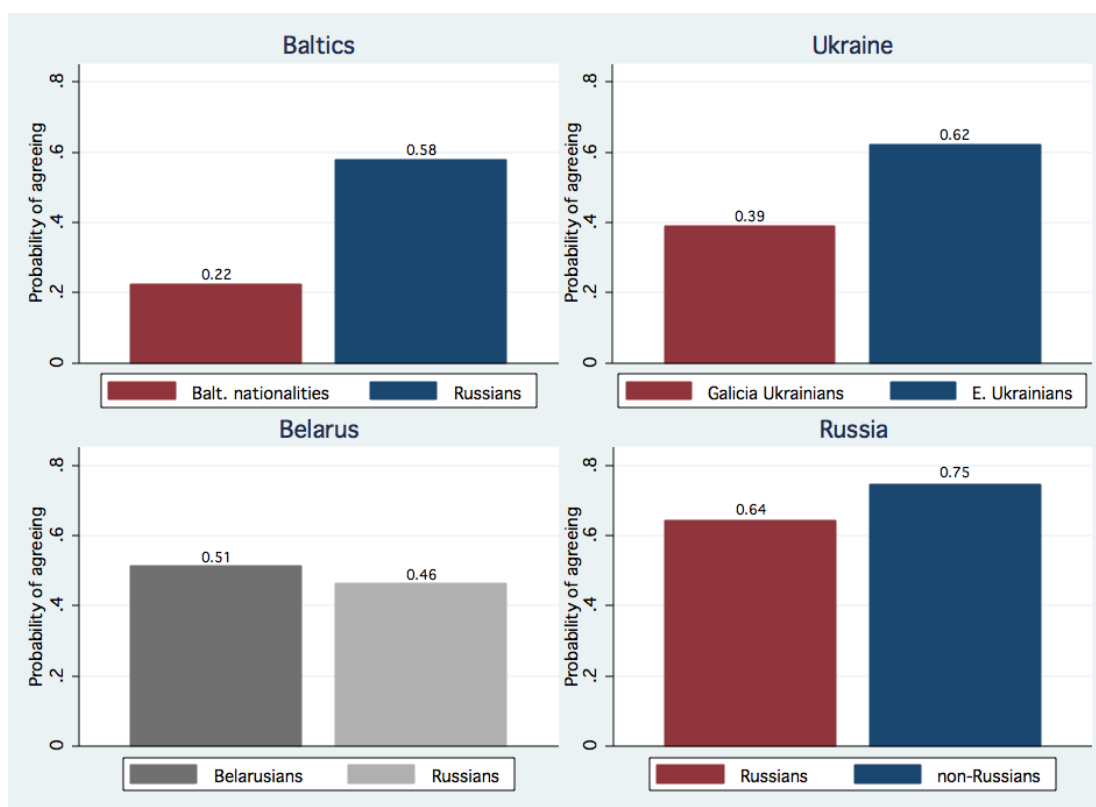


Figure 3.11: A35: It is better to live in an orderly society than to allow people so much freedom that they can become disruptive (1990)

Soviet rule for generations. Galician Ukrainians in 1990 had a probability of 0.39 of agreeing that order was preferable to freedom, while Ukrainians outside of Galicia agreed to this statement with a probability of 0.62. Thus, in the order vs. freedom tradeoff, Galician Ukrainians were more likely to prefer freedom over order.

In what has become a familiar refrain, figure 3.11 also confirms our prediction that nationality is not a significant predictor of democratic support in Belarus, as the Belarusian dummy variable fails to achieve statistical significance, suggesting that the views of Belarusians and Russians in 1990 were statistically indistinguishable.

Table 3.3 displays the predicted outcomes for each case, as well as the actual outcomes observed based on the results of the 1990 survey of the European USSR discussed above.

Table 3.3: Predicted and observed democratic support before transition (1990)

Group	Strong national ID/perception of occupation	Predicted democratic support	Observed democratic support
Baltic Nationalities	Yes	High	High
Baltic Russians	No	Low	Medium/Low
Galicia Ukrainians	Yes	High	Medium/High
Eastern Ukrainians	No	Low	Low
Belarusians	No	Low	Low
Russians in Belarus	No	Low	Low
Russia (combined nationalities)	No	Low	Low

### 3.3.2 Recap

The theory presented in this dissertation predicted that after 50 years of occupation of the Baltic states and Western Ukraine by the Soviet Union, the nationalities native to these regions would have constructed national identities that emphasized the differences between them and their Russian occupiers. These identities, which were passed down from parents to children due to the inability to keep independent national traditions alive in the public sphere, established and reinforced the idea that “we” are a democratic people tied to the West, in opposition to “they” of the authoritarian East. I also argued that this self-conception of the nation as inherently suited for democracy would lead to higher levels of democratic support among these populations relative to subpopulations lacking these dialectical dynamics of national identity transformation. According to my theory, this variation in democratic support should be strongest during the occupation period as native populations chafe at the restrictions imposed by external authoritarian rule.

The evidence I have provided from a 1990 survey of the European Soviet Union

has provided strong support for these claims, demonstrating that Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians, and Galician Ukrainians had statistically and substantively significant higher levels of support for democracy and liberal freedoms than did the relevant comparison groups living in their republics. Even controlling for additional personal characteristics, including material well-being, nationality was a major predictor of democratic support for these populations. Consistent with my theory, nationality did not emerge as a significant predictor of regime preferences among Belarusians, for they never experienced the same polarizing effects of Russian occupation on national identity development. It therefore comes as little surprise that a nation that saw few cultural differences between themselves and their Russian brothers should also have similar regime preferences to the Russians of Belarus. Just as national identity put forth weak cultural differentiation in Belarus, so too did it bring about minimal differentiation in political beliefs.

### 3.4 National ID and Democratic Support - After Transition

If the structure of public opinion in the late Soviet Union makes a convincing case for the importance of nationality in explaining and predicting democratic support among individuals living under authoritarian rule, it is worthwhile to ask whether those patterns continued after the major political and economic transition that resulted in the collapse of the Soviet Union. While national identity no doubt survived the Soviet collapse, what remains to be seen is whether it continued to shape preferences for democracy after the establishment of independence. Does the idea of a “democratic us” still bolster support for democracy among these nations, even after a tumultuous transition that failed to meet the expectations of many hopeful citizens? This is the question engaged in this section.

There are three reasons why we might expect national identity to lose some of its ability to predict mass support for democracy nearly two decades after independence was achieved. The first is related directly to the end of foreign occupation: with Latvians in charge in Riga once again, the cultural imperative to delegitimize Russian rule has nearly vanished. The propagation of the Latvian national identity can be carried out in public and in schools once again and is no longer “under attack” by Moscow’s Russification policies.

Because the occupation was central to the dichotomization of identities among the Baltic peoples, it is logical that its removal would also reduce the need to build such boundaries. This is especially true of those of the post-Soviet generation, for whom life under Moscow's rule is something to read about in history textbooks. A more detailed generational analysis will be presented in chapter 4, but in the meantime it is sufficient to posit that the end of occupation might dilute the power of national identity to regulate political beliefs on a societal level.

Second, it is possible that those Russians most averse to Latvian democracy (and potentially more sympathetic to stronger government control in Russia) left the republic following the restoration of independence. In other words, it is possible that the most authoritarian-leaning Russians left Latvia in the 1990s, raising the mean level of democratic support among the remaining Russians in Latvia (controlling for other factors) and narrowing the gap between Latvians and Russians. However, it is difficult to propose a similar story in Ukraine, where a narrowing of the gap between the Ukrainians of Galicia and those of the east would require a large degree of interregional population migration. While some migration has certainly taken place since 1991, it is hard to say whether this would have a significant effect on average levels of democratic support in various Ukrainian regions.

Finally, we might expect nationality to lose some of its predictive power after a painfully traumatic economic transition that accompanied political transition. The survey results from 1990 reflected the fact that some populations – particularly in the Baltics – idealized democracy and the liberalization that would accompany it. What they (and many outside observers) failed to realize is that democratization could also be accompanied by great hardship, disorder, and instability because of the dual economic and political transition. Such idealization, I argue, was the consequence of limited first-hand experience with democracy. Only being able to hear about freedom and democracy like that in the West, these populations were unprepared to face many of the darker realities that came with the transition experience. Such high expectations were thus set up to be dashed, a story that is the subject of chapter 5.

The remaining purpose of this section is therefore to inquire whether and to what degree differences in national identity differentiate democratic support among post-Soviet citizens. As the data will show, the political culture embedded in national identity is strong but not static. While it still continues to predict differences in support for democracy, the differences have diminished in both scale and frequency. To demonstrate this, we return to survey results from the 2007-2008 surveys of Latvia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia. As before, results from Russia are presented for completeness but are not the focus of the discussion. Variables used in the analysis are identical to those described in section 3.2.1, as are procedures for calculating predicted probabilities. This includes codings for Latvians and Galician Ukrainians according to the methods described on page 96.

Survey questions attempt to gauge support for democracy from a variety of angles and are presented in table 3.4. Summary statistics for these variables appear in the statistical appendix of this chapter.

Question Q21 – democracy may have its problems but is better than other forms of government – serves as a fairly straightforward evaluation of democracy relative to other forms of government. Q22, Q23, and Q24 each address possible deficiencies in democracy *as it may be experienced by individuals during democratization*. Thus, while they are perhaps not direct evaluations of democracy per se, they do capture the degree to which respondents adhere to critiques of democracy. These questions – Q21-Q24 – were replicated from previous waves of the World Values Survey (European Values Study Group and World Values Survey Association 2006) in order to enable over-time comparisons, which will be the focus of chapter 5. Q30 is an original question that seeks to capture the degree to which respondents are willing to exchange democracy for greater stability. Again, I do not argue that democracy and instability are incompatible, or that authoritarianism is more stable than democracy. However, after 17 years of oftentimes tumultuous transition, the perceived tradeoff between democracy and stability is a salient one in these societies. The great majority of interview subjects who were asked this question in qualitative interviews accepted the premise of the question; only a few stated that democracy and stability are unrelated. Finally, Q31 attempts to address the stability-democracy tradeoff from a dif-

Table 3.4: Questions about Democracy (2007-2008)

Question	Answer Set
Q21. Democracy may have problems but is better than other forms of government	1) strongly disagree; 2) disagree; 3) agree; 4) strongly agree
Q22. In democracy the economic system runs badly	
Q23. Democracies are indecisive and have too much squabbling	
Q24. Democracies aren't good at maintaining order	
Q30. Sometimes it's better to have less democracy in order to have more stability in the country.	
Q31. If the social and economic situation in the country is stable, how important is it for ordinary citizens like you to have the ability to influence the political process?	1) not at all important; 2) not very important; 3) somewhat important; 4) very important

ferent angle, asking respondents how important it is for ordinary citizens to influence the political process if economic and social conditions in the country are stable. In other words, should people have a say in running the country in good times as well as in bad times?

In order to condense the visual display of regression results, predicted probabilities for all questions will be grouped by country. Thus, figure 3.12 displays Latvia's predicted probabilities for all questions listed in table 3.4. As before, graphs in color represent analyses where the independent variable of interest (nationality or region) is statistically significant. Graphs plotted in grayscale indicate that the difference is not statistically significant.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup>Plots for Q21, Q22, Q23, Q24, and Q30 give the predicted probability that respondents will answer "agree" or "agree strongly." Plots for Q31 give the probability that respondents answer "important" or "very important."

### 3.4.1 Latvia

Figure 3.12 shows predicted probabilities for Latvia, comparing the beliefs of Latvians to those of Russians living in Latvia. Full regression results for Q21-Q24 and Q30-Q31 appear in table 3.27 on page 157 of the appendix.

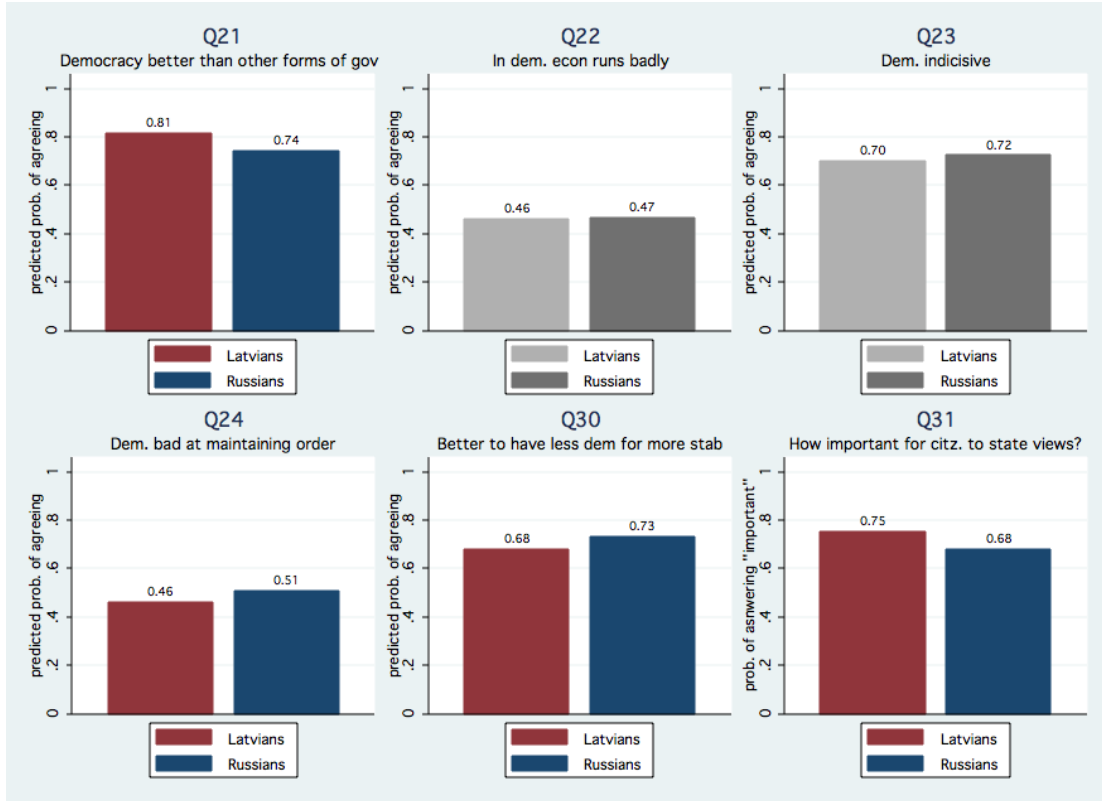


Figure 3.12: Beliefs about democracy in Latvia (2008)

Figure 3.12 shows that nationality retains some of its predictive power when explaining mass preferences for democracy in Latvia. Compared to ethnic Russians, Latvians are more likely to agree that “democracy may have its problems but is better than other forms of government” (Q21). They are also less likely to agree that “democracies aren’t good at maintaining order” (Q24) and that “sometimes it’s better to have less democracy in order to have more stability” (Q30). Finally, they are more likely to attach greater importance to citizens having “the ability to influence the political process” (Q31). For two dependent variables – Q22 (in democracy the economy runs badly) and Q23 (democracy is indeci-

sive and has too much squabbling) – nationality fails to differentiate between the views of Latvians and Russians.

Were we just to focus on statistical significance, we might be inclined to argue that four out of six regressions where Latvians are more supportive of democracy constitutes a reasonably strong case for the continued importance of national identity in explaining preferences for democracy. And in some respects it does, since there remains some differences when Latvians and Russians evaluate the overall desirability of democracy, as they do in Q21. Similarly, results for Q30 and Q31 suggest that Latvians may be less willing to trade democracy and political rights for increased order and stability. But when it comes to the deficiencies of democracy, there is little that differentiates the views of Latvians from those of Russians.

However, what is most striking about the predicted probabilities presented in figure 3.12 is that even in the cases where the difference between Latvians and Russians is statistically significant, it is substantively quite small: predicted probabilities between Latvians and Russians differ by only 5-7 percentage points where significant. Thus, while the difference may still be present, the gap has narrowed considerably. Gone are the wide variations in democratic support between the two nationalities that we observed in survey results from 1990. The economic and social dynamics that have produced this shift in public opinion will be explored later in chapter 5.

### 3.4.2 Ukraine

Figure 3.13 tells a similar story for Ukraine, whose regression results appear in table 3.30 on page 160. Some – but not all – measures of democratic support reflect the regional difference in support for democracy between the Ukrainians of Galicia and those outside of Galicia that was so clear in the survey data from 1990. Galician Ukrainians are more likely to agree that democracy is better than other forms of government (Q21), with a probability of 0.87. This contrasts with a predicted probability of 0.65 that Ukrainians outside of Galicia will agree to the same statement. Galicians are also less likely to agree that the economy runs poorly under democracy (Q22,  $p=0.32$ ) compared to other Ukrainians ( $p=0.48$ ). They



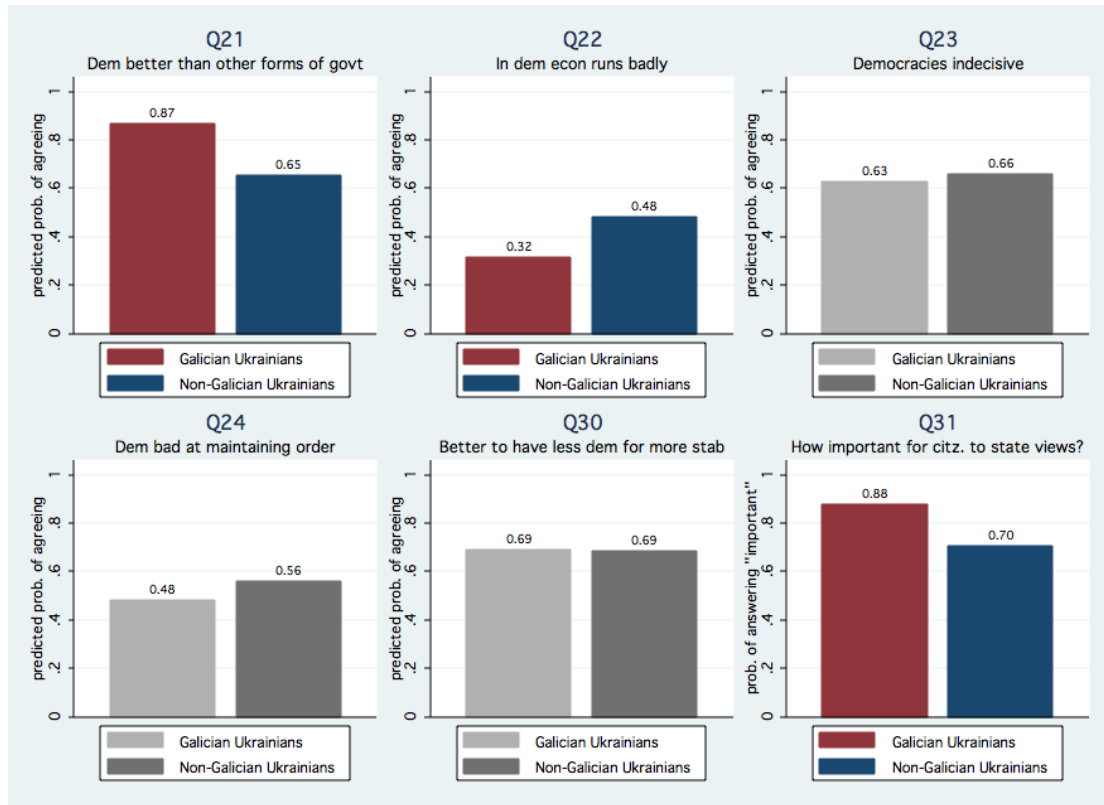


Figure 3.13: Beliefs about democracy in Ukraine (2008)

are also more likely to attach greater importance to citizens influencing political processes (Q31), answering that such influence is important with a predicted probability of 0.88, a value that is 0.18 higher than the probability for non-Galician Ukrainians.

While the margins are larger in Ukraine than they were in Latvia, the regional divide reaches statistical significance for only three out of six dependent variables. The patterns of these differences are interesting as well. Galicians are more likely to profess a general preference for democratic rule through their answers to Q21 (democracy better than other forms of government), but their answers to Q23 (democracies indecisive) and Q24 (democracies bad at maintaining order) reveal that they are skeptical of the ability of democracy to provide stability and order, a skepticism that they share with Ukrainians throughout the country. This would suggest that Galician Ukrainians are not necessarily willing to give democracy the benefit of the doubt on questions of order and stability as they

might have been in 1990. Furthermore, they have a 69 percent probability of agreeing that “sometimes it’s better to have less democracy in order to have more stability,” a total that matches the probability for other Ukrainians. Overall, these results suggest that the legacy of Hapsburg rule and the resulting national identity dynamics it produced do still have some effect on support for democracy in Galicia, although many years of chaotic political and economic change have taken their toll on that support.

### 3.4.3 Belarus and Russia

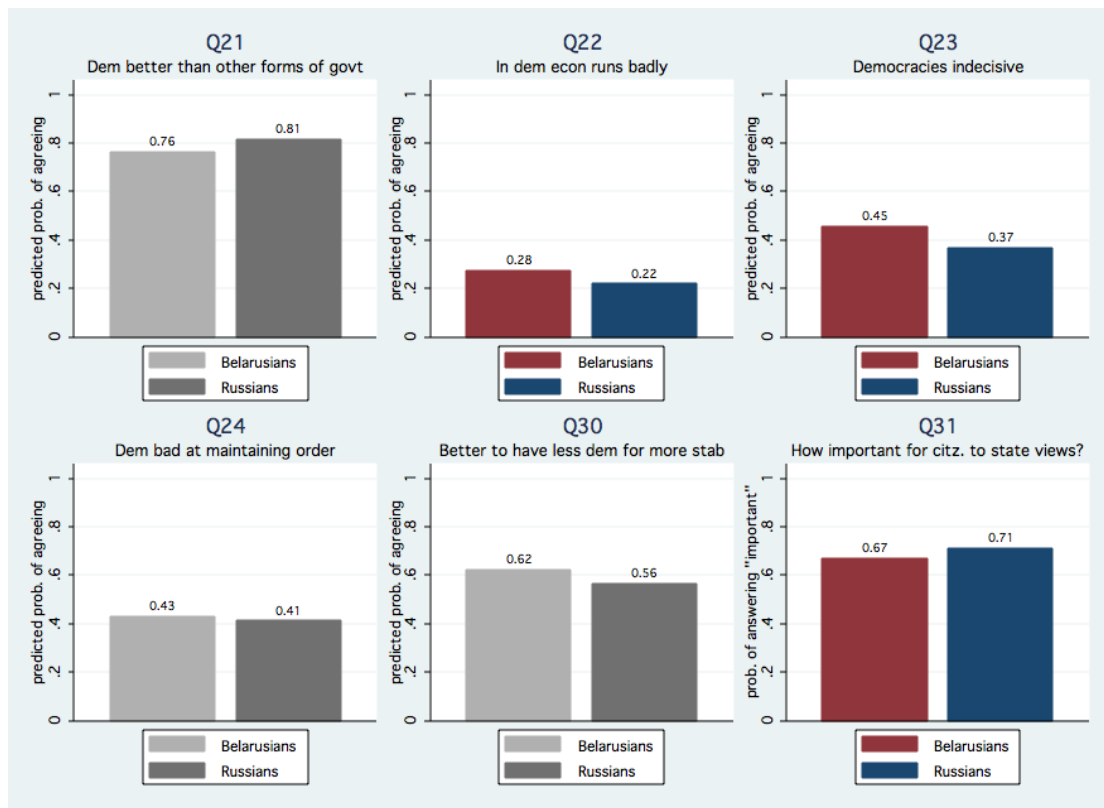


Figure 3.14: Beliefs about democracy in Belarus (2008)

Results from the 2008 survey of Belarus appear in table 3.32 on page 162. Predicted probabilities are shown in figure 3.14. Our theory of national identity and democratic support predicts that we should not see major differences between Belarusians and Russians in Belarus. This prediction is partially confirmed by the results shown in figure 3.14. Indeed,

national identity fails to reach statistical significance for three dependent variables: Q21 (democracy better than other forms of government), Q24 (democracy bad at maintaining order), and Q30 (sometimes better to have less democracy in order to have more stability). These results echo those from 1990 where nationality did not differentiate the views of Belarusians and Russians.

However, figure 3.14 reveals some unexpected surprises. On some measures of democratic support Belarusians are actually *less* supportive of democracy than Russians, being more likely to agree that in democracy the economy runs badly (Q22) and that democracies are indecisive (Q23). Similarly, they are less likely than Russians to answer that it is important for ordinary citizens to influence the political process if the social and economic situation in the country is stable (Q31). However, while these differences are statistically significant, they are not particularly large in substantive terms, with Russians and Belarusians separated by only 4-8 percentage points on these questions. While the difference itself is somewhat puzzling, its small scale does not do serious harm to our theory of national identity and democratic support.

Finally, table 3.34 on page 164 and figure 3.15 give predicted probabilities for Russians and non-Russians in Russia. Due to the catch-all nature of the “non-Russian” category, national identity does not emerge as a meaningful predictor of democratic support. However, the results for Russia have been presented here for the sake of completeness.

The results presented here from the 2007-2008 surveys of Latvia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia confirm the hypothesis with which we began this portion of the chapter. National identity and the political culture embedded in it continues to influence regime preferences and democratic support in the post-transition societies we have examined here. But nationality seems to have less of an effect on citizens’ preferences than it did prior to the political transition that brought independence to these countries. The results from 2007-2008 presented here show that while a gap between Russians and Latvians or Galician Ukrainians and Eastern Ukrainians may exist, it is no doubt a narrower gap than it was in 1990. This would suggest that something significant has taken place during the last 18 years, something that has caused citizens to revise their beliefs about democracy and

what it has to offer. That revision and the economic dynamics driving it are the subject of chapter 5.

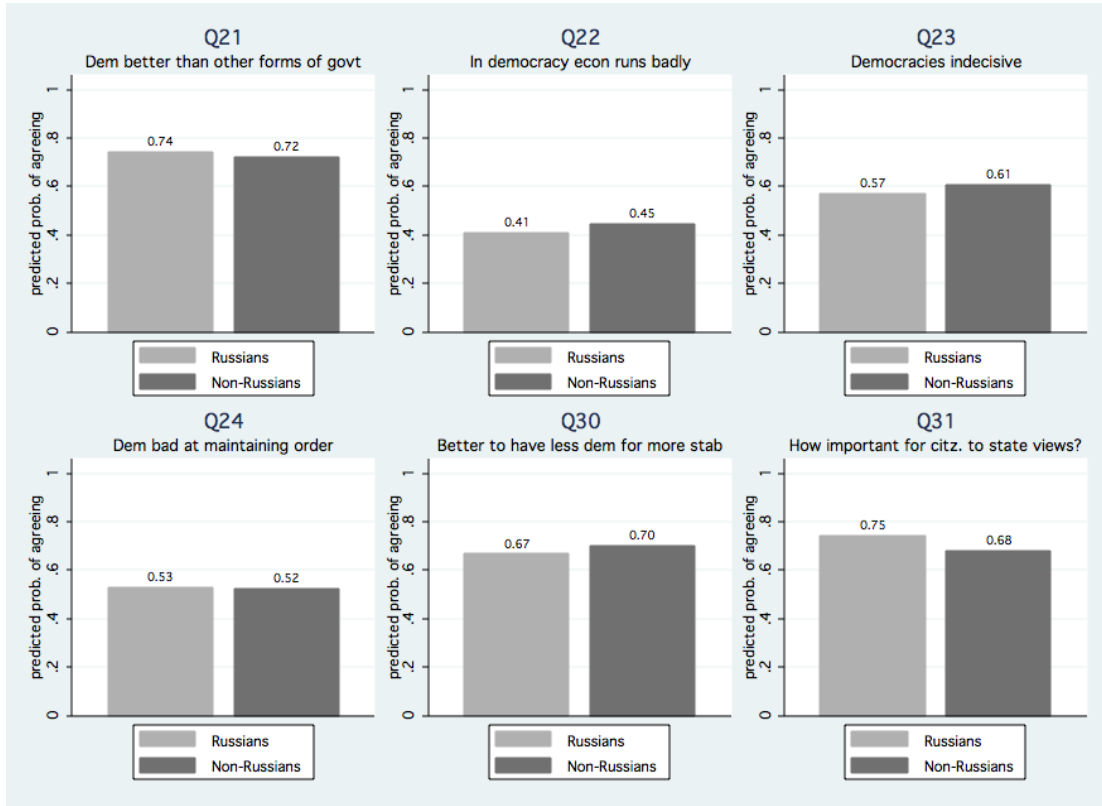


Figure 3.15: Beliefs about democracy in Russia (2008)

### 3.5 Chapter 3 Conclusion

In this chapter I have put forward the empirical case for a link between national identity and support for democracy among post-transition societies that have a historical legacy of strong national identity and foreign occupation by an outside authoritarian power. Where nationalization has taken place prior to foreign occupation, there is a clear sense among the population that their rulers are different from the masses. Because the indigenous people are not in control of their state and territory (control over which is often thought to be central to the nationalist program), they seek to delegitimize the occupier's rule from afar. One important way in which this is done is through a dichotomization between “us”

and “them,” emphasizing the foreignness and unnaturalness of the colonizing state and its citizens. In seeking to build boundaries between identities, the very content of national identity – what it means to be a member of the nation – can evolve as a result of occupation. In the face of an authoritarian occupier, occupied nations can come to define themselves as a democratic “us” in opposition to an authoritarian “them.” In this manner, a sense of the nation’s democraticness becomes embedded in the national identity as the occupied internalize the political culture generated through this dialectic process.

Of course, this is not the only potential source for a democratic political culture, or even a culture that thinks itself to be suited for democracy. It is beyond the scope of this work to identify the many historical processes that may give rise to a democratic political culture among some groups of people but not others. Rather, I have attempted to identify the central historical process that shaped the national identities and democratic preferences of members of formerly occupied communist countries. The analysis in this dissertation has been limited to former constituent republics of the Soviet Union; future research will attempt to extend the argument and its empirical testing into the post-communist countries of Eastern Europe that were under de facto occupation by the USSR following WWII.

I also do not argue here that democratic political culture is the only political culture that can arise from foreign occupation. Central to my explanation is the identity of the occupier: in defining the self as diametrically opposed to the other, the characteristics of the latter can’t but influence the former. Thus, I posit that a democratic response will be strongest when it is forged in opposition to an authoritarian occupier. Were the roles to be reversed – a democratic occupier exerting control over a nondemocratic country – it is likely that we would see different dynamics of national identity and political culture develop. Whether a preference for authoritarian rule might arise from such a situation is not out of the realm of possibilities and remains an important direction for future research.

Perhaps equally important in influencing how the occupied nation defines itself is the presence of positive “others.” For the cases I’ve examined here, this other toward which the peoples of the Baltics and Western Ukraine have oriented themselves has been Europe and “the West.” In defining themselves in opposition to the authoritarian Russian/Soviet

Empire of the East, these peoples have developed a strong sense of themselves as being tied to the cultural traditions – and the future – of Europe. The fact that democracy is the defining political trait of Western Europe has served to bolster the importance of democratic rule among the members of these nations. Again, a western-oriented national identity is not a given, even among the post-Soviet states. “Rejoining Europe” will never be an option for countries like Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and the other Central Asian nations; this no doubt has influenced their national self-conceptions and political cultures in ways that does not necessarily promote a democratic political culture among the citizenry.

The dichotomization between “us” and “them” is apparent when one speaks to residents of formerly occupied territories. People are quick to highlight the differences between themselves and Russians, usually presenting their own kind in a positive light while demonizing the Russians that came during the Soviet period. Among the many negative adjectives used by Latvians and Galician Ukrainians to describe Russians are things like imperialistic, chauvinistic, domineering, and importantly, authoritarian. Members of these nations assert that their people are closer to the cultural traditions of the West, while Russians belong to a foreign and Eastern culture. Furthermore, while “our” nation is culturally suited for democracy, theirs is not. The message is simple: we are a democratic people, they are an authoritarian people.

It is, of course, the non-cases that illuminate the process I’ve described above. Where national identities were weak or nonexistent when Russian rule was imposed on a territory, there was much less likelihood of a conflict – whether cultural or political – between Russians and the local populations. Without a strong belief in the uniqueness of “us,” “them” is not a particularly strong concept either. More importantly, in these areas where Russian rule predated local nationalization, Belarusians and Eastern Ukrainians became nationally self-aware surrounded by Russians and under Petersburg’s watchful eye. Given Russian control over most avenues of mass (and elite) culture, the dominant narrative for these nations was the Slavic brotherhood or friendship of nations. This was a theme that was revived and flourished under Soviet rule as well. And so, lacking the motivation to distinguish “us” from “them,” Belarusians and Ukrainians outside of Galicia were denied conditions that favored

the development of a national identity that included a sense of democraticness.

Where this self-conception of the nation as fundamentally democratic arose, we observed high support for democracy during the authoritarian Soviet period. Chafing for 50 years under Soviet rule and with minimal actual experience with democracy, the peoples of the Baltics and Western Ukraine idealized the idea of democratic rule and the freedom it promised. By the late Soviet period, a strong distinction was apparent within the territories under consideration here: Baltic nationalities expressed much higher support for democracy than did Russians in the Balts. The same can be said for the Ukrainians of Galicia when compared to Ukrainians outside of Galicia. But where national identity did not produce a strong dichotomization, such as in Belarus, we see virtually identical levels of democratic support among Belarusians and Russians. Thus, at the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, nationality was clearly a strong influence on mass preferences for democracy.

Alas, such high hopes for democracy were destined to be unmet. A painful economic and political transition for all post-Soviet countries tarnished enthusiasm for democracy as people discovered that the democracy they dreamed of was not exactly the democracy they got. Of course, not everyone in the post-Soviet space got democracy. Each of the four countries studied here took very different paths after 1991. We will discuss the interaction of economic conditions and regime development in the post-Soviet era in chapter 5, exploring how these factors changed regime preferences for the post-Soviet citizens of Latvia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia. But in the meantime, the data presented in this chapter have given us a preview of the story to come. While national identity in 2007-2008 still predicts some differences between Latvians/Russians and Galician Ukrainians/Eastern Ukrainians, these differences are not nearly as strong as they were two decades ago. Gone is the wide gap that separated the political preferences of those who were once the occupied and the occupier. The broader implications of this transformation will be taken up in the concluding chapter.

Absent through most of this chapter, however, has been the Soviet state itself. We have seen how the occupied peoples struggled to define their nation in opposition to Moscow's rule. But how did Moscow's own efforts to shape the political preferences of

its citizens fare among the diverse populations of the Soviet Union? This is the question addressed in the next chapter.



### 3.6 Statistical Appendix

Table 3.5: Summary statistics: Number of respondents, by group (1990)

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Group	Number of respondents
Baltic nationalities in Baltics	43
Ethnic Russians in Baltics	13
Galicia Ukrainians in Ukraine	100
Eastern Ukrainians in Ukraine	197
Belarusians in Belarus	53
Russians in Belarus	16
Russians in Russia	782
Non-Russians in Russia	144

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Table 3.6: Summary statistics: Number of respondents, by group (2008)

Group	Number of respondents
Ethnic Latvians in Latvia	533
Ethnic Russians in Latvia	296
Galicia Ukrainians in Ukraine	56
Eastern Ukrainians in Ukraine	719
Belarusians in Belarus	834
Russians in Belarus	107
Russians in Russia	1344
Non-Russians in Russia	146

Table 3.7: Summary statistics: Is Latvia/Russia closer to the East or West? (Latvia, 2008)

Group	West	East and West Equally	East
Is Latvia closer to the East or the West?			
Ethnic Latvians	72.8 <sup>a</sup> (72.8) <sup>b</sup>	12.2 (12.5)	15.0 (14.9)
Ethnic Russians	74.3 (74.5)	14.4 (14.6)	11.3 (10.9)
Is Russia closer to the East or the West?			
Ethnic Latvians	12.1 (12.6)	20.2 (20.4)	66.7 (66.9)
Ethnic Russians	28.1 (28.2)	33.2 (33.9)	38.7 (37.8)

<sup>a</sup> Cells display sample-corrected percentage of respondents giving a particular answer.

<sup>b</sup> Value in parentheses is the unweighted, uncorrected percentage.

Table 3.8: Summary statistics: Is Ukraine/Russia closer to the East or West? (Ukraine, 2008)

Group	West	East and West Equally	East
Is Ukraine closer to the East or the West?			
Galicia Ukrainians	77.2 <sup>a</sup> (77.5) <sup>b</sup>	14.9 (15.2)	7.9 (7.3)
Eastern Ukrainians	52.5 (47.7)	28.6 (31.0)	19.0 (21.3)
Is Russia closer to the East or the West?			
Galicia Ukrainians	28.2 (28.2)	10.1 (10.3)	61.7 (61.6)
Eastern Ukrainians	23.8 (24.1)	35.4 (37.4)	40.8 (38.4)

<sup>a</sup> Cells display sample-corrected percentage of respondents giving a particular answer.

<sup>b</sup> Value in parentheses is the unweighted, uncorrected percentage.

Table 3.9: Summary statistics: Is Belarus/Russia closer to the East or West? (Belarus, 2008)

Group	West	East and West Equally	East
Is Belarus closer to the East or the West?			
Belarusians	51.0 <sup>a</sup> (51.0) <sup>b</sup>	29.1 (29.0)	19.9 (20.0)
Russians	49.5 (49.1)	31.7 (32.2)	18.8 (18.8)
Is Russia closer to the East or the West?			
Belarusians	22.5 (22.3)	30.7 (30.8)	46.9 (46.9)
Russians	20.7 (20.6)	29.0 (29.0)	50.4 (50.4)

<sup>a</sup> Cells display sample-corrected percentage of respondents giving a particular answer.

<sup>b</sup> Value in parentheses is the unweighted, uncorrected percentage.

Table 3.10: Is [Russia/Belarus/Ukraine/Latvia] closer to the cultural traditions of the West or the East? (2007-2008)

	Latvia		Ukraine		Belarus	
	Latvia	Russia	Ukraine	Russia	Belarus	Russia
latvian	-0.268** (0.038)	0.998*** (0.000)				
galician			-1.023** (0.020)	0.456 (0.496)		
belarusian					-0.033 (0.919)	-0.123 (0.747)
male	-0.303** (0.019)	-0.009 (0.921)	-0.363** (0.039)	0.154 (0.432)	-0.025 (0.862)	0.134 (0.311)
urban	-0.150 (0.661)	-0.371 (0.197)	0.340 (0.314)	0.179 (0.530)	-0.013 (0.963)	0.088 (0.617)
age	0.003 (0.397)	0.001 (0.695)	0.006 (0.306)	0.008 (0.152)	-0.001 (0.726)	0.001 (0.837)
edu	-0.091 (0.193)	-0.068 (0.329)	0.140 (0.420)	0.020 (0.873)	-0.006 (0.949)	0.032 (0.877)
material	0.176** (0.045)	-0.105* (0.066)	-0.065 (0.701)	0.123 (0.344)	0.028 (0.728)	-0.040 (0.712)
unemployed	0.057 (0.841)	-0.454* (0.098)	-0.612 (0.216)	0.829*** (0.008)	-0.151 (0.835)	0.099 (0.867)
wage2007	-0.007*** (0.000)	-0.002** (0.039)	0.001 (0.704)	-0.015*** (0.000)	0.003 (0.599)	0.008 (0.680)
cut1	-1.510*** (0.007)	-2.675*** (0.000)	0.871 (0.393)	-1.462* (0.085)	0.362 (0.687)	0.062 (0.984)
cut2	-0.563 (0.292)	-1.255** (0.018)	2.252** (0.044)	0.041 (0.961)	1.738 (0.101)	1.438 (0.655)
<i>N</i>	1000	1000	991	991	1000	1000

*p*-values in parentheses

Negative coef. = closer to West; positive coef. = closer to East

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 3.11: Summary statistics: Latvians/Russians are culturally suited for democracy (Latvia, 2008)

Group	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Latvians are culturally suited for democracy				
Ethnic Latvians	5.4 <sup>a</sup> (5.5) <sup>b</sup>	19.1 (19.6)	56.3 (56.0)	19.3 (19.0)
Ethnic Russians	7.9 (7.6)	29.1 (28.9)	41.1 (41.2)	22.0 (22.4)
Russians are culturally suited for democracy				
Ethnic Latvians	24.0 (24.2)	33.4 (33.9)	33.2 (32.8)	9.4 (9.0)
Ethnic Russians	7.3 (7.1)	18.9 (18.8)	50.2 (49.9)	22.0 (24.3)

<sup>a</sup> Cells display sample-corrected percentage of respondents giving a particular answer.

<sup>b</sup> Value in parentheses is the unweighted, uncorrected percentage.

Table 3.12: Summary statistics: Ukrainians/Russians are culturally suited for democracy (Ukraine, 2008)

Group	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Ukrainians are culturally suited for democracy				
Galicia Ukrainians	7.9 <sup>a</sup> (8.6) <sup>b</sup>	9.8 (10.3)	44.0 (41.1)	38.3 (40.1)
Eastern Ukrainians	13.7 (13.7)	18.7 (20.0)	42.8 (41.4)	24.9 (24.9)
Russians are culturally suited for democracy				
Galicia Ukrainians	7.9 (8.6)	9.8 (10.3)	44.0 (41.1)	38.3 (40.1)
Eastern Ukrainians	13.7 (13.7)	18.7 (20.0)	42.8 (41.4)	24.9 (24.9)

<sup>a</sup> Cells display sample-corrected percentage of respondents giving a particular answer.

<sup>b</sup> Value in parentheses is the unweighted, uncorrected percentage.

Table 3.13: Summary statistics: Belarusians/Russians are culturally suited for democracy (Belarus, 2008)

Group	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Belarusians are culturally suited for democracy				
Belarusians	6.5 <sup>a</sup> (6.3) <sup>b</sup>	16.2 (16.4)	51.0 (51.0)	26.3 (26.3)
Russians	5.3 (5.4)	9.1 (8.9)	60.2 (59.7)	25.4 (26.0)
Russians are culturally suited for democracy				
Belarusians	6.5 (6.3)	16.2 (16.4)	51.0 (51.0)	26.3 (26.3)
Russians	5.3 (5.4)	9.1 (8.9)	60.2 (59.7)	25.4 (26.0)

<sup>a</sup> Cells display sample-corrected percentage of respondents giving a particular answer.

<sup>b</sup> Value in parentheses is the unweighted, uncorrected percentage.

Table 3.14: Are Russians/Belarusians/Ukrainians/Latvians culturally suited for democracy? (2007-2008)

	Latvia		Ukraine		Belarus	
	Latvians suited?	Russians suited?	Ukrainians suited?	Russians suited?	Belarusians suited?	Russians suited?
latvian	0.022 (0.841)	-0.872*** (0.000)				
galicia			0.661* (0.092)	-0.436 (0.329)		
belarusian					-0.231 (0.155)	-0.029 (0.890)
male	0.023 (0.792)	-0.096 (0.399)	-0.003 (0.988)	-0.112 (0.560)	0.080 (0.607)	0.019 (0.901)
urban	0.014 (0.946)	0.029 (0.890)	-0.380 (0.120)	-0.115 (0.695)	-0.371 (0.176)	-0.396* (0.064)
age	0.001 (0.802)	0.001 (0.692)	-0.008* (0.080)	-0.011** (0.027)	-0.013** (0.034)	-0.016*** (0.007)
edu	0.178** (0.041)	0.057 (0.458)	0.127 (0.392)	-0.001 (0.993)	0.130 (0.328)	0.136 (0.102)
material	-0.017 (0.806)	0.029 (0.540)	-0.074 (0.532)	-0.118 (0.236)	0.012 (0.880)	-0.083 (0.213)
unemployed	-0.273 (0.271)	0.063 (0.779)	-0.240 (0.554)	-0.041 (0.947)	0.204 (0.481)	0.119 (0.766)
wage2007	0.001 (0.386)	-0.003*** (0.000)	0.003 (0.166)	0.004 (0.402)	-0.013 (0.433)	-0.011 (0.449)
cut1	-1.899*** (0.000)	-2.780*** (0.000)	-1.884** (0.022)	-2.080** (0.011)	-5.183* (0.063)	-5.052* (0.077)
cut2	-0.162 (0.617)	-1.222** (0.019)	-0.778 (0.306)	-0.756 (0.339)	-3.750 (0.123)	-3.632 (0.154)
cut3	2.292*** (0.000)	0.701 (0.136)	1.106 (0.149)	0.712 (0.370)	-1.365 (0.482)	-1.399 (0.500)
N	1000	1000	991	991	1000	1000

*p*-values in parentheses

Positive coef. = agreement

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 3.15: A25 summary statistics - There is too much democracy in the Soviet Union today (1990)

Group (country)	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Uncer- tain	Agree	Agree strongly
Baltic nationalities (Baltics)	32.6 <sup>a</sup>	41.9	9.3	9.3	7.0
Russian (Baltics)	15.4	23.1	30.8	7.7	23.1
Galicia Ukrainian (Ukraine)	16.0	25.0	25.0	23.0	11.0
Eastern Ukrainian (Ukraine)	11.7	21.8	20.8	28.9	16.8
Belarusian (Belarus)	15.1	34.0	9.4	18.9	22.6
Russian (Belarus)	25.0	31.3	12.5	25.0	6.3
(Russia)	8.5	26.0	16.4	29.3	19.8

<sup>a</sup> Cells display percentage of respondents giving a particular answer (weights not available for analysis).



Table 3.16: A25: There is too much democracy in the Soviet Union today (1990)

	Baltics	Ukraine	Belarus	Russia
baltic_nat	-1.302*** (0.001)			
galicia		-0.408* (0.066)		
belarusian			0.454 (0.330)	
russian				-0.304* (0.079)
male	0.561* (0.052)	-0.381* (0.075)	0.156 (0.246)	-0.114 (0.364)
age	0.019*** (0.001)	0.005 (0.414)	0.004 (0.720)	0.016*** (0.000)
edu	-0.209* (0.094)	-0.310*** (0.000)	-0.559** (0.014)	-0.174*** (0.000)
material	0.131* (0.084)	0.044 (0.499)	0.052 (0.674)	-0.011 (0.785)
cut1	-1.017* (0.090)	-2.776*** (0.000)	-2.707*** (0.003)	-2.602*** (0.000)
cut2	0.740 (0.246)	-1.374*** (0.006)	-0.889 (0.382)	-0.798*** (0.004)
cut3	1.599** (0.011)	-0.405 (0.411)	-0.410 (0.667)	-0.094 (0.750)
cut4	2.366*** (0.001)	1.048** (0.037)	0.727 (0.206)	1.291*** (0.000)
<i>N</i>	55	295	69	920

*p*-values in parentheses

Standard errors clustered by settlement

Postive coef. = agreement

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 3.17: A114 summary statistics - Are you in favor of democratic government even if that may lead to a certain amount of insecurity and disruption, or are you in favor of strong government control even if that may lead to a certain amount of regimentation and loss of individual expression? (1990)

Group (country)	Democratic govt.	Strict govt. control
Baltic nationalities (Baltics)	94.6 <sup>a</sup>	5.4
Russian (Baltics)	70.0	30.0
Galicia Ukrainian (Ukraine)	91.6	8.5
Eastern Ukrainian (Ukraine)	62.8	37.2
Belarusian (Belarus)	60.0	40.0
Russian (Belarus)	73.3	26.7
Russia	61.7	38.3

<sup>a</sup> Cells display percentage of respondents giving a particular answer (weights not available for analysis).

Table 3.18: A114: Are you in favor of democratic government even if that may lead to a certain amount of insecurity and disruption, or are you in favor of strong government control even if that may lead to a certain amount of regimentation and loss of individual expression? (1990)

	Baltics	Ukraine	Belarus	Russia
baltic_nat	-2.697** (0.015)			
galicia		-1.968*** (0.000)		
belarusian			-0.160 (0.856)	
russian				-0.415 (0.110)
male	1.188 (0.243)	-0.631* (0.059)	0.001 (0.999)	-0.569*** (0.005)
age	0.017 (0.451)	0.024** (0.012)	0.039* (0.053)	0.034*** (0.000)
edu	0.307 (0.431)	-0.243* (0.072)	-0.539** (0.042)	-0.218*** (0.000)
material	0.548*** (0.005)	-0.002 (0.981)	-0.178 (0.243)	-0.013 (0.747)
cut1	5.860*** (0.002)	0.558 (0.425)	-0.211 (0.907)	0.629 (0.180)
N	47	225	60	736

*p*-values in parentheses

Standard errors clustered by settlement

Positive coef. = favors strong control

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 3.19: A22 summary statistics - There is currently too much criticism in Soviet newspapers and magazines (1990)

Group (country)	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Uncer- tain	Agree	Agree strongly
Baltic nationalities (Baltics)	14.0 <sup>a</sup>	39.5	20.9	16.3	9.3
Russian (Baltics)	7.7	15.4	0.0	23.1	53.9
Galicia Ukrainian (Ukraine)	2.0	32.0	18.0	30.0	18.0
Eastern Ukrainian (Ukraine)	1.0	19.8	14.2	47.2	17.8
Belarusian (Belarus)	5.7	24.5	11.3	28.3	30.2
Russian (Belarus)	6.3	43.8	6.3	25.0	18.8
Russia	2.7	16.1	10.9	47.4	22.9

<sup>a</sup> Cells display percentage of respondents giving a particular answer (weights not available for analysis).

Table 3.20: A22: There is currently too much criticism in Soviet newspapers and magazines (1990)

	Baltics	Ukraine	Belarus	Russia
baltic_nat	-2.357*** (0.000)			
galicia		-0.484** (0.036)		
belarusian			1.047** (0.026)	
russian				0.045 (0.766)
male	-0.116 (0.739)	-0.491** (0.026)	0.320 (0.213)	-0.252* (0.099)
age	0.039** (0.013)	-0.004 (0.487)	-0.021* (0.091)	0.001 (0.632)
edu	0.085 (0.672)	-0.067 (0.440)	-0.193 (0.279)	0.002 (0.968)
material	0.051 (0.758)	0.023 (0.733)	0.261* (0.093)	-0.018 (0.666)
cut1	-2.060* (0.091)	-5.028*** (0.000)	-2.454*** (0.004)	-3.670*** (0.000)
cut2	-0.019 (0.987)	-1.793*** (0.000)	-0.162 (0.794)	-1.548*** (0.000)
cut3	0.883 (0.504)	-1.054** (0.031)	0.310 (0.486)	-0.955*** (0.001)
cut4	2.124 (0.163)	0.902* (0.065)	1.606*** (0.001)	1.130*** (0.000)
<i>N</i>	55	295	69	920

*p*-values in parentheses

Standard errors clustered by settlement

Postive coef. = agreement

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 3.21: A36 summary statistics - Free speech is just not worth it if it means the danger to society of extremist political views (1990)

Group (country)	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Uncer- tain	Agree	Agree strongly
Baltic nationalities (Baltics)	23.3 <sup>a</sup>	46.5	23.3	7.0	0.0
Russian (Baltics)	7.7	46.2	30.8	7.7	7.7
Galicia Ukrainian (Ukraine)	10.0	25.0	41.0	12.0	12.0
Eastern Ukrainian (Ukraine)	7.1	23.9	32.5	21.8	14.7
Belarusian (Belarus)	17.0	30.2	18.9	13.2	20.8
Russian (Belarus)	12.5	31.3	12.5	31.3	12.5
Russia	6.4	29.5	28.9	24.1	11.1

<sup>a</sup> Cells display percentage of respondents giving a particular answer (weights not available for analysis).

Table 3.22: A36: Free speech is just not worth it if it means that we have to put up with the danger to society of extremist political views (1990)

	Baltics	Ukraine	Belarus	Russia
baltic_nat	-0.905** (0.032)			
galicia		-0.326 (0.148)		
belarusian			-0.286 (0.596)	
russian				-0.258 (0.144)
male	-0.145 (0.616)	-0.657*** (0.003)	0.323 (0.632)	-0.221* (0.096)
age	0.028* (0.092)	-0.008 (0.176)	0.009 (0.589)	0.007** (0.023)
edu	-0.177 (0.106)	-0.289*** (0.001)	-0.319** (0.022)	-0.092* (0.056)
material	0.063 (0.333)	0.073 (0.254)	-0.057 (0.351)	0.011 (0.718)
cut1	-1.395** (0.017)	-3.842*** (0.000)	-2.663*** (0.000)	-2.922*** (0.000)
cut2	0.829* (0.089)	-2.099*** (0.000)	-1.077 (0.102)	-0.797** (0.014)
cut3	2.621*** (0.000)	-0.523 (0.290)	-0.349 (0.679)	0.410 (0.239)
cut4	4.355*** (0.000)	0.601 (0.233)	0.583 (0.381)	1.888*** (0.000)
<i>N</i>	55	295	69	920

*p*-values in parentheses

Standard errors clustered by settlement

Postive coef. = agreement

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 3.23: A35 summary statistics - It is better to live in an orderly society than to allow people so much freedom that they can become disruptive (1990)

Group (country)	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Uncer- tain	Agree	Agree strongly
Baltic nationalities (Baltics)	16.3 <sup>a</sup>	34.9	25.6	18.6	4.7
Russian (Baltics)	15.4	7.7	15.4	30.8	30.8
Galicia Ukrainian (Ukraine)	6.0	26.0	35.0	26.0	7.0
Eastern Ukrainian (Ukraine)	1.5	18.8	22.8	28.9	27.9
Belarusian (Belarus)	7.6	20.8	15.1	11.3	45.3
Russian (Belarus)	12.5	25.0	18.8	18.8	25.0
Russia	4.3	16.3	16.7	32.0	30.7

<sup>a</sup> Cells display percentage of respondents giving a particular answer (weights not available for analysis).



Table 3.24: A35: It is better to live in an orderly society than to allow people so much freedom that they can become disruptive (1990)

	Baltics	Ukraine	Belarus	Russia
baltic_nat	-1.555*** (0.000)			
galicia		-0.950*** (0.000)		
belarusian			0.198 (0.697)	
russian				-0.499*** (0.001)
male	0.222 (0.664)	-0.443** (0.042)	0.251 (0.179)	-0.238 (0.109)
age	0.017 (0.133)	0.011* (0.090)	0.034*** (0.007)	0.025*** (0.000)
edu	-0.125* (0.058)	-0.207** (0.023)	-0.553 (0.133)	-0.198*** (0.001)
material	-0.024 (0.747)	0.003 (0.959)	-0.181 (0.288)	-0.010 (0.782)
cut1	-2.702*** (0.001)	-4.246*** (0.000)	-3.583*** (0.000)	-3.288*** (0.000)
cut2	-1.154 (0.132)	-1.874*** (0.000)	-1.780*** (0.000)	-1.488*** (0.000)
cut3	-0.122 (0.888)	-0.576 (0.247)	-0.905 (0.105)	-0.613** (0.045)
cut4	1.452* (0.097)	0.819 (0.105)	-0.253 (0.556)	0.809** (0.016)
<i>N</i>	55	295	69	920

*p*-values in parentheses

Standard errors clustered by settlement

Postive coef. = agreement

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 3.25: Summary statistics: Latvians in Latvia (2008)

Question	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Agree	Agree strongly
Q21: Democracy may have problems but is better than other forms of government	3.6 <sup>a</sup> (3.6) <sup>b</sup>	16.2 (16.5)	63.8 (63.3)	16.4 (16.6)
Q22: In democracy the economic system runs badly	10.1 (10.2)	46.4 (46.6)	35.2 (35.1)	8.4 (8.1)
Q23: Democracies are indecisive and have too much squabbling	4.0 (4.1)	24.8 (24.9)	47.7 (48.1)	23.6 (22.9)
Q24: Democracies aren't good at maintaining order	6.9 (6.8)	42.8 (43.2)	39.4 (39.3)	10.9 (10.7)
Q30: Sometimes it's better to have less democracy in order to have more stability in the country	6.8 (6.8)	19.5 (19.7)	53.2 (53.0)	20.5 (20.5)
	Not at all important	Not very important	Somewhat important	Very important
Q31: If the social and economic situation in the country is stable, how important is it for ordinary citizens like you to have the ability to influence the political process?	5.0 (5.0)	19.4 (19.3)	40.4 (40.7)	35.2 (35.0)

<sup>a</sup> Cells display sample-corrected percentage of respondents giving a particular answer.

<sup>b</sup> Value in parentheses is the unweighted, uncorrected percentage.

Table 3.26: Summary statistics: Russians in Latvia (2008)

Question	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Agree	Agree strongly
Q21: Democracy may have problems but is better than other forms of government	6.2 <sup>a</sup> (6.2) <sup>b</sup>	24.0 (22.8)	52.6 (53.0)	17.3 (18.0)
Q22: In democracy the economic system runs badly	10.1 (10.2)	46.4 (46.6)	35.2 (35.1)	8.4 (8.1)
Q23: Democracies are indecisive and have too much squabbling	7.9 (8.0)	19.4 (19.7)	44.9 (44.6)	27.8 (27.8)
Q24: Democracies aren't good at maintaining order	10.2 (10.0)	36.6 (37.1)	37.4 (36.8)	16.0 (16.1)
Q30: Sometimes it's better to have less democracy in order to have more stability in the country	4.3 (4.4)	19.2 (19.3)	46.9 (47.0)	29.6 (29.3)
	Not at all important	Not very important	Somewhat important	Very important
Q31: If the social and economic situation in the country is stable, how important is it for ordinary citizens like you to have the ability to influence the political process?	11.3 (11.4)	21.9 (21.8)	36.4 (36.0)	30.5 (30.9)

<sup>a</sup> Cells display sample-corrected percentage of respondents giving a particular answer.

<sup>b</sup> Value in parentheses is the unweighted, uncorrected percentage.

Table 3.27: Beliefs about Democracy in Latvia (2008)

	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q30	Q31
latvian	0.402*** (0.003)	-0.091 (0.552)	-0.102 (0.477)	-0.177* (0.085)	-0.228** (0.044)	0.364*** (0.001)
male	-0.185** (0.042)	-0.080 (0.563)	0.080 (0.380)	0.257* (0.056)	0.137 (0.397)	0.221** (0.021)
urban	-0.010 (0.962)	-0.192 (0.407)	-0.304 (0.243)	-0.154 (0.499)	0.070 (0.764)	-0.021 (0.942)
age	-0.009** (0.017)	0.008** (0.034)	0.009*** (0.005)	0.009* (0.061)	0.011*** (0.004)	0.001 (0.672)
edu	0.143* (0.097)	-0.152** (0.048)	0.009 (0.910)	-0.064 (0.512)	-0.090 (0.327)	-0.042 (0.555)
material	0.041 (0.573)	-0.102 (0.254)	-0.255*** (0.000)	-0.119* (0.087)	-0.027 (0.634)	0.043 (0.350)
unemployed	-0.466* (0.100)	-0.426* (0.092)	0.044 (0.843)	-0.103 (0.663)	0.160 (0.646)	-0.529* (0.062)
wage2007	0.002** (0.028)	0.001 (0.121)	-0.001 (0.365)	0.001 (0.360)	0.000 (0.842)	0.004*** (0.002)
cut1	-2.018*** (0.004)	-2.370*** (0.002)	-3.860*** (0.000)	-2.535*** (0.001)	-2.652** (0.013)	-1.002* (0.052)
cut2	-0.058 (0.914)	-0.134 (0.818)	-1.935*** (0.004)	-0.171 (0.726)	-0.950 (0.215)	0.624 (0.244)
cut3	2.777*** (0.000)	2.044*** (0.007)	0.191 (0.732)	1.856*** (0.003)	1.350 (0.105)	2.347*** (0.000)
<i>N</i>	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000

*p*-values in parentheses

Standard errors clustered by settlement

Postive coef. = agreement, analyzed sample limited to ethnic Latvians and Russians

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 3.28: Summary statistics: Galicia Ukrainians in Ukraine (2008)

Question	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Agree	Agree strongly
Q21: Democracy may have problems but is better than other forms of government	3.2 <sup>a</sup> (3.0) <sup>b</sup>	17.7 (16.9)	30.0 (31.8)	49.1 (48.3)
Q22: In democracy the economic system runs badly	28.6 (25.2)	35.4 (39.4)	25.3 (24.8)	10.7 (10.6)
Q23: Democracies are indecisive and have too much squabbling	13.3 (14.2)	23.2 (26.5)	28.5 (29.14)	35.0 (30.1)
Q24: Democracies aren't good at maintaining order	16.1 (11.9)	25.2 (25.5)	30.8 (33.4)	27.9 (29.14)
Q30: Sometimes it's better to have less democracy in order to have more stability in the country	10.0 (10.3)	10.8 (11.9)	45.1 (44.4)	34.2 (33.44)
	Not at all important	Not very important	Somewhat important	Very important
Q31: If the social and economic situation in the country is stable, how important is it for ordinary citizens like you to have the ability to influence the political process?	3.2 (3.3)	12.4 (8.3)	29.9 (30.8)	54.5 (57.6)

<sup>a</sup> Cells display sample-corrected percentage of respondents giving a particular answer.

<sup>b</sup> Value in parentheses is the unweighted, uncorrected percentage.

Table 3.29: Summary statistics: Eastern Ukrainians in Ukraine (2008)

Question	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Agree	Agree strongly
Q21: Democracy may have problems but is better than other forms of government	10.2 <sup>a</sup> (11.6) <sup>b</sup>	25.7 (24.1)	43.3 (43.2)	20.1 (21.2)
Q22: In democracy the economic system runs badly	16.1 (16.7)	35.9 (35.6)	28.5 (27.6)	19.5 (20.0)
Q23: Democracies are indecisive and have too much squabbling	9.1 (10.9)	24.7 (25.8)	31.3 (31.6)	34.9 (31.7)
Q24: Democracies aren't good at maintaining order	11.8 (12.7)	31.9 (30.9)	32.0 (31.6)	24.3 (24.8)
Q30: Sometimes it's better to have less democracy in order to have more stability in the country	9.4 (9.6)	18.7 (20.1)	38.2 (39.2)	33.8 (31.2)
	Not at all important	Not very important	Somewhat important	Very important
Q31: If the social and economic situation in the country is stable, how important is it for ordinary citizens like you to have the ability to influence the political process?	11.7 (11.9)	19.9 (20.5)	39.2 (38.7)	29.3 (28.9)

<sup>a</sup> Cells display sample-corrected percentage of respondents giving a particular answer.

<sup>b</sup> Value in parentheses is the unweighted, uncorrected percentage.

Table 3.30: Beliefs about Democracy among Ukrainians in Ukraine (2008)

	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q30	Q31
galician	1.146** (0.037)	-0.707** (0.048)	-0.223 (0.570)	-0.041 (0.933)	0.049 (0.889)	1.067** (0.029)
male	-0.128 (0.504)	-0.021 (0.906)	0.019 (0.905)	0.045 (0.792)	0.033 (0.839)	-0.017 (0.878)
urban	-0.137 (0.541)	-0.196 (0.432)	-0.132 (0.689)	-0.169 (0.501)	-0.219 (0.479)	0.200 (0.562)
age	-0.004 (0.393)	0.007 (0.169)	0.009* (0.086)	0.008 (0.114)	0.009* (0.093)	-0.005 (0.238)
edu	0.084 (0.630)	-0.155 (0.252)	-0.142 (0.394)	-0.182 (0.195)	0.040 (0.788)	0.088 (0.539)
material	0.211 (0.213)	-0.308** (0.014)	-0.295** (0.038)	-0.297** (0.013)	-0.281** (0.031)	-0.080 (0.531)
unemployed	-0.210 (0.442)	-0.235 (0.518)	0.586* (0.072)	-0.172 (0.593)	-0.103 (0.725)	0.218 (0.561)
wage2007	0.001 (0.590)	0.006 (0.109)	0.005 (0.139)	0.004* (0.059)	-0.001 (0.821)	-0.007** (0.022)
cut1	-1.492* (0.095)	-2.555** (0.012)	-2.970*** (0.009)	-2.982*** (0.003)	-2.771*** (0.005)	-2.606*** (0.003)
cut2	0.153 (0.838)	-0.790 (0.393)	-1.332 (0.179)	-1.216 (0.165)	-1.452 (0.101)	-1.332 (0.101)
cut3	2.050** (0.019)	0.621 (0.494)	0.011 (0.991)	0.224 (0.794)	0.252 (0.779)	0.329 (0.660)
<i>N</i>	991	991	991	991	991	991

*p*-values in parentheses

Standard errors clustered by settlement

Postive coef. = agreement, analyzed sample limited to ethnic Latvians and Russians

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 3.31: Summary statistics: Belarusians and Russians (combined) in Belarus (2008)

Question	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Agree	Agree strongly
Q21: Democracy may have problems but is better than other forms of government	6.7 <sup>a</sup> (6.7) <sup>b</sup>	15.7 (15.9)	50.4 (50.5)	27.2 (26.9)
Q22: In democracy the economic system runs badly	22.6 (22.5)	50.3 (50.4)	19.3 (19.3)	7.9 (7.8)
Q23: Democracies are indecisive and have too much squabbling	18.9 (18.7)	40.4 (40.8)	27.6 (27.5)	13.2 (13.0)
Q24: Democracies aren't good at maintaining order	17.8 (17.8)	43.4 (43.8)	26.7 (26.6)	12.1 (11.9)
Q30: Sometimes it's better to have less democracy in order to have more stability in the country	13.4 (13.4)	25.4 (25.5)	41.3 (41.4)	19.9 (19.7)
	Not at all important	Not very important	Somewhat important	Very important
Q31: If the social and economic situation in the country is stable, how important is it for ordinary citizens like you to have the ability to influence the political process?	16.8 (16.3)	17.0 (17.2)	41.8 (42.2)	24.5 (24.4)

<sup>a</sup> Cells display sample-corrected percentage of respondents giving a particular answer.

<sup>b</sup> Value in parentheses is the unweighted, uncorrected percentage.



Table 3.32: Beliefs about Democracy in Belarus (2008)

	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q30	Q31
belarusian	-0.280 (0.118)	0.333** (0.024)	0.376*** (0.005)	0.118 (0.464)	0.221 (0.116)	-0.248* (0.092)
male	-0.052 (0.626)	-0.232 (0.142)	-0.287** (0.013)	-0.330** (0.013)	-0.135 (0.226)	0.399*** (0.000)
urban	-0.238 (0.263)	0.002 (0.990)	0.018 (0.923)	-0.058 (0.771)	-0.169 (0.362)	0.525* (0.066)
age	-0.013*** (0.002)	0.012 (0.102)	0.014*** (0.004)	0.012*** (0.008)	0.015*** (0.000)	-0.011*** (0.005)
edu	0.215** (0.014)	-0.405** (0.015)	-0.353** (0.030)	-0.361*** (0.001)	-0.383** (0.011)	0.512*** (0.000)
material	0.011 (0.877)	-0.057 (0.451)	-0.114 (0.410)	-0.001 (0.985)	-0.001 (0.995)	0.018 (0.718)
unemployed	0.281 (0.389)	0.100 (0.753)	0.252 (0.192)	-0.055 (0.865)	-0.166 (0.694)	-0.154 (0.617)
wage2007	-0.010 (0.492)	-0.007 (0.499)	-0.006 (0.517)	-0.003 (0.616)	-0.002 (0.779)	0.011 (0.236)
cut1	-4.416 (0.115)	-3.484 (0.196)	-3.431 (0.102)	-3.093** (0.021)	-3.155* (0.096)	1.944 (0.250)
cut2	-2.993 (0.213)	-1.147 (0.607)	-1.503 (0.392)	-1.030 (0.349)	-1.687 (0.307)	2.960 (0.102)
cut3	-0.703 (0.737)	0.398 (0.860)	0.103 (0.950)	0.571 (0.588)	0.268 (0.861)	4.934** (0.018)
<i>N</i>	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000

*p*-values in parentheses

Standard errors clustered by settlement

Postive coef. = agreement, analyzed sample limited to ethnic Latvians and Russians

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 3.33: Summary statistics: Russia (all nationalities, 2008)

Question	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Agree	Agree strongly
Q21: Democracy may have problems but is better than other forms of government	6.4 <sup>a</sup> (6.7) <sup>b</sup>	17.8 (18.3)	46.7 (46.2)	29.2 (28.8)
Q22: In democracy the economic system runs badly	16.5 (16.3)	43.2 (43.0)	26.3 (25.8)	14.0 (14.8)
Q23: Democracies are indecisive and have too much squabbling	11.9 (12.2)	30.6 (30.1)	33.9 (33.5)	23.6 (24.3)
Q24: Democracies aren't good at maintaining order	11.7 (11.7)	36.6 (36.0)	33.2 (32.9)	18.6 (19.4)
Q30: Sometimes it's better to have less democracy in order to have more stability in the country	10.1 (10.3)	22.2 (22.4)	40.3 (39.1)	27.4 (28.2)
	Not at all important	Not very important	Somewhat important	Very important
Q31: If the social and economic situation in the country is stable, how important is it for ordinary citizens like you to have the ability to influence the political process?	7.4 (7.6)	18.0 (18.1)	44.1 (44.3)	30.5 (30.1)

<sup>a</sup> Cells display sample-corrected percentage of respondents giving a particular answer.

<sup>b</sup> Value in parentheses is the unweighted, uncorrected percentage.

Table 3.34: Beliefs about Democracy in Russia (2007)

	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q30	Q31
russian	-0.013 (0.941)	-0.099 (0.617)	-0.010 (0.953)	0.010 (0.949)	-0.021 (0.927)	0.282 (0.242)
male	0.057 (0.641)	-0.134 (0.172)	0.020 (0.836)	0.051 (0.650)	-0.046 (0.655)	0.140 (0.101)
urban	-0.005 (0.981)	-0.196 (0.357)	-0.106 (0.635)	-0.134 (0.511)	-0.259 (0.243)	0.001 (0.996)
age	-0.014*** (0.003)	0.017*** (0.001)	0.019*** (0.000)	0.017*** (0.000)	0.014*** (0.005)	-0.007** (0.042)
edu	-0.041 (0.663)	-0.128 (0.187)	-0.234*** (0.009)	-0.060 (0.428)	-0.125 (0.147)	-0.037 (0.635)
material	0.047 (0.494)	-0.156** (0.016)	-0.151** (0.023)	-0.175** (0.013)	-0.136** (0.045)	0.048 (0.441)
unemployed	-0.246 (0.538)	0.798** (0.027)	0.591* (0.082)	0.199 (0.549)	0.259 (0.373)	-0.246 (0.501)
wage2007	-0.000 (0.868)	-0.002 (0.289)	-0.005* (0.064)	-0.001 (0.422)	0.000 (0.901)	0.000 (0.939)
cut1	-3.406*** (0.000)	-2.450*** (0.003)	-3.450*** (0.000)	-2.372*** (0.000)	-2.726*** (0.000)	-2.539*** (0.000)
cut2	-1.845*** (0.002)	-0.343 (0.619)	-1.672*** (0.005)	-0.353 (0.469)	-1.245** (0.023)	-1.078** (0.014)
cut3	0.223 (0.696)	1.156 (0.115)	-0.078 (0.891)	1.272** (0.013)	0.532 (0.302)	0.837* (0.066)
<i>N</i>	1501	1501	1501	1501	1501	1501

*p*-values in parentheses

Standard errors clustered by settlement

Postive coef. = agreement

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

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### Bringing the State Back In: Political Socialization and Generation Effects

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In the previous two chapters I argued that historical processes of national identity formation and national identity evolution can, in reaction to foreign occupation by an authoritarian power, produce a self-conception among the occupied people that “we” are culturally suited for democracy. Under the conditions of authoritarian foreign occupation, these self-conceptions of the nation as fundamentally democratic are passed down across generations primarily through familial and informal social networks. These networks are somewhat shielded from the interference of the occupying state, which is generally hostile to potentially dangerous nationalisms that emphasize the foreignness of the occupier’s rule. Thus, there is the “underground” national identity, strains of which relate to political culture, that is kept alive by nationalists and sympathizers within the occupied nation. Such an identity - and the national sense of “democraticness” - was present among the Baltic nationalities and Galician Ukrainians prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union. Individuals growing up in these cultures therefore experienced a form of political socialization in the family that emphasized those characteristics - political included - that distinguished themselves from Russians.

Of course, the role that families play in transmitting political values and national

identity to younger generations is not the only force in the political socialization of individuals. The state has strong incentives to carry out its own efforts at political socialization. Indeed, political socialization and indoctrination was especially important in the Soviet system, the entire legitimacy of which rested on ideological foundations.<sup>1</sup> Making the masses believe in that ideology was essential for the existence of the Soviet state, making the political socialization of the new “Soviet Man” (often referred to as *homo sovieticus*) a primary concern of the state.<sup>2</sup>

For obvious reasons, the education system is the primary means of carrying out the political socialization of the citizenry and was deployed far and wide throughout the Soviet empire. However, political socialization through schooling is far easier when carried out among populations who have weakly developed national identities and are thus less resistant to socialization (Darden 2009). Though political socialization can also be carried out among resistant populations, its impact in the periphery is likely to be lower than in the center because of the existing animosities and dichotomization between “us” and “them” described in the previous chapters.

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<sup>1</sup>Juan Linz’s classic work on totalitarianism highlights the importance of a legitimizing ideology for totalitarian systems like the Soviet Union: “[Under totalitarianism] there is an exclusive, autonomous, and more or less intellectually elaborate ideology with which the ruling group or leader, and the party serving the leaders, identify and which they use as a basis for policies or manipulate to legitimize them. The ideology has some boundaries beyond which lies heterodoxy that does not remain unsanctioned. The ideology goes beyond a particular program or definition of the boundaries of legitimate political action to provide, presumably, some ultimate meaning, sense of historical purpose, and interpretation of social reality”(Linz 2000, 70).

<sup>2</sup>The importance of reshaping the Soviet Man, and by extension, Soviet society is also emphasized by Jowitt, who writes, “It is my thesis that all Leninist regimes are oriented to certain core tasks that are crucial in shaping the organizational character of the regime and its relationship to society. These tasks include: (1) transformation – the attempt decisively to alter or destroy values, structures, and behavior a revolutionary elite perceives as comprising or contributing to the actual or potential existence of alternative centers of political power; (2) consolidation – the attempt to create the nucleus of a new political community in a setting that ideally prevents existing social forces from exercising any uncontrolled and undesired influence over the development and definition of the new community; and (3) modernization – the regime’s attempt to develop more empirical and less dogmatic definitions of problems and policy. . . Transformation involves a confrontation between the regime and the “unreconstructed” society. Consolidation yields a structure of domination, as the politically defeated but “hostile” society must be prevented from “contaminating” the nuclei of the new socialist society. Modernization, however, requires a rather significant redefinition of the relationship between regime and society from mutual hostility and avoidance to the regime’s selective recognition and managed acceptance of society (Jowitt 1992, 56-57).

## 4.1 Political Socialization

This foray into non-nationalist political socialization prompts us to turn to the literature on political socialization and education for insights. Mainly in the American political context, many studies have examined the role that education (including civic education programs) plays in shaping the political knowledge, attitudes, and participation of individuals (Ehman 1980; Galston 2004; Gimpel, Lay and Schuknecht 2003). Though some studies have been carried out in other countries (Chaffee, Morduchowicz and Galperin 1997; Morduchowicz et al. 1996; Slomczynski and Shabad 1998), it is apparent that more work needs to be done on education and political socialization in comparative contexts. Scholars have also explored the role the media plays in processes of political socialization, though they too tend to be drawn from the American experience (Garrazone and Atkin 1986; Eveland Jr, McLeod and Horowitz 1998). While the specific effects vary in the literature, most recent studies do find that educational programs and media exposure seem to play a role in the political socialization of youth.

Much of the literature on political socialization and education rests on the belief that beliefs and behaviors learned in the early years tend to remain stable in the adult years. Thus, political beliefs, values, and behaviors tend to be “sticky” over time, reflecting the conditions under which the individual was socialized. There is debate over the degree to which political attitudes change after early socialization (Danigelis, Hardy and Cutler 2007). Still, many empirical studies have shown strong evidence of the persistence into adulthood of political values and beliefs that were learned in youth (Alwin and Krosnick 1991; Jennings, Stoker and Bowers 2001; Jennings and Niemi 1981, 52). Other scholars have shown that significant public events taking place in one’s youth leave a deeper imprint on one’s political memories and beliefs than events taking place later in life (Schuman and Scott 1989; Schuman and Corning 2000). While there is some disagreement over what the critical age range for political socialization is, Niemi and Hepburn suggest the ages of 14 through the mid-twenties as the “period of maximum change” when beliefs are most likely to be solidified (Niemi and Hepburn 1995). Hence, our concern with education, as this period encompasses the ages in which youth are exposed to political ideas in school.

#### 4.1.1 Marxism and Democracy

When we step beyond the US and into the Soviet context (for the majority of adults in the post-Soviet space today were educated under the Soviet system), we must recall that the Soviet state maintained tight control over the content of education and media. Through these institutions the state took an active role in attempting to indoctrinate the citizenry with the political, economic, and social values rooted in its Marxist-Leninist ideology. In particular, Marxism-Leninism's emphasis on collective values over individual rights, its traditional hostility toward western "bourgeois" liberal democracy, and its formulation of "true democracy" as that which brings economic and social (class) equality shaped the way in which Soviet citizens came to understand democracy in practice and in principle. I argue that this Soviet state-driven political socialization has left its stamp on the political values and preferences of today's post-Soviet citizens. But what does that stamp look like? To answer this question, we must first take a brief detour through Marxist-Leninist thought on democracy, liberalism, and freedom as deployed by the Soviet regime.

A key theme in Marx's work is that of holism, "the assumption that the social whole takes priority, both methodologically and morally, over its individual human components"(Femia 1993, 8). This supremacy of the collective over the individual, however, did not produce tension between individual values and collective values. For Marx and his followers, the general will was the will of the individuals comprising the proletariat. This was so not because the general will was the aggregation of the individual wills of all of society, but rather because history determined that the individual proletarian's interests and the socialist society's interests were one and the same. The wills of particular individuals could be determined simply by knowing the general will of society.

This primacy of the collective over the individual had profound consequences when extended to the political realm, particularly when it came to the question of individual rights and liberties. Why would individuals need special rights when their interests were already guaranteed by the historically determined general will? As Femia writes, "A protected private sphere, personal independence, unrestricted diversity of opinion and behavior – these cherished liberal values were precisely what Marx and his votaries denigrated in

their quest for an organic society”(Femia 1993, 141). This ideological strand extended into the realm of practice as implemented by the Soviet regime, whose model of democracy “assumed that the interests of the people were, fundamentally, identical, and that there would be no need either for institutional checks and balances. . . or for legal protection for minorities”(Priestland 2002, 113). Thus, in Marxist theory and Soviet practice, individual liberties were detached from the question of democracy; it was possible to have the latter without the former.

So-called freedom, rights, and democracy as understood in the liberal tradition did not, according to Marxists, constitute the freedom of man; even in their presence, man was still in chains. In *The State and Revolution*, Lenin wrote, “Freedom in capitalist society always remains approximately the same as in the ancient Greek republics: freedom for the slave-owners”(Lenin 1992, 78). As Herbert Marcuse put it, “Free election of masters does not abolish the master or the slaves.”<sup>3</sup> Femia expands on this theme of Marxist-Leninist thought, noting that “one does not liberate people by letting them speak freely, associate or worship as they please, dispose of their property or labour in accordance with their own wishes. This is illusory freedom, for these people would still be slaves to religion, property, and greed. Man’s political emancipation, in the form of bourgeois rights, turns out to be the ‘perfection of his slavery and his inhumanity’”(Femia 1993, 27). Rather, it is the emancipation from the state of economic oppression and inequality that will ultimately bring about the liberation of man.

In Marxist discourse and Soviet practice, the elimination of class distinctions and the achievement of economic equality become central to the idea of democracy and freedom. Democracy is “deepened” by extending it from the political realm to the economic and social realms. In the Soviet Union the instrument of this deepening was the party, which guided the socialist revolution (Debrizzi 1982, 96). That the party exerted despotic control over political functions was irrelevant: it had emancipated society from the only chains that matter, those of social class.

Hence, Marxism-Leninism identifies a stark contrast between the western liberal-

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<sup>3</sup>Quoted in Femia (1993, 44).



bourgeois form of democracy (“so-called democracy” or “democracy” – in quotes – in Soviet political writing) and the “true” form of democracy which embodies social and economic equality. Lenin’s hostility to liberal democracy is not surprising. For him, liberal democracy was “always constricted by the narrow framework of capitalist exploitation, and consequently always remains essentially democratism for the minority, only for the propertied classes, only for the rich”(Lenin 1992, 78) By contrast, “truly complete democracy” could be realized only in communist society (Lenin 1992, 80). This was because “freedom and socialist democracy are freedom for the whole people building a communist society. . . [The] genuine freedom of man. . . [is] freedom from all prejudices and class antagonisms.”<sup>4</sup> Once class antagonisms had been demolished, the resulting society, according to Lenin, would be “a million times more democratic than any bourgeois democracy; Soviet government is a million times more democratic than the most democratic bourgeois republic”(Lenin 1935, 135). This was because “Proletarian democracy, of which Soviet government is one of the forms, has given a development and expansion of democracy hitherto unprecedented in the world, precisely for the vast majority of the population, for the exploited and for the toilers”(Lenin 1935, 133)

Thus, the idea of “social leveling” - the elimination of social and economic inequalities in society - became a central component to the concept of “democracy” in Soviet Marxist-Leninist ideology. The centrality of collectivism for Marxist-Leninist thought did not remain within the dusty pages of philosophical tomes, but was actively deployed by the Soviet education system as the Soviet regime sought to create a fundamentally different type of individual: *Homo Sovieticus* or the “new Soviet man.” Tudge writes that Soviet education placed heavy emphasis on the development of a collectivist mentality in order to produce the ideal communist citizen: “[the] new Soviet man (and woman) is someone who is striving collectively with his fellows to build Communism, who is devoted to the Motherland and has the good of society at heart, who has been educated polytechnically and has a love of labour”(Tudge 1991, 128). Soviet citizens were exposed to Marxist-Leninist ideology for most of their lives, beginning early through schools and youth organizations (the Pioneers

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<sup>4</sup>F. Medvedev and G. Kulikov, Human Rights and Freedoms in the USSR, quoted in Femia (1993, 37).

and Communist Youth League) and continuing into adulthood through their exposure to the state-run media and workplace indoctrination.

School children and adolescents were exposed to basically the same ideological content in Soviet schools, whether studying in Tallinn or Tashkent. For, as Tudge writes,

“Since the formation of the Soviet Union in 1917, stress has been placed on keeping control of the educational system firmly in the hands of the state... [The] curricula in the various preschool and school institutions [were] enshrined in documents that [were] changed only after discussion at the highest levels. One implication is that, with few exceptions... children in all schools across the Soviet Union [were] taught much the same material in pretty much the same way.” (Tudge 1991, 125)

Because curriculum decisions were made only at the highest levels of political leadership, *the makeup of that leadership* had a direct influence on what children were being taught in the classroom. As the Soviet leadership changed with the rise of new leaders, the shifts in the ideological winds that accompanied those transitions would have eventually reached Soviet schoolchildren as well. Bunce writes:

“Long-term stability in cadres meant that the socialist successions of the 1980s involved not just some long-delayed changes in leadership, but also a rotation in political generations. This was crucial, because the nature of these systems – for instance, the tendency of elites to mount systemwide campaigns and introduce sudden and thoroughgoing shifts in policy directions – produced, not very surprisingly, unusually distinct political generations” (Bunce 1999, 59).

#### 4.1.2 Political Generations and Regime Preferences

The ideological environment in the Soviet Union changed over time, gradually mellowing from the intensely ideological eras of Stalin and Khrushchev. Various explanations have been put forward to explain this mellowing of ideology and the means used to implement it. The explanation put forth by Linz (2000) remains among the most persuasive to this day:

“Once the great breakthrough constraining conditions had been accomplished, with destruction of traditional society by war communism, the secure establishment of Communist party rule without any need to share power with other leftist parties, collectivization of agriculture and forced industrialization... and

a more complex society requiring greater expertise and consequently autonomy of individuals and groups had emerged, the leadership was probably right in assuming that a system could be run more efficiently and equally securely without the constant affirmation of moral political unity, emphasis on ideological orthodoxy, fear of “groupism,” constant assertion of the power of the party, and the recurrent mobilization for radical changes”(Linz 2000, 249).

As the emphasis on ideological orthodoxy declined and the structural deficiencies of the socialist socioeconomic model became painfully apparent,<sup>5</sup> the system was increasingly bankrupt of “true believers,” both among the citizenry and the leadership throughout the Brezhnev and Gorbachev eras. Furthermore, the messages that Soviet youth were exposed to in school evolved with the ideology and ideological intensity of the regime. Thus, if the political and ideological environment under which an individual was socialized during the impressionable years leaves a long-lasting stamp on one’s political beliefs, we should observe different belief structures about democracy and authoritarianism across different generations.

The depth and content of national identities also influences the degree to which individuals are receptive to state-drive ideological indoctrination. Let us begin with our expectations for *individuals whose nationality lacks the liberal/democratic-nationalist fusion* described in the previous chapters. I argue that two important components of Soviet socialization and ideological exposure manifest themselves today in the political attitudes of such citizens. First, I argue that the Soviet ideological legacy makes itself apparent in citizens’ understanding of “true democracy.” I hypothesize that individuals with the greatest ideological exposure during the Soviet era will strongly associate the idea of “true democracy” with Marxist-Leninist values of social and economic equality and not with liberal democratic values of individual political rights. Second, the Soviet idea of western liberal democracy as exploitative and therefore not “true democracy” should reinforce negative attitudes toward the experience of democracy in the 1990s. Because democracy was viewed during that period as something imported from the West, we expect people who were most heavily indoctrinated in the Soviet system to demonstrate the greatest hostility to the democratic experience of the 1990s. If political generational effects are at work, people socialized under

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<sup>5</sup>See Kornai (1992) and Nove (1983)

Stalinism should exhibit the strongest hostility to liberal democracy, the most openness to authoritarianism, and the strongest identification with a Marxist conception of democracy. According to my theory, hostility toward democracy should decline across age cohorts as citizens were socialized under successively less ideological eras of Soviet rule.

By contrast, *in areas in which liberal and democratic myths have been fused with nationalism and national identity*, we should still find evidence of Soviet-era political socialization, but with different patterns in beliefs across generations. Such patterns may include non-linearity: the oldest generations, most closely tied to the era of pre-Soviet national independence, might hold the most anti-authoritarian beliefs, making their political beliefs more like those of the generation that came of age after the restoration of independence in 1991. Or, we might observe an essentially flat relationship, whereby the preferences for authoritarianism and democracy are indistinguishable across generations, suggesting that the ideological climate of any given era mattered little to these populations resistant to any state-driven political indoctrination.

Thus, central to my endeavor is the exploration of generation effects among the political preferences of post-Soviet citizens. Formally defined, generation effects “derive from birth cohorts undergoing a shared community of experiences under roughly similar circumstances at pivotal, impressionable points (usually before mature adulthood) in the life cycle”(Jennings and Niemi 1981, 122). Many works on political socialization have found evidence of generation effects, with each generation bearing the markers of their unique socialization experiences (Schuman and Scott 1989; Schuman and Corning 2000; Jennings and Stoker 2002). Studies of political beliefs in the Soviet Union have also found evidence of generation effects (Bahry 1987; Gibson, Duch and Tedin 1992, 356-7). As White has stated, “It is...unlikely, to say the least, that the political beliefs and values of successive generations of Soviet citizens have been unaffected by the different circumstances in which they have been brought up within the USSR and by their different levels of knowledge of the outside world at formative periods in their political maturation”(White 1979, 182). More recently, Rose, Mishler and Munro (2006, 114-118) have supported a generational interpretation of regime support in Russia, finding that while the turbulence of the post-

Soviet transition has altered the beliefs of all age groups, different generations remain distinctly separate in their political beliefs.

## 4.2 Empirical Strategy

### 4.2.1 Defining Political Generations

In order to examine generational effects and their influence on support for democracy and authoritarianism among formerly Soviet citizens, it is necessary to first define what those generations are. Because the greatest shifts in political climate came with the changing of Soviet leaders, I define political generations according to the leader under which an individual came of age and was socialized. Thus, we can examine the belief structures of the “Stalin generation,” the “Khrushchev generation,” the “Brezhnev generation,”<sup>6</sup> the “Gorbachev generation,” and the “post-Soviet generation.” Of course, deciding when political socialization takes place and when an individual has “come of age” is notoriously difficult since realistically this happens at different times for different people. This complication manifests itself in the issue of where to put the cut points between generations: at what point does the Stalin generation end and the Khrushchev generation begin? Following the general literature about the key period of political socialization, I have selected the age of 16 as a cut point: in order for an individual to be coded as belonging to a particular generation, she must have reached the age of 16 under the particular leader in question.<sup>7</sup> Thus, an individual must have been at least 16 years old by the time of Stalin’s death in 1953 to be considered part of the “Stalin” generation. Individuals younger than this would be coded as the next generation (Khrushchev) on the assumption that while they had spent their childhood under Stalin, the key socialization years were spent under his successor. This procedure is followed for each successive generation, including the “post-Soviet generation,”

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<sup>6</sup>The long “Brezhnev”Empirically generation is extended to 1985, recognizing that Andropov and Chernenko were cast in the same mould as Brezhnev and were not in power long enough to bring about a major shift in the ideological environment.

<sup>7</sup>Of course, any cut point will be imperfect due to the individual differences noted above, but this error is likely to be random. Empirically, the statistical results presented in this chapter are not significantly affected when a different but nearby cut point - such as age 18 - is used.

Table 4.1: Summary of political generations

Generation	Birth Years	Came of Age*	Age in 2007	Percent of Sample
Stalin	1937 and earlier	Before 1954	70 and older	8.98
Khrushchev	1938-1948	1954-1964	59-69	15.00
Brezhnev	1949-1969	1965-1985	38-58	37.50
Gorbachev	1970-1975	1986-1991	32-37	9.29
Post-Soviet	1976-1990	After 1991	31 and younger	29.04

\* Based on socialization age of 16 years.

which consists of those individuals who were younger than 16 years in 1991 when the Soviet Union collapsed.

Table 4.1 summarizes the political generations as defined in this study, listing the range of birth years for each generation, the years in which each generation came of age, each generation's age range in 2007, and the percentage of the total survey sample<sup>8</sup> that each generation accounts for.<sup>9</sup>

#### 4.2.2 Generations Versus Age

It can be difficult to sort out generational effects from life-cycle effects. Life-cycle theories argue that political beliefs and values are the consequence of natural life stages rather than the consequence of events unique to particular generations. If older individuals tend to be more conservative and risk averse by virtue of their age, we would expect support for authoritarianism to grow over an individual's life cycle. Thus, whether one was socialized under Stalin or Brezhnev matters little; older individuals of any generation would hold similar beliefs at a comparable age. The difficulty becomes obvious quickly: if generational effects (with cohorts constructed by age groups) parallel age effects in empirical analysis, it can be difficult to determine which phenomenon is driving the results.

<sup>8</sup>Based on total sample size of 4,500 across Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, and Latvia

<sup>9</sup>Arithmetically inclined readers will note that the percentages in table 4.1 add up to 99.81 percent. The remaining 0.19 percent of individuals surveyed are a very select few who were old enough to have been socialized in interwar Poland (western parts of present-day Ukraine and Belarus) or interwar Latvia. Unfortunately, there are too few of such individuals remaining to effectively estimate a "pre-Soviet" generational effect and the inclusion of such a variable makes the statistical estimation impossible. They are therefore dropped from the statistical estimations. It is a shame, though one made inevitable by the march of time, since this pre-Soviet generation truly lies at the intersection of pre-Soviet national identity and Soviet occupation and assimilation policies.

There are a variety of tools that we can use to help distinguish between generational and life-cycle effects and confirm that it is generations and their attendant socialization experiences that help explain structures of regime preferences, not age. First, we can look for non-linearities in the statistical results. Suppose we found that the oldest (Stalin) generation was the most authoritarian, followed by the Khrushchev generation, then the Brezhnev generation, and so on, with each successive generation somewhat less authoritarian than the preceding generation. Such a pattern, in which support for authoritarianism seems to decline more or less linearly across generations could potentially be consistent with a life-cycle explanation that argues that people become more conservative and authoritarian as they age. But it could also be consistent with the generational argument that I've put forward here. Now imagine that support for authoritarianism progresses across generations in a non-linear fashion: perhaps it is highest among the Khrushchev generation (59-69 years old) and somewhat lower among the older Stalin generation (70 and older) *and* the younger Brezhnev generation (38-58 years old). Such an empirical pattern, while still requiring an explanation, would nonetheless provide evidence against a linear life cycle effect.

Different patterns of beliefs among generations within different political or ethnic groupings would also be evidence against age-based effects and evidence in favor of generation and socialization effects. In this chapter I will analyze generation effects on support for democracy and authoritarianism for six separate groups: residents of Russia and Belarus, eastern Ukrainians, western Ukrainians,<sup>10</sup> ethnic Latvians in Latvia, and ethnic Russians in Latvia. Since aging is a remarkably universal phenomenon, significant differences in the generational belief structures between these groups is evidence that experiences with political socialization (which do vary between groups) and not aging (which does not vary between groups) explains the results. On this last point, one might argue that people experience aging differently in different political, social, and economic contexts. Thus, aging in Russia might be different from aging in Latvia, thereby producing different results. While this is possible, we must question whether such a situation would really be a case of life-cycle effects, or just a different form of generational effects, one that asserts its influence

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<sup>10</sup>See page 178 for further explanation of the Ukrainian subsamples.

toward the end of life rather than earlier in life. But let us set aside different cross-national aging experiences for a moment and focus analytically on a single country. Were we to find different belief structures across generations between different groups within the same country - Latvians and Russians in Latvia, for example - this would argue against aging and life-cycle effects. Were life-cycle forces at work, we would expect that two ethnic groups in the same social, political, and economic environment would display the same effects of age as they get older. If the two groups' belief structures across generations turn out to be different, this would suggest that there are other forces at work that have shaped the political attitudes of particular generations.

The third method is a more direct empirical test intended to demonstrate that political generations and not aging effect are at work. Because age is highly correlated with the array of generations, it is not possible to include age and generational variables in the same regression - the high collinearity leads to "washed out" results. However, it is possible to focus on a single generation, preferably one with a wide age range, and examine whether age is a significant predictor of attitudes among that generation.

The long Brezhnev generation is ideal for this purpose thanks to Leonid Ilyich's longevity. The ages of members of this generation in 2007 range from 38 years old to 58 years old. If age is the driving force and not generation, then it should be statistically significant when we conduct the analysis only on the Brezhnev generation. The 20-year spread in age within the generation ensures sufficient variation in the independent variable to detect an age effect, should it exist. The size of the Brezhnev generation as represented in the sample - 37.5 percent of the total sample of 4,500 - is also sufficiently large for regression estimations on a single generation. If age fails to be a statistically significant predictor of democratic and authoritarian support within the Brezhnev generation, then we can take this as an additional piece of evidence that what shapes regime preferences is generation-variant political socialization and not simply life cycles.



### 4.2.3 Empirical Expectations

I have argued that the areas most receptive to Soviet political socialization - Russia, Belarus, and eastern Ukraine - should display relatively linear belief structures across generations: the Stalin generation should be the most supportive of authoritarianism and the least supportive of democracy. These beliefs should attenuate stepwise as we move to successive generations, so that the Gorbachev and post-Soviet generations are the least supportive of authoritarianism and the most supportive of democracy, reflecting the evolution of the political-ideological climate in which members of these generations were socialized.

I also argue that we will observe different patterns of generational effects in places with strong dynamics of national identity and resistance to Soviet indoctrination. Because a strong national identity and the accompanying resistance to Soviet occupation would have interfered with Soviet attempts at political socialization, we should observe minimal generational effects in these areas. In other words, nationalism produced a barrier between the regime and the political socialization of the occupied nations, resulting in generations that are more homogenous than those in Russia and Belarus. Because little of the official socialization effort was getting through, the changes in the ideological climate in Moscow were less likely to have left a mark on members of the occupied nationalities.

Thus, we should see different patterns of beliefs, including a relative absence of generational effects, among Galician Ukrainians. Unfortunately, the number of individuals surveyed in Galicia - sampled in proportion to their representation in the Ukrainian population - is insufficiently large to support a separate analysis of the Galician subsample. A more feasible way to conduct subsample analyses is to divide Ukraine into two relatively equal subsamples. Splitting the country at the Dniepr River, often considered to be a salient divide between eastern and western Ukraine, results in two balanced subsamples.<sup>11</sup> Eastern Ukraine's heavily Russian population and historical and cultural proximity to Russia should produce generational effects that are roughly similar to those seen in Russia and Belarus. Western Ukraine's larger Ukrainian population and the possible diffusion of anti-Soviet Ukrainian nationalism from Galicia should mitigate the generational effects seen in

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<sup>11</sup>Of the 1,000 residents of Ukraine sampled, 498 live west of the Dniepr and 502 live east of the Dniepr.

the western portion of the country. Of course, we would expect the nationalist “barrier” between regime and society to be strongest in Galicia proper were we able to conduct a separate analysis of the Galician subpopulation. A noticeable, albeit watered down effect observed in Right Bank Ukraine (i.e., Ukraine west of the Dniepr) would at least lend plausibility to the theory I’ve proposed.

We should also see different patterns of beliefs among Latvians in Latvia, who should be more resistant to Soviet socialization and thus display minimal evidence of generational effects in their beliefs about democracy and authoritarianism. A useful comparison group remains the ethnic Russians of Latvia, who by virtue of their ethnicity and status in the Soviet Union should have been more receptive to Soviet political socialization. As such, Russians in Latvia should display some evidence of generational effects similar to those seen in Russia, Belarus, and eastern Ukraine. Fortunately both subsamples in Latvia - Latvians and Russians - are sufficiently large to support subsample analyses.

#### 4.2.4 Dependent Variables

A familiar battery of questions will be used as dependent variables in the analyses presented in the following section. Those questions and their answer sets are reproduced in table 4.2. In the regressions that follow, our key independent variables are dummy variables that identify the generation to which a respondent belongs. Variables for the Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev, and Gorbachev generations are included; the post-Soviet generation is the excluded or baseline group. As in other chapters, complete regression tables are presented in the statistical appendix to this chapter, which begins on page 206. In the results section below, I present graphs of predicted probabilities that present the likelihood that someone of a given generation agrees or strongly agrees with the statement under evaluation (the dependent variable).

I use another dependent variable to measure a particular generation’s adherence to the Marxist conception of democracy versus a liberal conception of democracy, as discussed in section 4.1.1. Survey respondents were asked the following question: “People talk about what it means for a country to have *real* democracy. Please select three items from the

Table 4.2: Table of Dependent Variables

Question	Answer Set
Q21. Democracy may have problems but is better than other forms of government	1) strongly disagree; 2) disagree; 3) agree; 4) strongly agree
Q22. In democracy the economic system runs badly	
Q23. Democracies are indecisive and have too much squabbling	
Q24. Democracies aren't good at maintaining order	
Q26. Authoritarian rule is more decisive and gets things done	
Q27. Under authoritarian rule the economic system is more stable	
Q30. Sometimes it's better to have less democracy in order to have more stability in the country.	

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Table 4.3: People talk about what it means for a country to have *real* democracy. Please select three items from the following list that you think are essential for real democracy.

Liberal democratic answers	Marxist democratic answers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizens elect their leaders</li> <li>• Citizens can criticize the government</li> <li>• Media is allowed to criticize the government</li> <li>• Opposition political parties and groups are allowed</li> <li>• People can protest if they don't like government policies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is economic equality in society</li> <li>• People have enough money to buy food and clothing</li> <li>• Everybody can find work</li> <li>• The government takes care of the elderly, poor, and sick.</li> <li>• Everybody has a place to live</li> </ul>

following list that you think are essential for real democracy.”<sup>12</sup> They were then presented with a list of 10 options and were required to select 3 from the list. Possible choices are listed in table 4.3. Five of the possible answers were taken from themes that are emphasized in liberal conceptions of democracy and five possible answers were taken from themes present in Marxist conceptions of democracy. By requiring respondents to select three answers from the list, I was able to categorize individuals as strong Marxists (3 of 3 answers come from the Marxist list), weak Marxists (2 of 3 answers come from the Marxist list), weak liberals (2 of 3 answers come from the liberal list), and strong liberals (3 of 3 answers come from the liberal list). In the list that was presented to respondents, liberal and Marxist answer choices were alternated so that answer ordering would not influence the choices individuals made between Marxist and liberal answers. Compilation and re-

<sup>12</sup>The idea of “real democracy” arose during early field interviews in Russia where people distinguished between the flawed democracy that they experienced in the 1990s and the ideal or “real” democracy that they wished for. Based on some of the characteristics that people gave for what real democracy should look like in their opinions, I then constructed the closed-end survey question to quantify the two main competing visions of ideal democracy that emerged in the course of interviews: a Marxist conception that emphasizes social and economic rights and a liberal conception that emphasizes individual political liberties.

coding thus produced a variable that places individuals on a Liberal-Marxist continuum in their conception of “real democracy”: lower values indicate a more Marxist democratic ideal, higher values indicate a more liberal democratic ideal. Again, the populations most receptive to Marxist doctrine should be residents of Russia, Belarus, eastern Ukraine, and ethnic Russians in Latvia. These populations should demonstrate the generational effects that parallel the de-ideologization of the Soviet Union across political leaders. Residents in western Ukraine and Latvians in Latvia should be more resistant to the Soviet regime’s Marxist indoctrination, and should thus be less likely to display such generation effects in their attitudes about the ideal form of democracy.

### 4.3 Results and Discussion

As in other chapters, complete regression tables can be found in the statistical appendix to this chapter, which begins on page 206. Also in keeping with the procedure used elsewhere, in this section I will present graphs of predicted probabilities based on the regression results. In the graphs that follow, I plot predicted probabilities by generation, holding other variables at a constant level. Because the post-Soviet generation is the excluded or baseline group for each model, its predicted probabilities are graphed in blue. Other generations whose responses are statistically significantly<sup>13</sup> different from the post-Soviet generation are graphed using red bars. In other words, a red bar labeled “Stal” indicates that the responses of the Stalin generation are significantly different from the responses of the post-Soviet generation. Gray bars indicate that the responses of a generation are not statistically significantly different from the responses of the baseline generation. Thus, a gray bar plotted for the Gorbachev generation would indicate that their views do not differ significantly (in statistical terms) from the views of the post-Soviet generation.

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<sup>13</sup>As indicated by the regression results presented in the appendix

#### 4.3.1 Marxist Democracy Versus Liberal Democracy

The first results presented here are those exploring individuals' beliefs about "real democracy," or the ideal characteristics that they believe are necessary to consider a system to be democratic. As described above, this question asked individuals to select three characteristics from a list of ten that are essential for democracy. Five possible answers were drawn from Marxist themes, while five possible answers related to liberal democratic themes. Based on their responses, individuals were placed on a four-point scale; a higher score indicates a more liberal outlook, and a lower score indicates a more Marxist outlook.

We would expect the most distinct generational effects among the populations that were, for the historical reasons discussed throughout, most receptive (or least resistant) to Soviet political socialization. First and foremost is the population of Russia, which was certainly the most Sovietized of the 15 constituent republics. Among the population of Russia, the most Marxist and least liberal generation should be the Stalin generation. Each successive should be less Marxist and more liberal in their understandings of "real democracy" than the generation that precedes it, evidence of the changing ideological and political climate in which each generation was socialized. The most liberal and least Marxist generation should be the generation that came of age after the collapse of communism. We should see similar patterns among other malleable populations, including residents of Belarus, Eastern Ukraine, and ethnic Russians in Latvia.

By contrast, we should see limited or no evidence of generational differences among the populations that were, by virtue of the nationalization and occupation experiences, more resistant to Soviet political socialization. Because nationalism "blocked" (or at least interfered with) the Soviet message, any variations in the content and intensity of that message should have little bearing on the views of an unreceptive population. This includes first and foremost the ethnic Latvian population of Latvia. We also expect to find some evidence of this phenomenon - and therefore limited generational effects - among the population of western Ukraine if, in fact, the nationalist ideology centered in Galicia diffused to other parts of western Ukraine.

The results of the analysis on people's views of "real democracy" are presented in

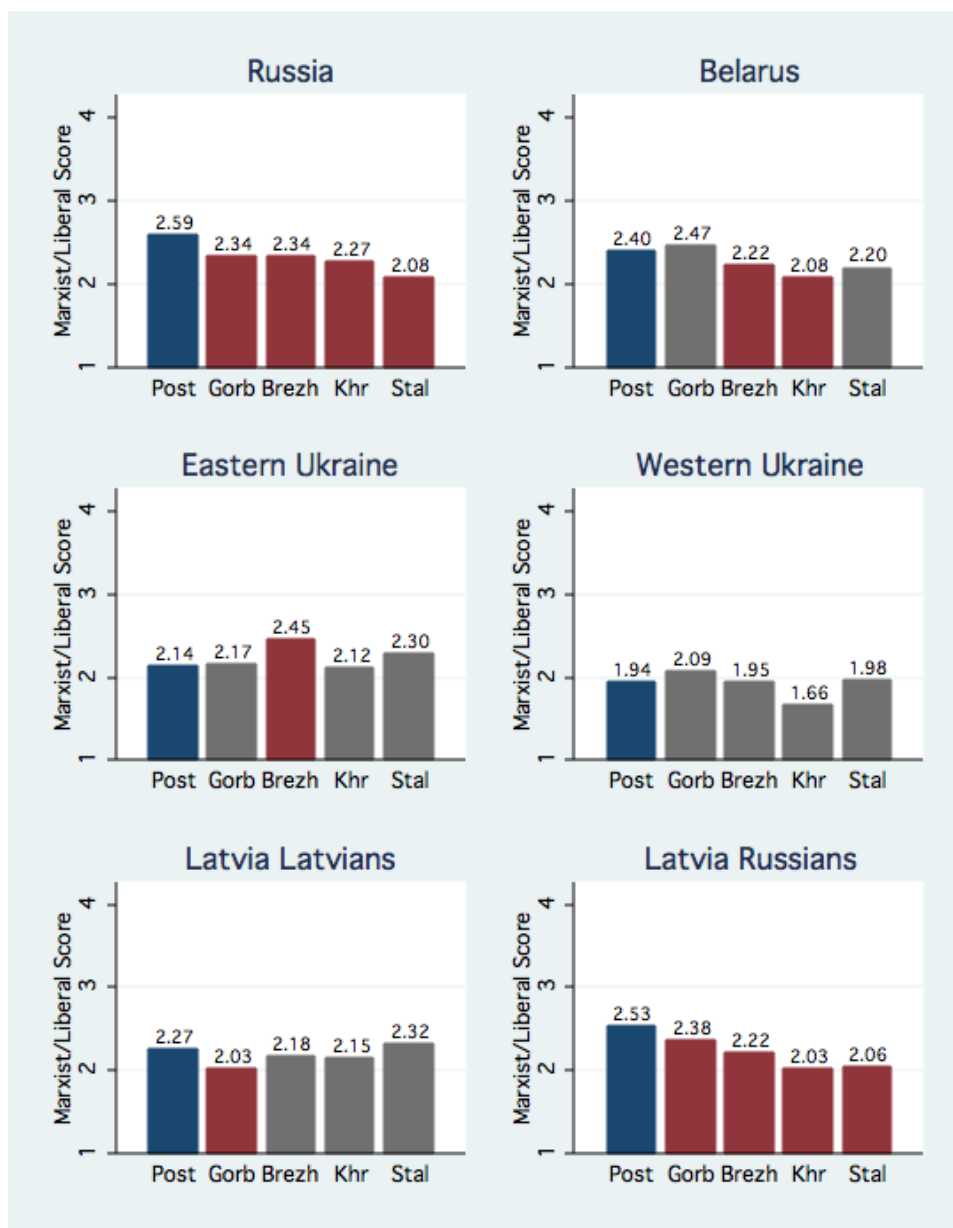


Figure 4.1: Marxist vs. liberal understandings of democracy (higher scores indicate more liberal outlook)

figure 4.1. The regression table can be found in table 4.6 on page 207 of the appendix. Figure 4.1 graphs a particular generation's predicted Marxist/liberal democracy score, holding other control variables constant. On the four-point scale from one to four, higher predicted scores indicate a more liberal version of ideal democracy; lower predicted scores indicate a more Marxist version.

As predicted, Russia displays the strongest evidence of generational effects, with every Soviet generation statistically different from the post-Soviet generation (as conveyed through the red bars in the graph). Furthermore, the results follow the pattern we would expect from a political system that became decreasingly ideological over time: the Stalin generation is the generation most heavily indoctrinated by Marxist political thought, followed in stepwise progression by later generations. The post-Soviet generation is the least Marxist. Conversely, the post-Soviet generation is the most liberal, while generations socialized during the Soviet era are less liberal, especially the Stalin generation which is the least liberal in its ideal formulation of democracy.

A similar pattern, if not as stark, is present in the results from Belarus. With the exception of the Gorbachev generation, which is slightly more liberal than the post-Soviet generation, the Soviet-era generations are more Marxist and less liberal than the post-Soviet generation. Interestingly, the Stalin generation is not statistically different from the post-Soviet generation, though the sign is in the expected direction (less liberal). The expected pattern does hold for the Khrushchev and Brezhnev generations, which are often thought to be part of the "golden age" of Soviet communism.

Eastern Ukraine, contrary to expectations, follows an unusual pattern, with the Brezhnev generation somewhat more liberal in outlook than even the post-Soviet generation. Other generations are not distinguishable, statistically speaking. It is unclear why individuals of the Brezhnev generation in Eastern Ukraine should stand out as they do, though it would be equally important to ask whether the post-Soviet generation (which serves as the baseline) is unusually illiberal in its outlook. Perhaps further research into the life paths of this post-Soviet generation in Eastern Ukraine would shed light on the question.



Recall that the theory predicts a lack of meaningful generational differences among populations whose nationalist experiences insulated them from Moscow's efforts at political socialization. This pattern, as expected, seems to hold for western Ukraine where some of the nationalist program originating in Galicia likely spread through the more heavily Ukrainian western portion of the republic. As figure 4.1 shows, none of the generations in western Ukraine are statistically different from the post-Soviet generation. In other words, political generation does not seem to be a significant predictor of beliefs about democracy, exactly as would be predicted by my theory.

A similar lack of generational effects among Latvians in Latvia is also consistent with my predictions: Marxist/liberal scores that vary little or not at all across generations suggest a population that was resistant to Soviet indoctrination regardless of the changing message that was coming from the center of the empire. The subsample analysis of ethnic Russians in Latvia also supports the theory I've put forward: unlike ethnic Latvians, Russians in Latvia display the same generational effects in a similar pattern as do residents of Russia. This suggests that they were more amenable to Moscow's ideological program and therefore more sensitive to changes in that program across time, something that we would expect among the population of Russians that migrated to Latvia after the Soviet annexation. Among this population, it is the Stalin and Khrushchev generations that are the most heavily Marxist and least liberal in their opinions of the ideal nature of a democratic system. In turn, the post-Soviet generation of Russians in Latvia are the most liberal in outlook compared to coethnics of older generations.

The patterns of political beliefs described above among various post-Soviet populations demonstrates that state-led efforts at political socialization during the Soviet era left a lasting mark on the political beliefs of Soviet citizens: those who were open to such socialization efforts display the evolution of Soviet ideology over time - both in content and intensity - in their beliefs about ideal characteristics of democracy today. Those who were socialized in the ideologically charged eras of Stalin and Khrushchev are more disposed toward Marxist variants of democracy that emphasize social rights and equality than are those who were socialized later during the less ideological Brezhnev and Gorbachev

eras. These results have also shown how nationalism interacts with state-led political socialization: among the populations that were resistant to Soviet rule and indoctrination, generations tend to hold similar beliefs about democracy. This lack of generational differences suggests that nationalism was a buffer that blunted the impact of socialization efforts originating at the center, rendering changes in the ideological climate in Moscow less pronounced among the beliefs of occupied nationalities.

In the following sections, I turn to the battery of questions that gauge attitudes and support for democracy and authoritarianism in each of the countries and subgroups to look for further evidence of the lasting effect that state-led political socialization has on people's regime preferences.

#### 4.3.2 Political socialization and generational effects in Russia

Figure 4.2 reveals the presence of strong generational effects among residents of Russia when it comes to their beliefs about and preferences for democracy and authoritarianism. Full regression results can be found in table 4.7 on page 208. The sub-graphs in figure 4.2 and the figures for each country or group below plot the predicted probability that an individual of a particular generation agrees or strongly agrees with the statement evaluated in the question. The questions were reproduced in table 4.2 on page 180 for readers who would like to refer back to the original wording of each question. As before, the baseline post-Soviet generation is plotted in blue. Generations who differ significantly (statistically, that is) from this baseline are plotted in red; generations that do not differ from the post-Soviet generation in their beliefs are plotted in gray.

As is evident in figure 4.2, residents of Russia display a linear progression across generations in their preferences for democracy and authoritarianism, consistent with the hypothesis that generational beliefs reflect the evolution of the ideological climate in the Soviet Union. As the regime became less orthodox in its emphasis of Marxist-Leninist thought (and the strident anti-democratic strains contained in that ideology), citizens socialized under the mellowing Soviet leadership were less likely to hold anti-democratic views compared to older generations. Thus, the Stalin generation is consistently the most author-

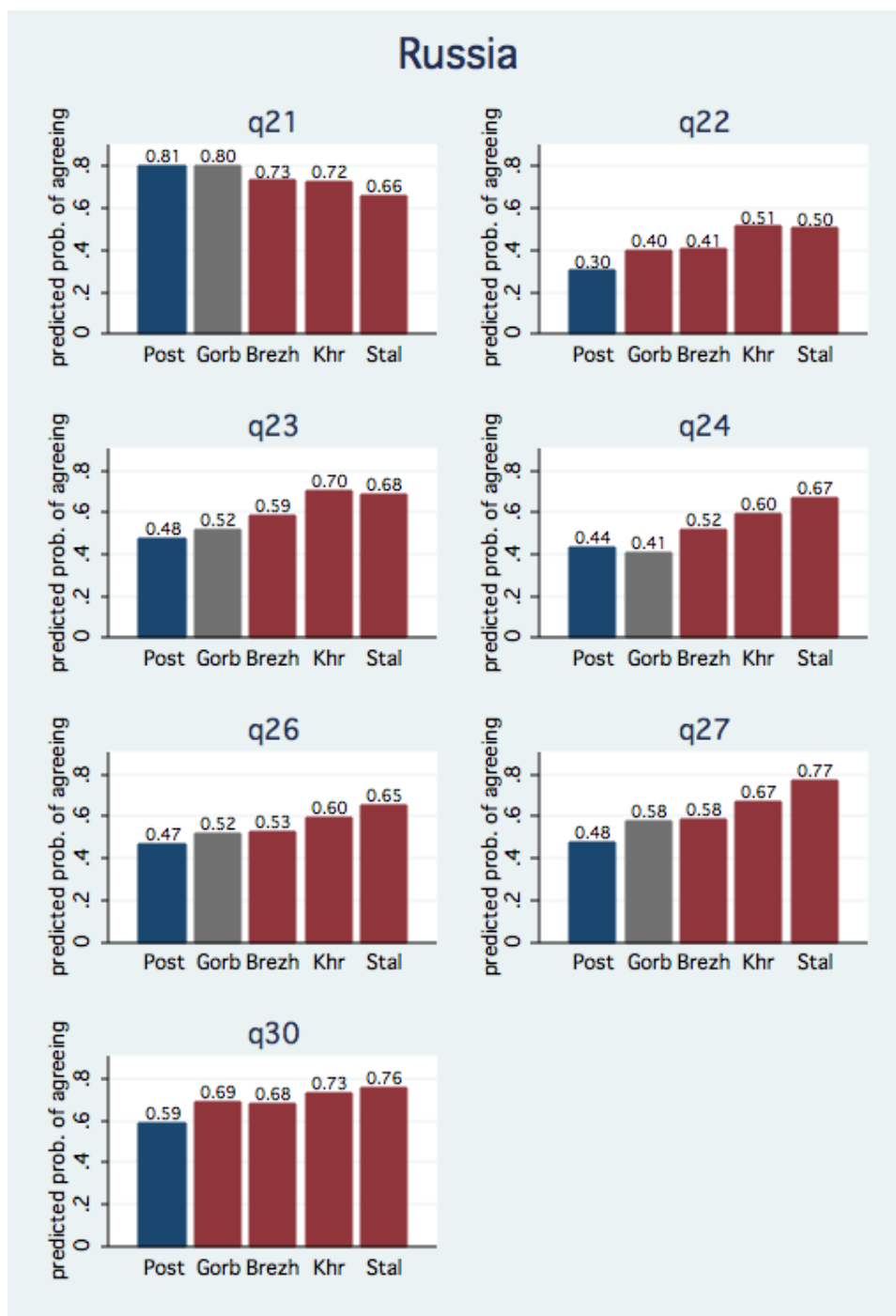


Figure 4.2: Political generations and regime preferences in Russia

itarian and anti-democratic generation in Russia, followed by the Khrushchev and Brezhnev generations. In what may be a reflection of a *perestroika* and *glasnost* effect, the Gorbachev generation does not differ from the post-Soviet generation in most instances: the two groups generally share similar belief structures about democracy and authoritarianism.

Thus, Russia presents striking evidence that generations matter: different generations of Russians have markedly different attitudes about democracy and authoritarianism. For example, an individual of the Stalin generation has a 65 percent probability of agreeing that “authoritarian rule is more decisive and gets things done” (q26); a member of the post-Soviet generation is only 47 percent likely to share the same belief. Evidence from Russia seems to confirm that the political climate under which one was socialized early in life leaves a lasting mark on the political beliefs of citizens.

#### 4.3.3 Political socialization and generational effects in Belarus

Results from Belarus, which are presented in figure 4.3 and table 4.8 (page 209) display a similar pattern as Russia, which is consistent with my theoretical expectations. The generational effect is particularly strong for the two oldest and most ideological generations: members of the Stalin and Khrushchev generations are consistently the least democratic and most authoritarian in their regime preferences. Somewhat less authoritarian is the Brezhnev generation. As was the case in Russia, members of the Gorbachev generation in Belarus often do not differ significantly from the post-Soviet generation. Again, the gap between generations is large: a member of the Stalin generation has a 55 percent likelihood of agreeing that “democracies are not good at maintaining order(q24). Someone who came of age after 1991 is only 37 percent likely to agree.

Thus, the present-day generational belief structure of Belarusian citizens reflects the ideological climate of the era in which they were socialized. Lacking a strong national identity, they were receptive to political socialization originating in Moscow, a fact that is apparent in their beliefs about democracy and authoritarianism today.

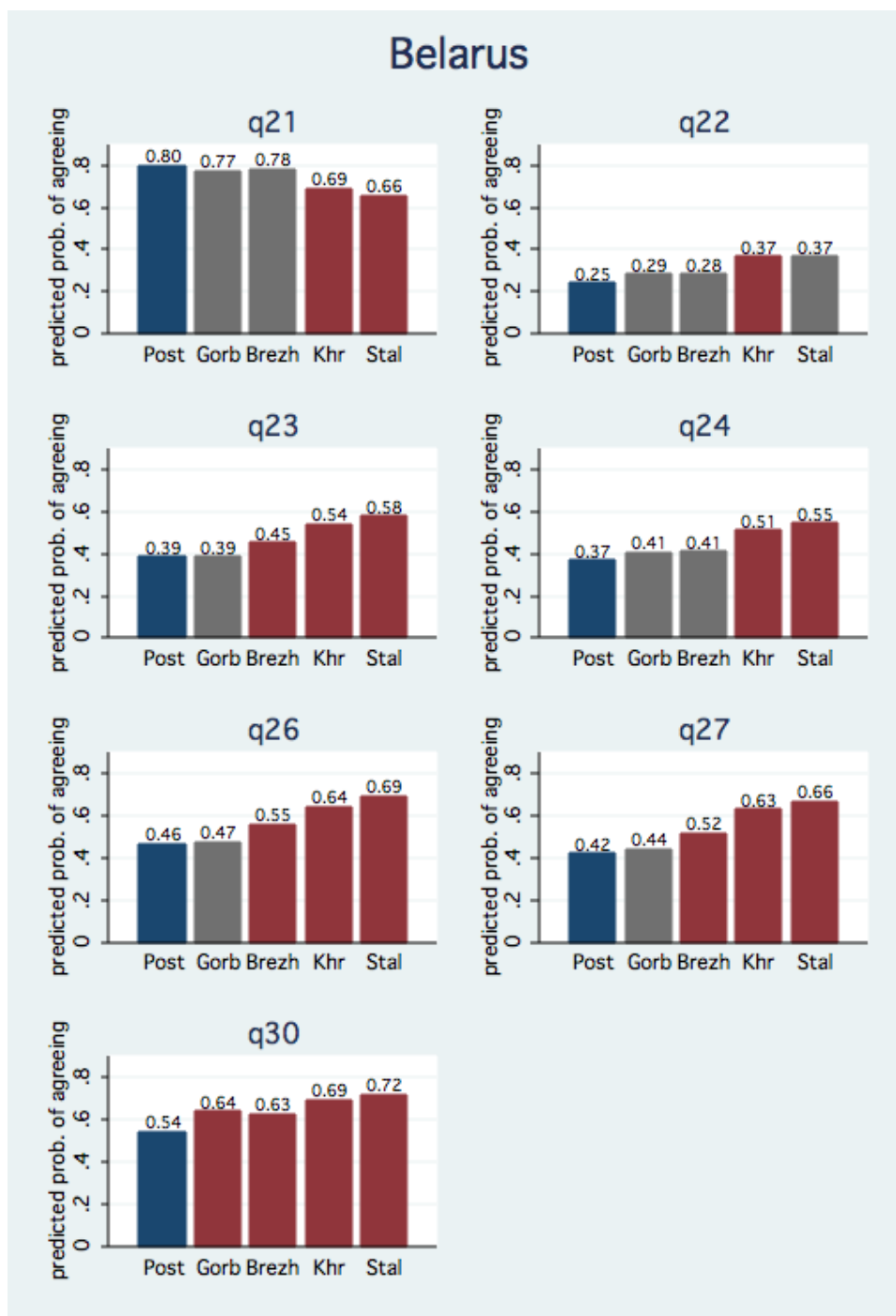


Figure 4.3: Political generations and regime preferences in Belarus

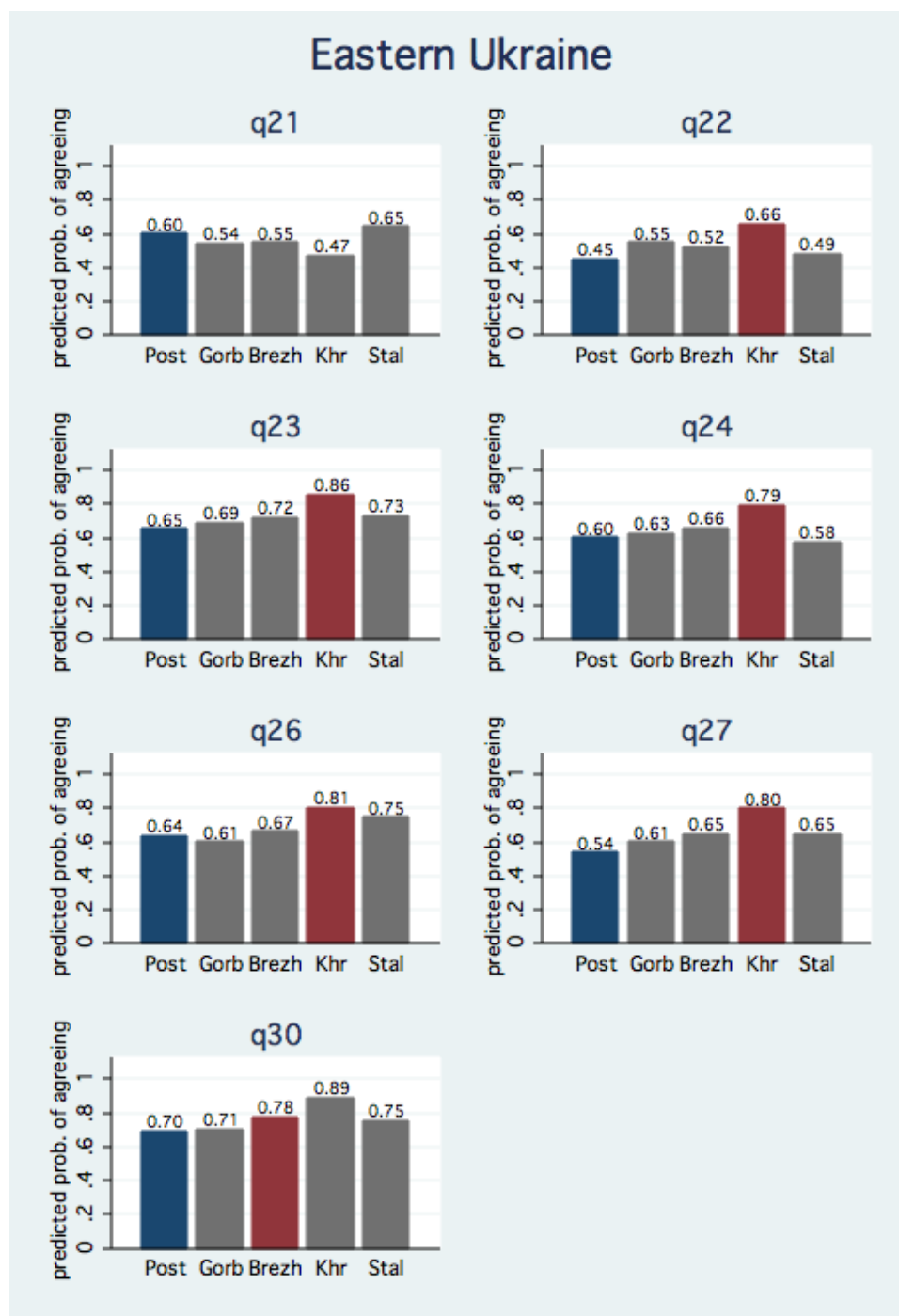


Figure 4.4: Political generations and regime preferences in eastern Ukraine

#### 4.3.4 Political socialization and generational effects in Eastern Ukraine

The analysis of generational effects in Ukraine east of the Dniepr River, presented in figure 4.4 and table 4.9 (page 210 of the appendix), partially fits the theoretical expectations. In general, the older generations should exhibit the most authoritarian views compared to younger political generations. While the Gorbachev and Brezhnev generations are not significantly different in most cases from the post-Soviet generation, we see that the Khrushchev generation is noticeably less democratic and more authoritarian than the post-Soviet generation.

This may come as a surprise, for we might expect the Khrushchev generation that came of age during “the thaw” to be more democratic than other Soviet generations. However, we must remember that the Khrushchev era was still one of intense ideological struggle. The late historian of the Soviet Union, Martin Malia, writes the following:

“For all his years as Stalin’s pliant instrument, Khrushchev had remained a true believer in the Leninism of his youth, in that ideological commitment to socialism as the “radiant future”... For Khrushchev’s generation the mystique of the Revolution was always very real... In any event, once Stalin was gone, Khrushchev’s aim was to... return it to its true Leninist principles. Thus, in his own way, Khrushchev wanted to be the “Lenin of his day”... the leader who would at last permit the system to realize its human and economic potential” (Malia 1994, 319-20).

Thus, the official ideological orthodoxy of the Khrushchev regime shouldn’t be underestimated. As figure 4.4 suggests, individuals in eastern Ukraine who came of age in that climate were by no means shaped into lifelong democrats by their experience of the post-Stalin thaw.

Thus, it is understandable that the Khrushchev generation might be less democratic than later generations. What is still puzzling, though, is the fact that the Stalin generation fails to be significantly different from the post-Soviet generation in their belief structures. We would expect them to be the most authoritarian of generations, consistent with the patterns seen in Russia and Belarus. Of course, it is entirely possible that something specific to the political experiences of this generation in this region made them at least as democratic as the post-Soviet generation. It is also possible that something in the experiences of the

baseline category has made them unusually critical of democracy, though it is not clear why this should be the case only in eastern Ukraine. What is most likely is that the puzzling results for the Stalin generation are due to a small sample size - only 31 individuals are counted in the Stalin generation in eastern Ukraine. Were this population oversampled and analyzed with the appropriate weighting methods, it is likely that their beliefs would more closely resemble the patterns in Belarus and Russia. With only 31 individuals in the current sample, it is possibly too small a number of respondents to establish precisely the generational effect.

Thus, eastern Ukraine presents evidence that the political socialization experiences of different generations in the Soviet Union produced different long-lasting beliefs about democracy and authoritarianism, though this evidence is admittedly not as clear-cut as what is found in Russia and Belarus.

#### 4.3.5 Political socialization and generational effects in Western Ukraine

Shifting our gaze to the part of Ukraine that lies to the west of the Dniepr River in an effort to detect any diffusion of the nationalist “buffer” from Galicia that would make Ukrainians resistant to Soviet political socialization, we examine the results presented in figure 4.5 and table 4.10, which appears on page 211 of the statistical appendix to this chapter. A strong nationalist influence - that which we would expect to find in Galicia proper - would largely insulate the population from Moscow’s efforts at political socialization. Thus, we would expect find to find minimal evidence of political generation effects among the population. As noted above, the number of proportionally sampled Galicians in the Ukrainian sample is too small to support a complete subsample analysis for Galicia. The next best option is to expand the analysis to a broader swath of western Ukraine, understanding that any results can only be taken as suggestive and are likely to deviate slightly from the null effect we would expect to find in Galicia.

Figure 4.5 does offer such suggestive evidence that the population of western Ukraine was somewhat resistant to Soviet political socialization. Generations fail to explain beliefs about democracy and authoritarianism for several of the dependent variables analyzed,



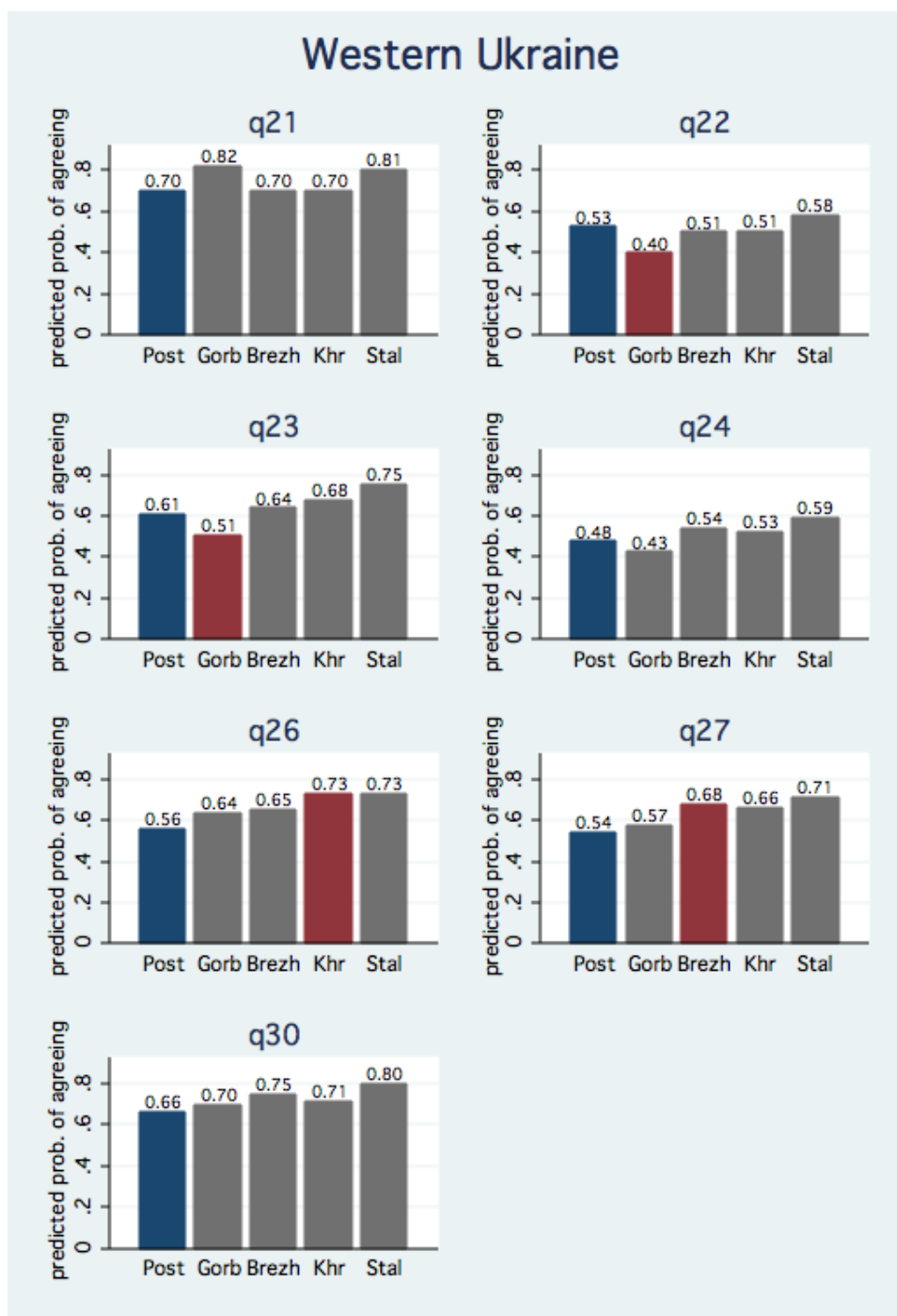


Figure 4.5: Political generations and regime preferences in western Ukraine

including q21,<sup>14</sup> q24,<sup>15</sup> and q30.<sup>16</sup> In the case of two questions - q22<sup>17</sup> and q23<sup>18</sup> the Gorbachev generation is in fact more democratic than the post-Soviet generation. While this does not fit the theory perfectly, it also does not fit the opposite expectation that older generations are more authoritarian, suggesting that some unique dynamics are at play in western Ukraine that warrant further exploration. Finally, we see that in q26<sup>19</sup> the Khrushchev generation is more authoritarian than the post-Soviet generation, and in q27<sup>20</sup> it is the Brezhnev generation that holds more authoritarian beliefs. Again, these results do not match what we would expect in the “pure case” of Galicia. But they are not altogether surprising since western Ukraine more broadly is not as nationalistic as Galicia. Thus the mixed results found for western Ukraine are not inconsistent with the theory I’ve proposed, though we should be careful to treat them as suggestive rather than conclusive.

#### 4.3.6 Political socialization and generational effects among ethnic Latvians

The theory I have put forward predicts that among Latvians - the population that was most resistant to Soviet rule and political indoctrination - we should see minimal evidence of state-led socialization effects, as reflected in generational differences. This is because the nationalist barrier hindered the Soviet regime from leaving its mark on Latvians. As a result, the belief structures of Latvians should be similar across generations.

This expectation is met in figure 4.6. Regression results appear in table 4.11 on page 212. The large number of gray bars in the sub-graphs demonstrate that beliefs about democracy and authoritarianism do not vary significantly across political generations of Latvians. Ethnic Latvians of different ages are much more similar in their regime preferences than are citizens of Russia, for example. Though the message from Moscow was

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<sup>14</sup>Democracy may have problems but is better than other forms of government

<sup>15</sup>Democracies aren’t good at maintaining order

<sup>16</sup>Sometimes it’s better to have less democracy in order to have more stability in the country

<sup>17</sup>In democracy the economic system runs badly

<sup>18</sup>Democracies are indecisive and have too much squabbling

<sup>19</sup>Authoritarian rule is more decisive and gets things done

<sup>20</sup>Under authoritarian rule the economic system is more stable

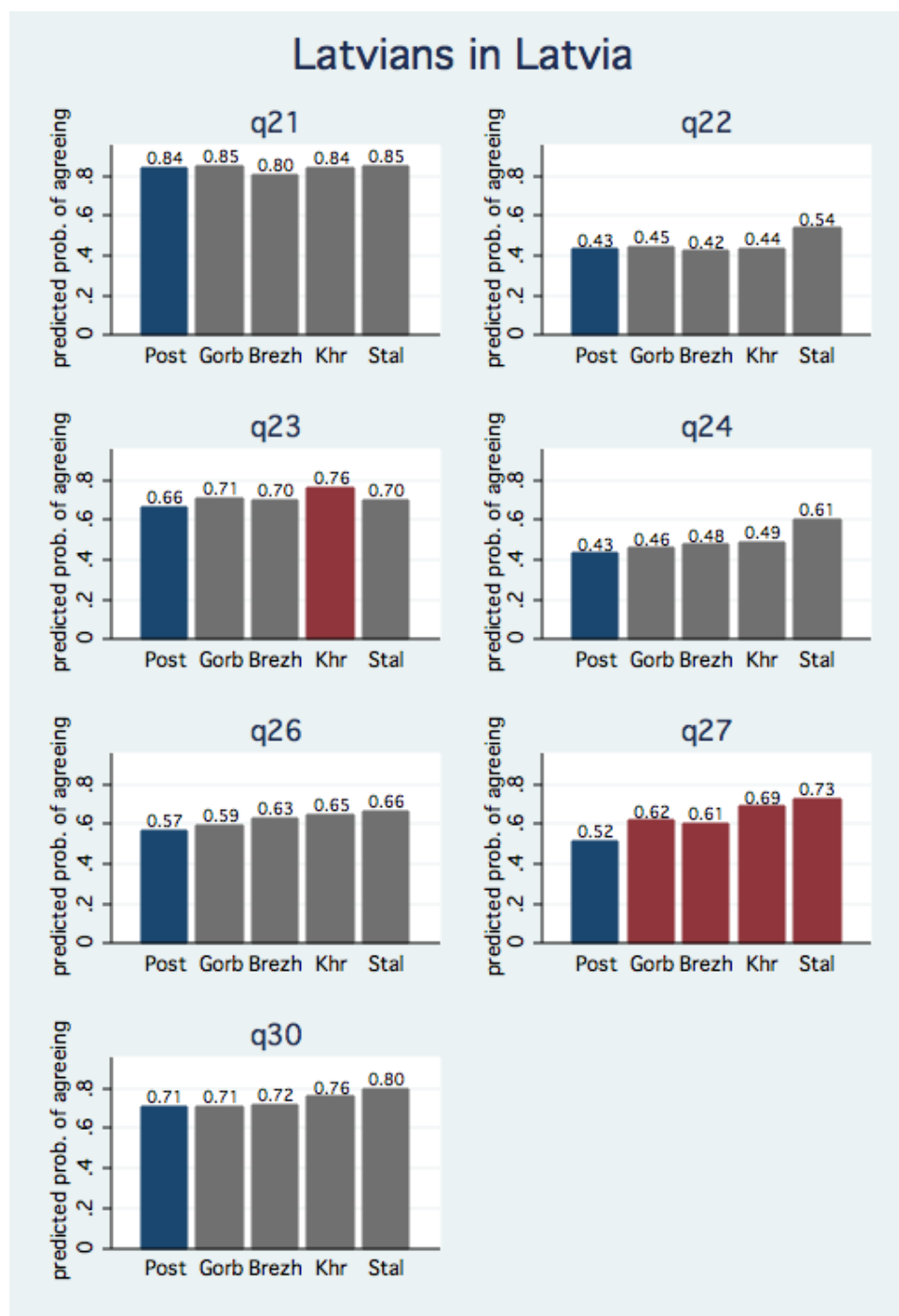


Figure 4.6: Political generations and regime preferences among Latvians in Latvia

much different, a Latvian coming of age under Khrushchev is just as likely to agree to the statement that “in democracy the economic system runs badly” as Latvians who came of age under Brezhnev, Gorbachev, or in independent Latvia.

One small deviation from this pattern is q26,<sup>21</sup> where the Brezhnev generation’s red bar indicates that it is statistically more likely to agree to the statement than the post-Soviet generation. However, we see that the substantive difference is minimal, with a difference in probability of six percentage points. A more significant deviation from the pattern is q27<sup>22</sup>, which displays a step-like pattern across generations that is more characteristic of what was observed in Russia. However, it is worth noting that these results achieve their statistical significance in their relation to the post-Soviet generation, whose probability of agreeing with the statement is fairly low compared to the older Soviet generations. Among those Soviet generations, the actual variation in predicted probabilities is relatively small. This flatter relationship between generations, I would argue, is still consistent with the theory I’ve proposed: nationalism should minimize the effectiveness of Soviet political socialization and should decrease variation in beliefs across generations.

#### 4.3.7 Political socialization and generational effects among ethnic Russians in Latvia

Figure 4.7 presents results for the final subgroup under consideration, ethnic Russians living in Latvia. Regression results can be found in table 4.12 on page 213. Given the common ethnicity they share with Russians at the heart of the Russo-centric Soviet empire, we would expect Russians in Latvia to display the same distinct generational effects of political socialization that are present among the populations of Russia, Belarus, and eastern Ukraine. Lacking the nationalist dynamics that buffered the Latvian population from Soviet indoctrination, Russians in Latvia should have been more open to Moscow’s socialization efforts.

The results presented in figure 4.7 do echo those of other populations that were amenable to Soviet socialization. In several cases (q21, q22, and q27) the Stalin generation

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<sup>21</sup>Authoritarian rule is more decisive and gets things done

<sup>22</sup>Under authoritarian rule the economic system is more stable

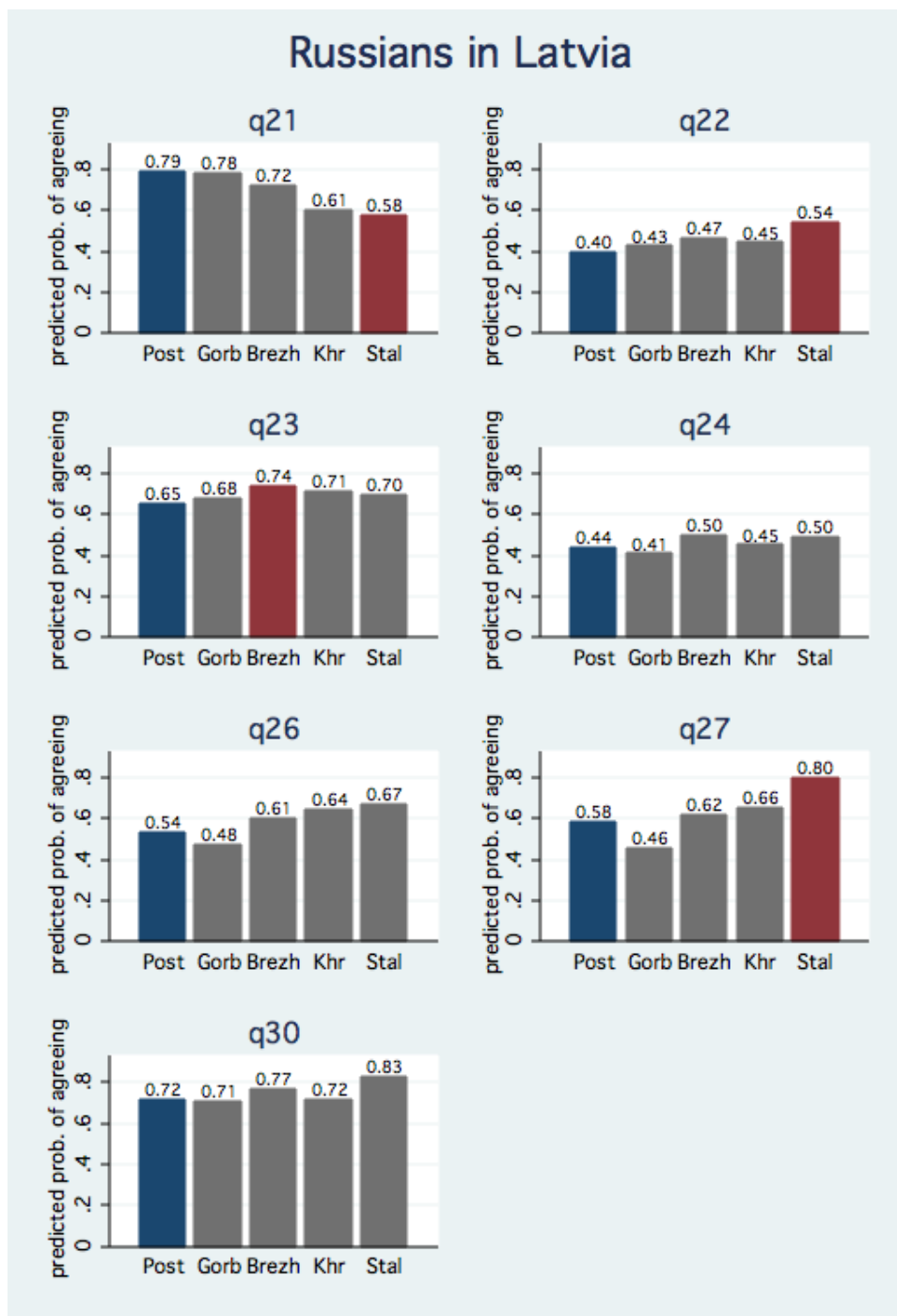


Figure 4.7: Political generations and regime preferences among Russians in Latvia

displays the highest authoritarian support and lowest democratic support. Q26 follows this pattern with the stepwise progression of authoritarian support by generation as expected, though the results do not reach the level of statistical significance. Q23 also suggests evidence of generational differences, with the Brezhnev generation more likely to agree that democracies are indecisive than is the post-Soviet generation.

While figure 4.7 does suggest generational differences that are consistent with the theory I've presented, it must be acknowledged that they are not as strong as what we would expect if our main baseline for comparison is the population of Russia proper. Evidence of generational differences in political socialization experiences are present in both groups but are considerably stronger and more distinct in the population of Russia. This suggests that the population of Russians in Latvia may differ in meaningful ways from the population of Russia, the great majority of which is ethnically Russian as well. Three possible scenarios come to mind. The first is a question of Soviet Russians selecting into Latvia - were the ethnic Russians who settled in Latvia during the Soviet era somehow different from Russians in other parts of the empire?<sup>23</sup> Or did these Russians evolve differently politically during nearly five decades of living alongside Latvians? We must also consider those Russians who selected themselves out of Latvia after the country regained independence in 1991. Were those who emigrated to Russia more heavily socialized into the Soviet/Russian system than the Russians who remained in post-Soviet Latvia? An affirmative answer to this question would also explain the differences observed between Latvia's Russians and the population of Russia today. The third possibility is that nearly twenty years of living in independent Latvia has altered the generational effects of Soviet rule among Latvia's Russian population. However, this scenario is highly unlikely given the evidence of durable socialization effects and resistance to preference updating that is present in other segments of the post-Soviet population. If early formed political beliefs are as durable as they appear to be, then it is unlikely that 17 years of post-Soviet life have erased those beliefs among Latvia's Russian population. As such, selection effects present a more likely explanation.

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<sup>23</sup>Of course, given that internal migration within the Soviet Union was tightly restricted and carried out at the behest of the state, it is perhaps more accurate to talk about individuals who *were selected* into Latvia.

Table 4.4: Predicted and observed outcomes for generational effects on regime preferences (2007-2008)

Group	Strong national ID/perception of occupation	Predicted structure of generation effects	Observed structure of generation effects
Ethnic Latvians	Yes	Absent or nonlinear	Absent
Russians in Latvia	No	Linear - oldest most authoritarian	Mixed absent/some linear
Western Ukrainian	Yes	Absent or nonlinear	Absent/non-linear
Eastern Ukrainian	No	Linear - oldest most authoritarian	non-linear
Belarus	No	Linear - oldest most authoritarian	Linear-oldest most authoritarian
Russia	No	Linear - oldest most authoritarian	Linear - oldest most authoritarian

This suggests that a fruitful avenue for future exploration may be differences among ethnic Russians across different post-Soviet countries. While we unfortunately do not have data on the Russians who have left each country since 1991, the large percentages of Russians in modern Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, and Latvia, populations that are well-represented in the survey data, will provide an opportunity to explore differences among coethnics living under vastly different political regimes.

A summary of predicted outcomes and observed outcomes for all cases is presented in table 4.4.

#### 4.3.8 Age versus generational effects

In section 4.2.2 I discussed the potential difficulties in distinguishing between the generational differences that I attribute to variation in political socialization experiences and life-cycle theories that would suggest that as people age they become more authoritarian. In

particular, I noted that linear or step-wise generational effects of the sort observed among the population of Russia would be consistent with both theories, making it essential to find empirical strategies to distinguish between these competing alternatives.

The first strategy is to look for non-linearities or flat effects among generations. In other words, generational belief structures that do not conform to the pattern of the oldest generation being the most authoritarian (followed by the next oldest, and so on...) would argue against an age-based interpretation of the data. Similarly, the lack of generational effects, despite differences in age, would suggest that dynamics of political socialization and not age account for belief structures among a population. The former conditions were observed in eastern Ukraine, where it was frequently the Khrushchev generation and not the Stalin generation that was the most authoritarian in their beliefs. The latter condition - a lack of variation in beliefs across generations - was found in western Ukraine and among Latvia's Latvian population. If age were driving the results and not political socialization (interacting with national identity), we would expect to see greater variation than we do.

Similarly, cross-sectional variation between countries, regions, and ethnic groups was suggested as another means of falsifying a life-cycle explanation of regime preferences. Since aging is a universal experience, we would expect to see fairly uniform age effects regardless of country, region, or ethnic groups. Nonetheless, the results presented in this chapter show strong evidence of variation in belief structures among these different segments of the surveyed population, suggesting that the variation is due to different experiences in political socialization, not age.

Finally, I suggested that holding political generation constant and including age as an explanatory variable would help to disconfirm a life-cycle hypothesis. The large Brezhnev generation, which constitutes 37.5 percent of the total sample and whose members range from 38 to 58 years old, is ideal for this purpose. If age fails to be a statistically significant explanatory variable for regime preferences in this sub-population that varies in age by 20 years from the youngest member to the oldest, it is unlikely that aging accounts for the generational differences I've presented in this chapter.



Thus, the analysis of all models<sup>24</sup> was repeated for each group analyzed above,<sup>25</sup> restricting analysis to members of the Brezhnev generation and including age as an independent variable. Of the 48 models tested, age reached statistical significance in only three models.<sup>26</sup> Although generations other than the Brezhnev generation are not as well suited for this test because of their smaller size or shorter age span, the analysis was repeated on all generations for good measure; age resoundingly fails to explain differences in regime preferences within political generations. Thus, it is unlikely that a conservatism that supposedly comes with aging explains the generational effects observed in the survey results. Rather, it is differences in the political socialization experiences of individuals growing up in the Soviet Union that account for the variation in generational preferences for democracy and authoritarianism.

#### 4.4 Chapter 4 Conclusion

In chapters two and three, I argued that political values embedded in the national identities of certain groups can have a deep and lasting effect on the contemporary regime preferences of members of those nations. Populations such as ethnic Latvians and Galician Ukrainians, in response to foreign occupation by the Russian-dominated Soviet Union, came to define and understand themselves as a fundamentally democratic people in opposition to the authoritarian “other” that occupied their lands. These political values and the national identities that held them, I argued, were largely passed down through familial and other informal networks, surviving nearly 50 years of Soviet occupation. These dynamics of national identity, dynamics which were absent in other parts of the Soviet Union like Russia, Belarus, and eastern Ukraine, produced distinct structures of democratic and authoritarian support across the Soviet and post-Soviet space.

This chapter has acknowledged that parents and grandparents are not the only source

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<sup>24</sup>Marxist/liberal score, q21, q22, q23, q24, q26, q27, q30

<sup>25</sup>Russia, Belarus, eastern Ukraine, western Ukraine, Latvians in Latvia, and Russians in Latvia.

<sup>26</sup>The complete regression results have been omitted for the sake of brevity. Age reached statistical significance for q25, q26, and q27 in Russia.

of political values, beliefs, and preferences for younger generations. In fact, the state has strong incentives to shape the political views of its citizens, an effort that begins early in a person's life through the educational system. This was especially true in the Soviet Union, whose legitimacy was built upon the Marxist-Leninist ideology that justified the regime's existence. Perhaps more so than in other types of regimes, indoctrination and socialization was of paramount importance for the totalitarian and post-totalitarian Soviet state. For how does an ideologically justified political system survive if nobody believes in the ideology?<sup>27</sup> Thus, the Soviet state engaged in its own vigorous efforts at political socialization and indoctrination, attempting to instill in successive generations of Soviet citizens the values of Marxism-Leninism.

Inherent in that ideology were important anti-democratic strains, as well as an emphasis on the importance of collective values and social equality. Thus, I argue that part of what people think about democracy and authoritarianism today - both in its ideal and actual form - is tied to what they learned about these political concepts as youth in the Soviet school system. In other words, individuals' political socialization experiences early in life left a lasting imprint on their preferences for democracy and authoritarianism today. To be sure, official state-led political socialization is not the only factor that shapes regime preferences, but I argue that it is an important one whose mark can still be seen today.

The mark of official Soviet political socialization is recognizable today through variation in the belief structures of political generations in former Soviet citizens. Just as the Great Depression in the United States left its mark on the political preferences of Americans who came of age during and after that event (Erikson, MacKuen and Stimson 2002, chapter 5), so too did the political climate surrounding successive Soviet generations leave its mark as those generations came of age. Because we know that the ideological climate changed significantly over time in the Soviet Union, with the highly ideological Stalin and Khrushchev eras giving way to the less orthodox - and eventually ideologically bankrupt - Brezhnev and Gorbachev eras. This change in the ideological intensity and the content of

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<sup>27</sup>The lesson drawn by many observers based on the ideological decay in the Soviet Union that culminated in the 1991 collapse is that such a system does not survive, or at least not for very long.

the ideology into which Soviet youth were socialized, I have argued, can be mapped out by analyzing the regime preferences of distinct political generations in the Soviet Union.

Throughout this work I have argued that people's preferences for democracy and authoritarianism are shaped during their lifetimes by several overlapping layers of influence. There can be no doubt that these layers of influence interact with each other, a fact that is readily apparent when we consider the intersection of nationalism and state-led political socialization. The national identity formation that made certain nationalities predisposed to democratic support also made them more resistant to official Soviet political socialization programs. Thus, nationalism produced a barrier that hindered the adoption of "official" Soviet political values among populations like ethnic Latvians and western Ukrainians. It therefore stands to reason that variations in the ideological content originating in the Kremlin would have a muted effect on regime preferences in these areas. This phenomenon was confirmed among the populations noted above, where there is little evidence of generational differences in democratic and authoritarian support.

By contrast, the parts of the Soviet empire that were - by virtue of their own histories of national identity development - less resistant to Soviet rule were also less resistant to Soviet political socialization. Being more open to the "party line" as delivered from Moscow, these populations therefore bear greater evidence of that party line changing over time. Thus, in Russia, Belarus, eastern Ukraine, and among Latvia's Russian population, we see stronger evidence of political generations than is apparent in the "occupied" parts of the empire. Among these populations, the ideological climate in which a person was socialized politically left a lasting effect on their support for democracy and authoritarianism. People socialized in the eras of Stalin and Khrushchev remain to this day more supportive of authoritarianism and more critical of democracy than members of later political generations. Importantly, these generational differences in democratic and authoritarian support are not simply the result of age or life-cycle effects.

Up to this point I have therefore elaborated two key forces that have had a deep and lasting impact on people's beliefs about democracy and authoritarianism: national identity and its role in transmitting political values; and state-led political socialization. During

the Soviet period, these were the two dominant informational sources that shaped citizens' beliefs about democracy, often playing either reinforcing and contradictory roles depending on the population under question. Importantly, we must remember that both sources about democracy - and ultimately its desirability as a political system - were more or less second-hand sources with the potential for bias. Latvian nationalists and Soviet ideologues all had incentives to misrepresent the nature of democracy, though in the case of the former the idealization of democracy may not have always been intentional deception. Either way, what people believed about democracy and their desire (or lack thereof) to live under a democratic political system circa 1990 was based largely on second-hand information.

That all changed unexpectedly in 1991 when, for the first time in their lives, citizens of some post-Soviet nations gained first-hand experience with democratic rule. Their lives were turned upside down by the monumental political, economic, and social changes that took place during those early years of post-Soviet existence. So too were their beliefs about and preferences for democracy and authoritarianism upended as a result of their rocky experiences with the dual political and economic transition of the early 1990s. That transition and the major effect it had on regime preferences is the subject of the next chapter.

## 4.5 Statistical Appendix

Table 4.5: Summary statistics: Number of respondents by group and generation (2008)<sup>a</sup>

Group	Stalin	Khrushchev	Brezhnev	Gorbachev	Post-Soviet
Ethnic Latvians in Latvia	31	86	191	61	164
Ethnic Russians in Latvia	25	60	167	32	105
Galician Ukrainians in Ukraine	27	67	191	42	169
Eastern Ukrainians in Ukraine	31	68	199	45	154
Belarusians in Belarus	73	132	296	82	250
Russians in Belarus	9	12	51	13	22
Russia (combined nationalities)	193	221	539	134	414

<sup>a</sup> As is evident from the 35 cells of this table, presenting complete summary statistics of dependent variables, as well as cross-tabulations by group and generation would require an additional 35 or so tables. Summary tables of the dependent variables are therefore omitted from this chapter but are available upon request from the author. Aggregate summary statistics by country for dependent variables can be found in the statistical appendix to chapter 5.

Table 4.6: Marxist/Liberal Scores

	Russia	Belarus	E. Ukraine	W. Ukraine	Latvia Latvian	Latvia Russian
Stalin	-0.513*** (0.000)	-0.204 (0.161)	0.161 (0.466)	0.039 (0.876)	0.064 (0.652)	-0.485** (0.014)
Khrushchev	-0.322*** (0.002)	-0.318*** (0.000)	-0.020 (0.915)	-0.275 (0.137)	-0.115 (0.286)	-0.509*** (0.000)
Brezhnev	-0.252*** (0.000)	-0.175*** (0.006)	0.315* (0.058)	0.009 (0.947)	-0.084 (0.274)	-0.320*** (0.000)
Gorbachev	-0.251** (0.017)	0.067 (0.437)	0.031 (0.877)	0.147 (0.556)	-0.238* (0.067)	-0.156* (0.076)
material sit	0.052 (0.176)	-0.044 (0.201)	0.056 (0.529)	0.089 (0.260)	0.055 (0.156)	0.141*** (0.001)
unemployed	-0.027 (0.868)	-0.170 (0.294)	-0.014 (0.952)	-0.055 (0.808)	-0.155 (0.315)	-0.624*** (0.000)
urban	0.168 (0.308)	-0.065 (0.628)	-0.161 (0.517)	-0.317 (0.168)	0.054 (0.613)	-0.012 (0.943)
male	0.103* (0.074)	0.314*** (0.000)	0.240* (0.083)	0.169 (0.161)	0.242*** (0.000)	0.252*** (0.003)
education	0.009 (0.849)	0.295*** (0.000)	0.166** (0.025)	0.125 (0.239)	0.125*** (0.000)	0.097* (0.088)
trans econ	-0.769 (0.204)	-0.076 (0.974)	1.762 (0.562)	-0.845 (0.561)	0.506 (0.597)	0.017 (0.984)
post econ	-0.105 (0.736)	-0.387 (0.646)	-2.444 (0.225)	-0.419 (0.342)	-0.191 (0.799)	0.316 (0.640)
Russian	-0.094 (0.442)					
Belarusian		-0.021 (0.793)				
Ukrainian			0.171 (0.335)	-0.164 (0.157)		
constant	2.700*** (0.000)	0.726 (0.391)	-1.698 (0.389)	1.947* (0.096)	1.654* (0.060)	2.554*** (0.003)
<i>N</i>	1501	1000	664	751	1000	1000

*p*-values in parentheses

Models: OLS

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 4.7: Generations in Russia

	(1) Q21	(2) Q22	(3) Q23	(4) Q24	(5) Q26	(6) Q27	(7) Q30
Stalin	-0.771*** (0.003)	0.841*** (0.003)	0.861*** (0.000)	0.970*** (0.000)	0.747*** (0.004)	1.307*** (0.000)	0.771*** (0.006)
Khrushchev	-0.467** (0.033)	0.882*** (0.000)	0.964*** (0.000)	0.648*** (0.002)	0.522** (0.012)	0.826*** (0.000)	0.615*** (0.006)
Brezhnev	-0.427** (0.025)	0.451** (0.019)	0.443*** (0.004)	0.325** (0.031)	0.236* (0.077)	0.439** (0.032)	0.408** (0.024)
Gorbachev	-0.014 (0.929)	0.429** (0.020)	0.160 (0.393)	-0.110 (0.537)	0.204 (0.285)	0.418 (0.124)	0.404** (0.045)
material sit	0.015 (0.834)	-0.060 (0.327)	-0.087 (0.204)	-0.134* (0.070)	-0.124* (0.067)	-0.030 (0.677)	-0.122* (0.072)
unemployed	-0.225 (0.599)	0.770** (0.034)	0.534 (0.116)	0.173 (0.590)	0.318 (0.522)	0.312 (0.338)	0.223 (0.454)
urban	-0.029 (0.902)	-0.171 (0.435)	-0.084 (0.708)	-0.121 (0.557)	-0.384** (0.043)	-0.164 (0.413)	-0.224 (0.317)
male	0.076 (0.528)	-0.172* (0.093)	-0.008 (0.935)	0.033 (0.765)	-0.162 (0.130)	-0.287*** (0.006)	-0.066 (0.533)
education	-0.027 (0.770)	-0.170* (0.096)	-0.256*** (0.005)	-0.046 (0.590)	-0.149 (0.214)	-0.170* (0.078)	-0.135 (0.163)
trans econ	-1.038 (0.230)	2.201*** (0.004)	2.604** (0.012)	1.645 (0.122)	1.600* (0.100)	1.628 (0.154)	2.176 (0.141)
post econ	-0.238 (0.567)	0.211 (0.630)	0.369 (0.519)	0.225 (0.709)	0.213 (0.666)	0.116 (0.865)	0.604 (0.376)
Russian	-0.025 (0.876)	-0.070 (0.726)	-0.015 (0.929)	0.027 (0.868)	0.111 (0.650)	0.261 (0.304)	-0.044 (0.827)
cut1	-3.354*** (0.000)	-1.506** (0.043)	-2.096*** (0.004)	-1.584** (0.035)	-2.190*** (0.009)	-1.589* (0.066)	-2.364*** (0.006)
cut2	-1.789*** (0.001)	0.612 (0.361)	-0.314 (0.629)	0.442 (0.512)	-0.296 (0.682)	0.072 (0.923)	-0.871 (0.251)
cut3	0.286 (0.594)	2.116*** (0.009)	1.286* (0.060)	2.074** (0.010)	1.533* (0.050)	1.942** (0.021)	0.925 (0.212)
<i>N</i>	1501	1501	1501	1501	1501	1501	1501

*p*-values in parentheses

Models: ordered logit

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 4.8: Generations in Belarus

	(1) Q21	(2) Q22	(3) Q23	(4) Q24	(5) Q26	(6) Q27	(7) Q30
Stalin	-0.737** (0.011)	0.600 (0.294)	0.772** (0.010)	0.720** (0.023)	0.962*** (0.001)	1.006*** (0.002)	0.777** (0.021)
Khrushchev	-0.592** (0.010)	0.599** (0.038)	0.629*** (0.002)	0.588*** (0.003)	0.742*** (0.000)	0.861*** (0.002)	0.680*** (0.003)
Brezhnev	-0.102 (0.495)	0.185 (0.291)	0.275** (0.037)	0.182 (0.154)	0.370*** (0.008)	0.399** (0.041)	0.365*** (0.003)
Gorbachev	-0.178 (0.386)	0.204 (0.314)	-0.005 (0.977)	0.152 (0.479)	0.029 (0.874)	0.061 (0.751)	0.407** (0.034)
material sit	0.000 (0.996)	-0.041 (0.593)	-0.094 (0.454)	0.028 (0.638)	0.031 (0.647)	-0.064 (0.429)	-0.010 (0.911)
unemployed	0.321 (0.450)	0.105 (0.753)	0.180 (0.450)	-0.030 (0.907)	-0.151 (0.599)	-0.179 (0.618)	-0.071 (0.857)
urban	-0.257 (0.204)	-0.048 (0.799)	-0.034 (0.841)	-0.083 (0.625)	-0.205 (0.342)	-0.079 (0.647)	-0.198 (0.267)
male	-0.069 (0.495)	-0.245 (0.120)	-0.317*** (0.006)	-0.364*** (0.008)	-0.224** (0.013)	-0.313** (0.021)	-0.108 (0.313)
education	0.163 (0.180)	-0.370* (0.061)	-0.327* (0.056)	-0.304*** (0.006)	-0.275*** (0.005)	-0.336** (0.014)	-0.410** (0.014)
trans econ	1.151 (0.654)	-2.821 (0.284)	-3.544** (0.037)	-2.862 (0.192)	-2.392 (0.536)	-2.144 (0.597)	-1.885 (0.451)
post econ	-0.323 (0.774)	-0.593 (0.532)	-0.257 (0.788)	-0.244 (0.836)	-0.088 (0.958)	-0.300 (0.831)	-0.392 (0.676)
Belarusian	-0.172 (0.265)	0.295* (0.053)	0.326*** (0.005)	0.072 (0.613)	0.402** (0.020)	0.279 (0.158)	0.056 (0.717)
cut1	-1.777 (0.281)	-2.362 (0.156)	-3.135** (0.045)	-3.232** (0.047)	-3.095 (0.253)	-2.771 (0.134)	-3.368** (0.037)
cut2	-0.336 (0.839)	-0.028 (0.985)	-1.205 (0.402)	-1.168 (0.439)	-1.313 (0.589)	-0.978 (0.571)	-1.885 (0.205)
cut3	1.937 (0.273)	1.499 (0.366)	0.425 (0.763)	0.453 (0.755)	0.480 (0.839)	0.801 (0.632)	0.060 (0.968)
<i>N</i>	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000

*p*-values in parentheses

Models: ordered logit

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$



Table 4.9: Generations in Eastern Ukraine

	(1) Q21	(2) Q22	(3) Q23	(4) Q24	(5) Q26	(6) Q27	(7) Q30
Stalin	0.176 (0.696)	0.120 (0.808)	0.377 (0.443)	-0.116 (0.818)	0.518 (0.353)	0.472 (0.451)	0.308 (0.404)
Khrushchev	-0.534 (0.198)	0.887*** (0.001)	1.151** (0.016)	0.932* (0.071)	0.856** (0.042)	1.236** (0.034)	1.280** (0.010)
Brezhnev	-0.227 (0.284)	0.292 (0.335)	0.328 (0.214)	0.252 (0.509)	0.106 (0.758)	0.472 (0.278)	0.429 (0.132)
Gorbachev	-0.247 (0.550)	0.409 (0.406)	0.166 (0.672)	0.118 (0.688)	-0.160 (0.812)	0.274 (0.590)	0.050 (0.852)
material sit	0.098 (0.404)	-0.232 (0.135)	-0.373** (0.024)	-0.290 (0.110)	-0.362* (0.052)	-0.301 (0.201)	-0.376 (0.111)
unemployed	-0.730* (0.080)	-0.240 (0.635)	1.105*** (0.008)	-0.424 (0.266)	0.028 (0.949)	-0.147 (0.788)	-0.439 (0.337)
urban	-1.029*** (0.002)	0.700 (0.134)	0.461 (0.345)	0.734* (0.097)	0.218 (0.673)	0.359 (0.446)	0.615 (0.248)
male	-0.186 (0.286)	-0.129 (0.597)	-0.038 (0.828)	-0.044 (0.856)	-0.018 (0.928)	-0.221 (0.303)	-0.090 (0.759)
education	0.451** (0.017)	-0.282 (0.112)	-0.294 (0.141)	-0.332** (0.028)	0.034 (0.860)	-0.189 (0.337)	-0.085 (0.653)
trans econ	2.222 (0.520)	0.963 (0.879)	12.183 (0.159)	4.738 (0.463)	8.810 (0.199)	1.328 (0.812)	10.372 (0.111)
post econ	-2.149 (0.629)	-2.729 (0.571)	-1.610 (0.746)	-0.875 (0.833)	-0.829 (0.865)	0.111 (0.980)	-2.715 (0.439)
Ukrainian	0.163 (0.623)	-0.198 (0.644)	-0.138 (0.733)	-0.055 (0.862)	-0.190 (0.507)	-0.118 (0.678)	-0.034 (0.908)
cut1	1.723 (0.631)	0.520 (0.863)	4.787 (0.154)	0.088 (0.973)	3.369 (0.360)	-1.804 (0.573)	6.055* (0.099)
cut2	3.680 (0.313)	2.526 (0.404)	6.525* (0.062)	2.256 (0.384)	5.092 (0.177)	-0.070 (0.983)	7.466** (0.047)
cut3	5.743 (0.134)	4.301 (0.165)	8.309** (0.024)	4.112 (0.118)	7.439* (0.055)	2.018 (0.528)	9.372** (0.015)
<i>N</i>	664	664	664	664	664	664	664

*p*-values in parentheses

Models: ordered logit

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 4.10: Generations in Western Ukraine

	(1) Q21	(2) Q22	(3) Q23	(4) Q24	(5) Q26	(6) Q27	(7) Q30
Stalin	0.580 (0.298)	0.227 (0.569)	0.676 (0.119)	0.471 (0.201)	0.749 (0.132)	0.757 (0.311)	0.736 (0.136)
Khrushchev	-0.008 (0.979)	-0.072 (0.812)	0.320 (0.240)	0.197 (0.577)	0.776** (0.048)	0.492 (0.147)	0.264 (0.419)
Brezhnev	-0.006 (0.983)	-0.090 (0.730)	0.142 (0.438)	0.256 (0.237)	0.389 (0.131)	0.569* (0.088)	0.447 (0.135)
Gorbachev	0.667 (0.108)	-0.506* (0.072)	-0.403* (0.084)	-0.196 (0.463)	0.342 (0.325)	0.128 (0.760)	0.178 (0.558)
material sit	0.286* (0.079)	-0.255** (0.042)	-0.148 (0.298)	-0.180 (0.185)	-0.119 (0.349)	-0.092 (0.574)	-0.061 (0.592)
unemployed	0.200 (0.597)	-0.176 (0.720)	0.051 (0.891)	-0.183 (0.703)	-0.003 (0.996)	-0.163 (0.792)	-0.436 (0.364)
urban	0.161 (0.583)	-0.217 (0.379)	-0.263 (0.394)	-0.422* (0.064)	-0.374 (0.144)	-0.579* (0.059)	-0.513 (0.122)
male	-0.055 (0.805)	-0.181 (0.436)	-0.120 (0.635)	-0.007 (0.978)	-0.202 (0.331)	-0.234 (0.285)	-0.120 (0.593)
education	-0.018 (0.929)	-0.120 (0.497)	0.013 (0.937)	-0.227 (0.161)	-0.069 (0.622)	-0.177 (0.400)	0.124 (0.500)
trans econ	0.533 (0.761)	-3.017** (0.023)	-3.137** (0.034)	-2.372* (0.086)	-2.788** (0.037)	-3.546* (0.087)	-1.150 (0.508)
post econ	-0.504 (0.334)	0.636 (0.223)	-0.207 (0.702)	-0.246 (0.704)	0.473 (0.393)	0.617 (0.460)	-0.261 (0.715)
Ukrainian	0.296 (0.351)	0.037 (0.886)	-0.133 (0.479)	-0.078 (0.741)	-0.197 (0.359)	-0.156 (0.512)	-0.221 (0.451)
cut1	-1.090 (0.547)	-4.709*** (0.005)	-3.805** (0.039)	-3.866** (0.035)	-4.565*** (0.004)	-5.660* (0.057)	-2.551 (0.169)
cut2	0.338 (0.853)	-3.106** (0.049)	-2.291 (0.178)	-2.385 (0.178)	-3.115** (0.036)	-4.223 (0.144)	-1.258 (0.475)
cut3	2.159 (0.234)	-1.663 (0.285)	-0.993 (0.547)	-0.985 (0.567)	-1.341 (0.346)	-2.507 (0.358)	0.540 (0.757)
N	751	751	751	751	751	751	751

*p*-values in parentheses

Models: ordered logit

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 4.11: Generations in Latvia (Ethnic Latvians)

	(1) Q21	(2) Q22	(3) Q23	(4) Q24	(5) Q26	(6) Q27	(7) Q30
Stalin	0.063 (0.838)	0.402 (0.245)	0.140 (0.645)	0.655 (0.154)	0.393 (0.272)	0.915** (0.047)	0.493 (0.167)
Khrushchev	-0.025 (0.910)	0.020 (0.943)	0.477* (0.064)	0.208 (0.353)	0.337 (0.390)	0.709** (0.041)	0.235 (0.399)
Brezhnev	-0.266 (0.198)	-0.021 (0.911)	0.160 (0.320)	0.188 (0.416)	0.260 (0.179)	0.363** (0.041)	0.051 (0.836)
Gorbachev	0.074 (0.816)	0.054 (0.881)	0.201 (0.265)	0.071 (0.733)	0.106 (0.671)	0.415* (0.084)	0.008 (0.979)
material sit	0.024 (0.814)	-0.145 (0.138)	-0.274*** (0.004)	-0.159* (0.065)	0.069 (0.463)	0.122 (0.179)	-0.033 (0.753)
unemployed	-0.508 (0.305)	-0.880* (0.081)	-0.257 (0.496)	-0.227 (0.569)	-0.262 (0.463)	-0.036 (0.929)	0.051 (0.911)
urban	-0.023 (0.916)	-0.120 (0.683)	-0.407 (0.163)	-0.324 (0.269)	-0.029 (0.912)	0.199 (0.368)	0.011 (0.968)
male	-0.313** (0.039)	-0.008 (0.958)	-0.004 (0.974)	0.145 (0.247)	0.059 (0.692)	0.142 (0.395)	0.186 (0.327)
education	0.127 (0.244)	-0.030 (0.775)	-0.011 (0.929)	0.025 (0.825)	-0.030 (0.736)	-0.206** (0.042)	-0.065 (0.614)
trans econ	0.408 (0.873)	-0.264 (0.860)	-0.129 (0.929)	0.123 (0.928)	-0.575 (0.724)	-0.347 (0.837)	-0.224 (0.928)
post econ	-0.011 (0.995)	0.617 (0.616)	1.094 (0.499)	1.303 (0.458)	0.248 (0.838)	0.177 (0.834)	0.970 (0.458)
cut1	-3.264* (0.053)	-2.985* (0.054)	-4.457** (0.034)	-3.887* (0.094)	-2.653* (0.068)	-2.767*** (0.002)	-3.605** (0.015)
cut2	-1.320 (0.358)	-0.483 (0.718)	-2.139 (0.217)	-1.245 (0.506)	-0.521 (0.680)	-0.721 (0.345)	-1.996 (0.111)
cut3	1.777 (0.228)	1.689 (0.228)	0.050 (0.975)	0.941 (0.605)	1.656 (0.224)	1.407* (0.066)	0.455 (0.697)
<i>N</i>	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000

*p*-values in parentheses

Models: ordered logit

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 4.12: Generations in Latvia (Ethnic Russians)

	(1) Q21	(2) Q22	(3) Q23	(4) Q24	(5) Q26	(6) Q27	(7) Q30
Stalin	-1.133** (0.016)	0.607* (0.084)	0.357 (0.181)	0.201 (0.660)	0.604 (0.240)	1.029*** (0.009)	0.752 (0.158)
Khrushchev	-0.957 (0.129)	0.231 (0.358)	0.337 (0.233)	0.062 (0.745)	0.464 (0.129)	0.328 (0.227)	0.061 (0.827)
Brezhnev	-0.478 (0.194)	0.308 (0.315)	0.508* (0.051)	0.242 (0.305)	0.303 (0.186)	0.168 (0.390)	0.381 (0.249)
Gorbachev	-0.088 (0.856)	0.167 (0.569)	0.158 (0.480)	-0.112 (0.655)	-0.235 (0.411)	-0.517 (0.124)	-0.012 (0.958)
material sit	0.030 (0.803)	-0.056 (0.621)	-0.323*** (0.008)	-0.173 (0.260)	0.079 (0.558)	0.032 (0.609)	-0.039 (0.722)
unemployed	-0.538** (0.029)	-0.299 (0.441)	0.051 (0.834)	-0.152 (0.507)	0.652** (0.038)	0.005 (0.985)	0.040 (0.908)
urban	0.033 (0.933)	-0.324 (0.416)	-0.656 (0.265)	-0.017 (0.965)	0.088 (0.831)	0.163 (0.587)	-0.133 (0.778)
male	-0.003 (0.985)	-0.021 (0.899)	0.150 (0.371)	0.443* (0.092)	0.282 (0.133)	0.279* (0.085)	0.101 (0.676)
education	0.255* (0.094)	-0.347* (0.099)	-0.113 (0.360)	-0.181 (0.191)	0.096 (0.470)	-0.217** (0.023)	-0.146 (0.344)
trans econ	0.750 (0.828)	1.000 (0.701)	0.392 (0.926)	0.345 (0.865)	-0.253 (0.884)	-0.343 (0.791)	0.297 (0.922)
post econ	-0.105 (0.967)	1.351 (0.490)	0.544 (0.848)	0.082 (0.958)	0.369 (0.775)	0.330 (0.727)	1.716 (0.583)
cut1	-2.550 (0.300)	-4.760* (0.053)	-3.457 (0.197)	-2.776 (0.146)	-1.500 (0.311)	-3.344*** (0.003)	-5.050 (0.137)
cut2	-0.572 (0.802)	-2.701 (0.189)	-1.940 (0.438)	-0.666 (0.684)	0.059 (0.967)	-1.262 (0.194)	-3.082 (0.286)
cut3	1.996 (0.420)	-0.497 (0.783)	0.171 (0.942)	1.199 (0.492)	2.319 (0.143)	0.845 (0.370)	-0.938 (0.697)
<i>N</i>	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000

*p*-values in parentheses

Models: ordered logit

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

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### After the Collapse: Economics and Democratic Experience

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#### 5.1 Economics, Democratization, and Democratic Support

In the preceding chapters I have explored those forces that were primary in shaping people's beliefs about and preferences for democracy and authoritarianism in the Soviet Union prior to its collapse in 1991. These forces operated largely through the framework of political culture: lacking any direct experience with democracy, citizens' preferences for a democratic political system were the result of what they had been told about it, whether embedded in myths of pre-Soviet democratic national identity or through the "party line," hostile to Western-style democracy, that was taught to generations of Soviet school children. The purpose of this chapter is to account for citizens' preferences for democracy and authoritarianism *after* the collapse of the Soviet Union, once inhabitants of the post-Soviet countries under consideration gained first-hand experience with democracy for the first time. In doing so, we will also need to contend with a surprising empirical finding: people in the post-Soviet states that have had the greatest experience with and exposure to democracy since 1991 have become the most skeptical critics of democracy. Thus is the paradox of this chapter: why are the populations that were most supportive of

democracy in 1991 the least supportive today?

I will argue that the key to unraveling this paradox lies in the dual experience of economic collapse and political liberalization (which was advertised as “democratization” at the time) that took place during the first few years after the Soviet collapse. During that time, the shock of a severe economic collapse seared itself in the minds of those who experienced it, causing people to dramatically revise their beliefs about the desirability of the political regime - democracy - under which such collapse occurred. “Democracy” and “chaos” went hand in hand for post-Soviet citizens and soon became inseparable in the minds of citizens.

Once this belief was forged, I argue, post-Soviet citizens became highly resistant to updating their thinking on regimes long after economic conditions improved. Thus, their beliefs about democracy and authoritarianism today can be traced back to their experiences of economic collapse during the early years of political and economic transition. I will also argue that in adopting this cognitive framework associating democracy with poor economic performance, chaos, and disorder, post-Soviet citizens, especially those living in more democratic regimes, engaged in what is commonly known as “confirmation bias.” Accepting only evidence confirming their beliefs about democracy (that it breeds instability and disorder) while ignoring evidence to the contrary, citizens of the post-Soviet democracies became increasingly critical of the political system they had once fought to establish. The political implications of these dynamics will be discussed in the concluding chapter. In the meantime, it is worthwhile to briefly review the literature in political science that speaks to the themes of this chapter.

It should come as no surprise that economic factors have played a dominant role in explanations of regime preferences. Several studies of economic voting, including those with a cross-national focus as well as those more specifically on post-communist transitions, have examined the ways in which a country’s economic performance influences the candidates that voters choose at the polls (Powell and Whitten 1993; Wilkin, Haller and Norpoth 1997; Fidrmuc 2000; Duch 2001; Weyland 2003; Mishler and Willerton 2003; Duch and Stevenson 2008). While the debate continues over whether citizens engage in retrospective versus

prospective economic voting, the general conclusion is that poor economic performance (or expectations of poor performance) can spell doom for incumbents facing reelection.

The issue takes on increased magnitude in young post-transition regimes where simultaneous political and economic transitions can be traumatic. Several authors have noted that the unprecedented economic contraction following the collapse of socialism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union had far-reaching consequences throughout all realms of society (Bunce 1999; Popov 2000*a,b*). As (Przeworski 1991) predicted in 1991, “the durability of the new democracies will depend to a large extent on their economic performance,” suggesting that the very economic trauma that these countries were experiencing would have important consequences for their very survival. While some scholars have argued that there is a limited connection between economic performance and support for political and economic reforms (Finkel, Muller and Seligson 1989; Evans and Whitefield 1995), many more have argued for an inverse relationship between economic collapse and support for democracy, democratization, and market reforms (Duch 1993; Waldron-Moore 1999; Munro 2002; Samuels 2003). Many have noted that conditions of economic stress can erode support for both market and democratic reforms, resulting in rebellious publics and fertile ground for the rise of populist movements (Duch 1993; Walton and Seddon 1994; Tismaneanu 1998; Weyland 1998; Shenfield 1998). Individuals who have been “locked out” of the post-communist economy because they lack the skills and resources to operate effectively in the new market environment are especially prone to developing support for non-democratic alternatives (Kitschelt 1992; Hellman 1998; Kullberg and Zimmerman 1999). Nevertheless, there remains debate regarding the impact of economics on democratic breakdown and the relationship between economic reforms and political instability (Berman 1997; Bermeo 1998; Hanson and Kopstein 1997; Ekiert and Kubik 1999; Greskovits 1998; Colton 1996).

I argue that economic experiences during and after the transition process can have a significant effect on popular support for new regimes and the regime preferences of ordinary citizens. This effect is largely through strong associational beliefs that arise in the populace based on their experiences under the new regime. It is well known that the massive economic transformation from command to market economy that took place among the

post-socialist countries resulted in severe economic collapse. While some transition policies and pathways resulted in slightly shallower collapses or somewhat faster recoveries, every post-socialist state in Europe experienced massive economic contraction. The trauma and shock of economic collapse was felt acutely by ordinary citizens who saw their savings disappear overnight, their paychecks delayed for weeks and months, prices for goods skyrocket, social services scaled back, and public infrastructure crumble. In short, the post-socialist transition brought about unprecedented disorder and instability to all realms of life - economic, political, social, and personal.

These traumatic economic reforms went hand in hand with the political transitions taking place at the time, most of which were carried out under the banner of “democratization,” pushed by a new generation of post-communist liberal elites seeking quick marketization and democratization of their countries. However, the inherent tension between economic and political reform begins to create serious problems: economic dislocation produces mass disenchantment with the reform process and vocal demands for the restoration of order and stability, something which the liberalizing elites are unable to implement. Because of the closely intertwined nature of the dual political and economic transition, in which democratization and economic reform are tightly packaged and sold by the same elites, the condition of disorder, chaos, and instability becomes inextricably linked with democracy in the minds of ordinary citizens. In such a situation citizens fondly recall (with a bit of historical revisionism) the “good old days” of stability and prosperity with a strong leader. The prior experience with authoritarian governance in the pre-transition period as well as the experience with “democratization” following transition generates among citizens two powerful associations which reveal key principles shaping their political outlooks: democracy equals disorder and authoritarianism equals order. When citizens’ daily survival is at stake amidst chaotic conditions, it becomes easy to understand the appeal of strongmen promising pensions, wages, housing, and food.



### 5.1.1 The Lasting Impact of Major Political and Economic Events

Previous scholarship in various subfields of political science have established the ability of major political, social, and economic events felt society-wide to leave lasting marks on the collective knowledge, beliefs, and behavior of those who experienced these events. In a survey of American adults, Schuman and Scott (1989) asked respondents to “think of national or world events or changes that have occurred over the past 50 years and to name one or two...that seem to you to have been especially important”(Schuman and Scott 1989, 362). While Schuman and Scott’s purpose was to show evidence of generational differences on collective memories, their data reveals the imprints that major societal events leave on the memories and beliefs of those who experience them. Among the most frequent responses that they were received were events like World War II, the Vietnam War, the Kennedy assassination, the civil rights movement, and the Great Depression. Predictably, responses varied by age: people who did not experience the Great Depression were less likely to list it as one of the most important in the last 50 years than were people who lived through the Depression. However, the fact that individuals who were young adults during the Depression still consider it to be one of the most significant events of their lifetime (along with WWII) over 50 years later speaks to the power of traumatic events leaving their mark on people’s political beliefs.

A later study of Russian adults carried out by Schuman and Corning (2000) came to similar conclusions, finding that certain collectively shared events leave a disproportionately large mark on the memories of those who experience them. Again, the authors find variance across generations and age groups: some events affected certain groups differently than others.<sup>1</sup> However, they also find that certain events are so monumental in the breadth and depth that they affect society that these events leave an enduring mark on *all* individuals who lived through that event, regardless of their generation. In particular, those who lived during the period of Stalin’s “Great Purge” (1937-1938) bear this characteristic. Those who witnessed the purges first-hand, arguably the most traumatic period in Soviet society until

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<sup>1</sup>To use a US case as an example, young men who were eligible for the draft during Vietnam may have stronger impressions of the Vietnam War than do men who were too old to be drafted at the time, even if they were only a few years older than those of draft age.

the collapse of the Soviet Union, had a stronger collective memory of that event, indicating the ability of society-changing events to leave lasting impressions in people's minds.

Perhaps the event to which the post-Soviet economic collapse has most often been compared is the Great Depression. Scholars of American politics have studied the long-lasting impact of the Great Depression and the New Deal, not only on political knowledge and collective memory, but also on political behavior. In particular, they have studied durable voting patterns that seem to have been established as a result of the massive changes taking place in American society in the 1920s and 1930s. A seminal work on the subject is Erikson et al's *The Macro Polity* (2002). Chapter 5 of *The Macro Polity* engages in what the authors refer to as "political archeology": using current surveys of voters to make inferences about the events that influenced voters' partisanship long in the past. They write, "Much of a cohort's partisanship can be traced to its exposure to events in its years of initial political awareness" (Erikson, MacKuen and Stimson 2002, 153).

Erikson et al. find strong evidence that the experience of the Great Depression had a long-lasting effect on partisanship in the United States. Writing about the generation that came of political age *before* the Great Depression, they find that this generation remained significantly more Republican across their lifetimes than the generation that came of age during the New Deal. By contrast, the "New Deal Generation" - whose early political experiences came after the "good years" of Republican leadership in the 1920s - was much more likely to remain lifelong Democrats as a result of those early experiences. The authors write, "profound forces must have been at work during the realignment period to generate such relatively massive generational differences that persist to this day. Why is the archeological record of early partisanship preserved in this manner? It is preserved because partisanship is long memoried" (Erikson, MacKuen and Stimson 2002, 179).

Indeed, it was the "profound forces" of economic, political, and social upheaval during the Great Depression that made such a lasting impact on the political beliefs and preferences of American voters who came of political age during that era. I argue that the post-Soviet economic collapse unleashed similarly profound forces that left a durable imprint on the regime preferences of citizens in the former USSR. Whereas American voters during the

Great Depression were socialized within an established party system, post-Soviet voters could not pin the collapse on a particular party per-se, thanks to the lack of a consolidated party system. Rather, it was the “liberals” and the “democracy” that they pedaled who took the blame for the collapse, tainting people’s view of democracy long into the future. Furthermore, I assert that the scale of the post-Soviet collapse - which far exceeded the severity of the Great Depression - was such that it made an impression on nearly all post-Soviet citizens who experienced the collapse, regardless of their generation.

The theoretical ability of a major event to fundamentally revise people’s beliefs is consistent with principles of Bayesian updating when that event introduces new information with high certainty. Bullock (2009) offers a formal discussion of this phenomenon, as well as an illustrative example of how news of the attack on Pearl Harbor quickly produced convergence to agreement within Congress:

“In formal terms, the attack on Pearl Harbor can be seen as a new message with extremely low variance ( $\sigma_x^2 \approx 0$ ). The effect of such a message is to cause people to discount all of the information that they had previously received: in effect, posterior beliefs are determined almost exclusively by the new message. In the context of deliberations about war,  $\sigma_x^2 \approx 0$  implies that when legislators heard the news about Pearl Harbor, their beliefs about the net benefit of a declaration of war were determined almost exclusively by that news, and not by the different beliefs that they held before they heard that news. . . [This example] *shows how unusually clear new information can produce convergence to agreement even among people whose beliefs had been sharply diverging*”[emphasis added] (Bullock 2009, 1119).

My argument asserts that the dual economic collapse and political transition similarly produced new information that was perceived by post-Soviet citizens as having high certainty: the widespread hardship that accompanied economic collapse and “democratization” left no sector of post-Soviet society untouched. Nearly all citizens were affected directly and personally by the economic collapse, and even those lucky few who profited during the transition period were witness to the economic and social dislocation taking place everywhere around them. This fact, combined with the unprecedented scale of the collapse and its strong link with democratic reforms, produced a situation in which “new information” about democracy was bluntly clear to post-Soviet citizens: democracy equals

disorder and hardship.

This begins to explain the convergence of democratic support between Latvians and Russians in Latvia and between Galician Ukrainians and Eastern Ukrainians in Ukraine that was noted at the end of chapter 3. While the prior beliefs of the different populations, shaped by historical processes of national identity formation, differed prior to 1991, by 2008 they had converged significantly thanks to the new message that citizens received first-hand in the post-Soviet era: democracy did not bring the prosperity that was hoped for.

### 5.1.2 The Durability of Beliefs and Preferences

Once set, these beliefs about democracy and economic performance became remarkably durable, continuing to influence preferences for democracy and authoritarianism long after the initial economic shock had subsided. In other words, their beliefs became quite “sticky” and resistant to updating following the profound and traumatic shock that took place in the early post-Soviet period.

Scholars of political- and social-psychology have given considerable attention to resistance in updating one’s prior beliefs. Two key mechanisms have been explored. The first is often referred to as *confirmation bias* or sometimes *motivated reasoning* or *motivated skepticism*.<sup>2</sup> Confirmation bias is a situation where an individual selectively interprets evidence in a way that is favorable toward his or her prior beliefs. This may consist of only accepting new information that confirms one’s prior beliefs while ignoring information that disconfirms one’s priors. Confirmation bias may also take the form of interpreting contradictory information as neutral or even favorable toward a prior belief, despite the fact that most objective observers would view the information as evidence as contradictory (Steenbergen 2002, 7). Importantly, this selective interpretation does not have to be a deliberate or conscious action intended to support a desired outcome; rather, it may also be a subconscious

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<sup>2</sup>In fact, many scholars treat confirmation bias and motivated reasoning as separate (but related) processes, wherein the former is a case of biased cognitive processes and the latter a case of an explicit desire or motivation to arrive at a particular conclusion (Kunda 1990). Others are less particular about making the distinction (Taber and Lodge 2006), as the outcome is the same: individuals are more likely to attach greater weight to information that confirms their prior beliefs and downgrade information that contradicts their priors.

process about which biased individuals are not fully aware.

Discussions of confirmation bias can be found throughout the literature on political- and social-psychology (Ditto and Lopez 1992; Fischle 2000; Houston and Fazio 1989; Klein and Kunda 1992; Koehler 1993; Kruglanski and Freund 1983; Kunda 1987, 1990; Taber and Lodge 2006; Lord, Ross and Lepper 1979; Pyszczynski and Greenberg 1987; Sorrentino and Higgins 1986; Stein 1988; Zaller 1992). While many have taken confirmation bias as evidence that humans are not perfect Bayesian updaters, Gerber and Green (1999) have demonstrated that in fact confirmation bias is consistent with principles of Bayesian updating. These works and others have provided strong evidence that political beings - whether elites or ordinary citizens - are prone to selective interpretation of evidence in ways that supports their prior beliefs.

Recent studies have used experimental methods to delve deeper into the workings of confirmation bias with regard to individuals' political beliefs. In a study of resistance to belief updating, Steenbergen (2002) used a variety of experimental manipulations to examine how different types of evidence affect subjects' beliefs about capital punishment, given their prior beliefs on this politically charged issue. The author found that the great majority of subjects engaged in confirmation bias, interpreting evidence to fit their prior beliefs, even when that evidence contradicted their priors. Importantly, Steenbergen also found that stronger prior beliefs made it less likely that an individual would accurately evaluate the evidence presented to her.

Taber and Lodge (2006) also present evidence from an experimental study demonstrating that individuals are prone to selective interpretation of evidence that contradicts their political beliefs. Using affirmative action and gun control as anchoring issues, the authors find evidence of several means by which subjects avoided changing their beliefs in the face of contrary information. First, they discover that individuals who feel strongly about an issue *ex ante* will find supporting arguments more compelling than contrary arguments. Second, they find that individuals spend more time and cognitive resources disconfirming contrary arguments than they do congruent arguments. Third, they find that when given a choice, individuals are likely to seek out information that confirms their beliefs rather than

information that contradicts them. The result of these processes is a situation where people do not update their prior political beliefs, despite being presented with new evidence that should affect their posterior beliefs.

A second cognitive process that results in “sticky” beliefs that are resistant to updating is known as *cognitive conservatism* or *conservatism bias*. This is a situation in which individuals update their beliefs to an insufficient degree when presented with new information. In other words, too little weight is given to the new evidence, resulting in a smaller shift in posterior beliefs than would be expected from a pure and unbiased Bayesian approach (Edwards 1962, 1982; Lopes 1985; Nisbett and Ross 1980; Osherson 1995; Peffley, Feldman and Sigelman 1987; Peterson, Schneider and Miller 1965; Phillips and Edwards 1966; Shanteau 1972; Smith 1991; Slovic and Lichtenstein 1971).

Steenbergen’s study finds that those who *did* interpret the contradictory evidence correctly (in other words, those who managed to avoid confirmation bias) nonetheless were unlikely to adjust their beliefs as much as was warranted by the evidence. Thus, even when individuals recognize and accept evidence as contrary to their prior beliefs, they are prone to attaching insufficient weight to that evidence, relying more heavily on their prior beliefs to determine their posterior beliefs.<sup>3</sup> The result, again, is a situation in which beliefs are relatively static over time despite the presence of new information that might otherwise cause a rational Bayesian to update her beliefs.

Steenbergen’s work reveals that both processes - confirmation bias and conservatism bias - may occur within the same population, producing similarly “sticky” beliefs regardless of which bias characterized a particular individual’s cognitive process. Thus, he develops a general *Updating Resistance Model (URM)* to describe the broader process:

“There are three ‘resistance’ mechanisms in the URM, which allow decision makers to hold onto their prior beliefs: (1) selective exposure, (2) selective judgment, and (3) insufficient adjustment. Selective exposure causes decision makers to seek out evidence that confirms their prior beliefs, and to avoid evidence that contradicts those beliefs. This results in a confirmation bias. Selective judgment means that decision makers interpret contradictory evidence in a manner

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<sup>3</sup>For more detail on the various possible explanations for cognitive conservatism, see Gerber and Green (1999).

that supports, or at least does not challenge, prior beliefs. This, too, results in a confirmation bias. Finally, insufficient adjustment means that the decision maker anchors on the prior belief and does not sufficiently consider his or her evaluation of the evidence. This results in a conservatism bias.”(Steenbergen 2002, 34).

Taber and Lodge (2006) and others (Gerber and Green 1999; Bullock 2009) discuss the possibility of “attitude polarization” in the presence of the cognitive biases discussed above. Taber and Lodge write, “all of these mechanisms - the prior attitude effect, the disconfirmation bias, and the confirmation bias - should theoretically lead to attitude polarization because they deposit more supportive evidence and affect in memory. . . Our theory suggests that those on either side of the issues should become more attitudinally extreme in their positions, despite the fact that they were exposed to the same balanced stream of information”(765). Thus, exposure to more information, whether confirming or disconfirming one’s priors could, over time, lead to more extreme views in a person.

### 5.1.3 Applying the Theory to the Cases

The theories discussed above provide us with a way to understand how a major social-economic-political event could bring about the rapid revision of political beliefs and preferences as citizens are “shocked” into a new reality. They also help us understand how those beliefs, once solidified during the turbulent upheaval of the transition period, might endure after their initial formation, resisting adjustment in the future through the cognitive processes of confirmation bias and conservatism bias. The related cognitive process of attitude polarization also helps explain how these beliefs might actually become more extreme over time as individuals are exposed to more information that (through their biased interpretation of evidence) lends additional support to the beliefs that were solidified early by the shock of transition.

In the case of Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, and Latvia, I argue that the dual economic collapse and political transition carried out under the banner of “democratization” provided the initial shock that realigned beliefs about democracy for post-Soviet citizens.<sup>4</sup> This

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<sup>4</sup>It is important to recall that all four countries engaged in democratic reforms during the early post-

traumatic experience solidified the belief that “democracy equals chaos” in the minds of ordinary people because this was the nearly universal experience of post-Soviet citizens: wherever one turned in the early 1990s one could see evidence that democratic reforms had failed to bring about the better life that people had hoped for. In the face of such high certainty/low variance information (to put it in formal terms), mass regime preferences were significantly altered as the public became much more critical of democracy.

This brings me to the first hypothesis of this chapter:

- H1: Citizens of post-Soviet states will display a strong association between democracy/democratization and conditions of economic hardship, hardship, instability, disorder, and chaos in the social, political, and especially economic realms.

Once this new reality and the corresponding beliefs about democracy were solidified by the trauma of the collapse, I argue that these views remained durable and resistant to change later in the post-Soviet period. At the moment I remain agnostic over whether this resistance to updating was driven primarily by confirmation bias or conservatism bias, though it is likely that both processes characterized the post-Soviet societies under confirmation. My survey data do not allow me to make a judgement on the relative prevalence of each type of bias within the surveyed population, but future experimental research might be able to shed additional light on the question. Nonetheless, I will argue that the truly life-altering nature of the post-Soviet transition was strong enough to lock in the early impressions of democracy and make citizens highly resistant to revising their beliefs in later years.

This leads me to next two hypotheses that I will evaluate in this chapter:

- H2: The more severe the economic collapse experienced by an individual in the early 1990s, the more critical of democracy she will be today. Similarly, a more severe

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Soviet years. Thus, while regime trajectories diverged greatly with time, citizens of Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, and Latvia all experienced the bitter taste of economic collapse in the presence of democratization in the early 1990s.



economic collapse under democracy will make individuals less critical of authoritarian rule.

- H3: Contemporary beliefs about and preferences for democracy and authoritarianism will be affected by the scale of the early economic collapse and will *not* be affected by the scale of economic recovery after the recent collapse. In other words, contemporary attitudes were solidified by early economic experiences and have not been affected by recent economic developments, evidence of the “stickiness” of such beliefs.

The confirmation bias thesis argues that additional information regarding democracy and economic performance will be processed selectively so that respondents who believe that democracy is responsible for disorder and instability will ignore evidence to the contrary or might even reinterpret such evidence so that it confirms their beliefs. They are also likely to put greater weight on evidence that confirms their beliefs. The polarization thesis would therefore lead us to expect that as post-Soviet citizens processed new information about democracy, they might become more critical of democracy through these cognitive processes.

I would posit that it is those citizens living under more democratic regimes that will be the recipients of more information about democracy because it is part of their daily experience. If such citizens are more likely to attach weight to the negative information about democracy (information that confirms for them that democracy is a disorderly system), this suggests that they may become more critical of democracy than citizens of countries who have less exposure to and information about democracy. This leads me to the next two hypotheses:

- H4: Individuals who have greater exposure to and experience with democracy in the post-Soviet countries will be more critical of democracy and more supportive of authoritarianism than individuals who have less experience with democracy.
- H5: Over time, aggregate levels of dissatisfaction with democracy should increase in more democratic countries.

Thus, we should find those most critical of democracy in Latvia and Ukraine - those countries that have remained more democratic, while citizens of Russia and Belarus should be less critical of democracy.

Having laid out the theoretical expectations and hypotheses that will be evaluated using both qualitative and quantitative evidence later on, we now turn our attention to a more detailed discussion of the post-Soviet economic and political transition.

## 5.2 The Post-Soviet Collapse and Transition

There can be little doubt that the dual transitions - political and economic - that occurred in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union were the most traumatic and disruptive social phenomena experienced by Soviet citizens since Stalin's collectivization of agriculture, the Great Terror, and the Second World War. As many interview respondents noted, the "golden age" of communism under Brezhnev may not have brought significant material comfort (several mentioned the lack of consumer goods when discussing that period), but it was a time of stability and predictability. Perhaps more importantly, most citizens had their basic needs met by the state: work, housing, healthcare, and pensions provided individuals with what they required to live - what several interviewees referred to as their "human rights." It certainly was not the most luxurious or comfortable life imaginable - I don't mean to minimize the many hardships that plagued the daily lives of Soviet citizens - but at the end of the day the state's substantial social safety net did bring a measure of stability to people's lives.

One can imagine, then, the life-altering disruption that occurred as a result of the collapse of the Soviet economic and political system. It was the moribund and ultimately unsustainable Soviet command economy that brought the system to its knees by 1991, and it was the post-Soviet citizens that were left to pick up the pieces of a tightly coupled socio-political-economic system that lay in ruins. It is not my intention to provide a detailed account of the ways in which ordinary life was upended in the years following the collapse of the Soviet Union - this has been done already by others with both greater literary skill than my own and closer proximity to the events of those days. Rather, I will attempt to

convey the scope of the collapse through the numbers and through the words of the citizens I interviewed who still remember vividly those turbulent years. Of particular interest will be the way in which those early economic and political experiences in the post-Soviet era have left a lasting mark on the political beliefs and regime preferences of the individuals who experienced them first-hand.

### 5.2.1 The Post-Soviet Economic Collapse

That the period of economic collapse in the early 1990s among the post-Soviet countries was a traumatic shock is somewhat of an understatement.<sup>5</sup> Even countries that experienced milder economic collapses endured significant pain. In Latvia, while wages bottomed out quickly and recovered more quickly than in other countries, the initial shock was severe: with 1991 as the base year, average wages declined 32% after the Soviet collapse.<sup>6</sup> Belarus, another country with a milder collapse still experienced a 36% decline in average wage levels before bottoming out in 1994.<sup>7</sup> Russia was hit more severely by the post-Soviet economic collapse, with average wages dropping 46% by 1995.<sup>8</sup> Finally, Ukraine experienced a truly devastating collapse, witnessing wage levels plummet an incredible 63% by the time they hit the bottom in 1994.<sup>9</sup> As of 2007, neither Ukraine's real average monthly wage levels nor its real GDP per capita had returned to their 1991 levels. To put this into perspective, real GDP per capita in the United States declined by *only* 25% during the first several years

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<sup>5</sup>In the statistical analyses presented in this chapter, I utilize real average monthly wages measured at the oblast level in Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine. In Latvia, wage levels are measured at the regional level for the five administrative regions of Latvia: Riga, Kurzeme, Latgale, Zemgale, and Vidzeme level that are compiled from a variety of statistical sources. While average wage levels during the post-Soviet era track closely with GDP per capita levels, I prefer to use wages as a measure of economic well being at the macro level because they better reflect the economic conditions of ordinary citizens (those who earn the wages) than GDP per capita might in a resource-rich country with high GDP but little redistribution of income from those resources.

<sup>6</sup>While wages bottomed out in 1992, Latvia's real GDP per capita did not bottom out until 1993 and then spent several years with minimal growth before starting to rise noticeably in the later 1990s. Between 1990-1993, Latvia's real GDP per capita dropped approximately 42%.

<sup>7</sup>Belarus's GDP per capita declined by 35% between 1990 and bottoming out in 1995.

<sup>8</sup>Russian GDP per capita declined 42% between 1990 and 1996, though 1998 saw levels drop slightly below the 1996 lows.

<sup>9</sup>Ukraine's GDP per capita bottomed out in 1998, having declined by 58% since 1990.

of the Great Depression. And as painful as the so-called “Great Recession” of 2009 felt, in 2009 US GDP per capita declined by only 2.4%.

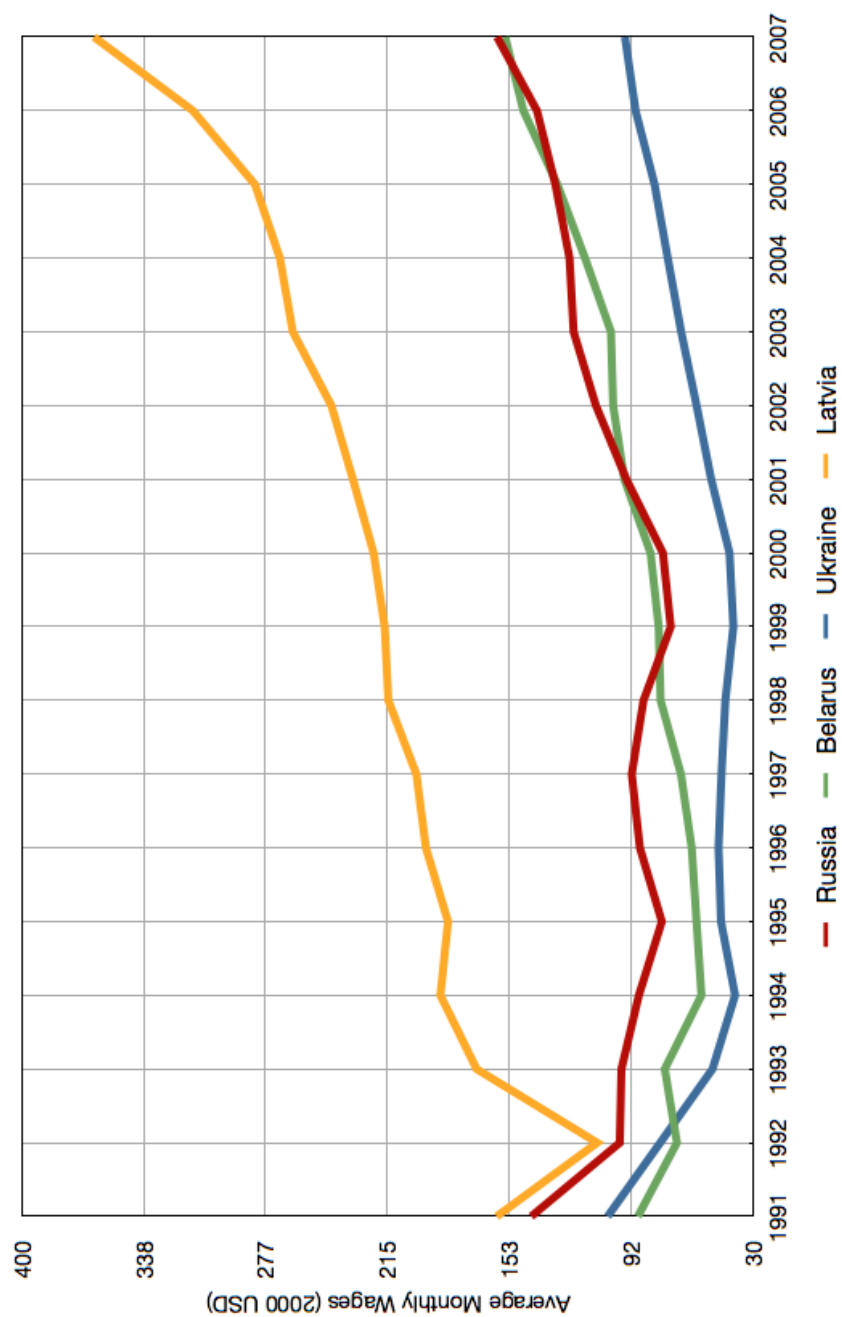


Figure 5.1: Post-Soviet Economic Development, 1991-2007



Figure 5.2: Russia's economic development (average monthly wages), 1991-2007

To help readers visualize the scope and scale of the economic collapse, figure 5.1 plots each country's national average monthly wage levels (in real terms) from 1991-2007. However, Latvia's higher starting point and impressive recovery seems to distort the scale on the chart, suggesting much flatter curves for the other countries and suggesting milder economic transitions than they really experienced. Thus, figures 5.2 - 5.5 show national wage levels for each country individually, allowing readers to get a much better grasp on how painful the years immediately following the Soviet collapse really were.

During qualitative open-ended interviews with citizens in Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, and Latvia, I asked subjects to talk about their lives and experiences during the early 1990s. Throughout the interviews, there was near universal agreement that the period following the Soviet collapse was one of instability and disorder in which people's lives were upended as a result of the traumatic changes taking place in society. Several respondents blamed the leaders of that era by name, while others compared their lives after the collapse to what they had had before.

Not surprisingly, work, money, and food were common themes. According to a 34 year old woman in Tambov, Russia, "things were very unstable in the 1990s - I lost my



Figure 5.3: Belarus' economic development (average monthly wages), 1991-2007

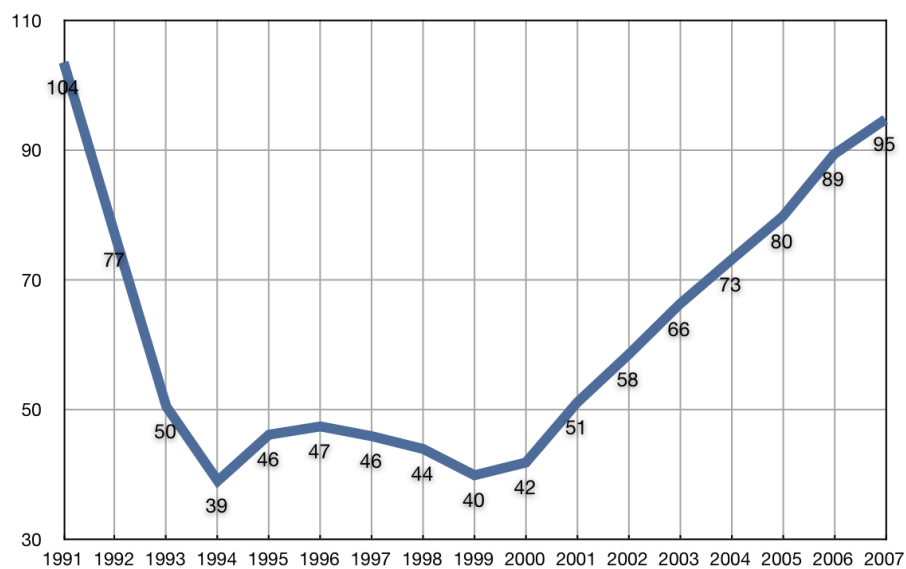


Figure 5.4: Ukraine's economic development (average monthly wages), 1991-2007

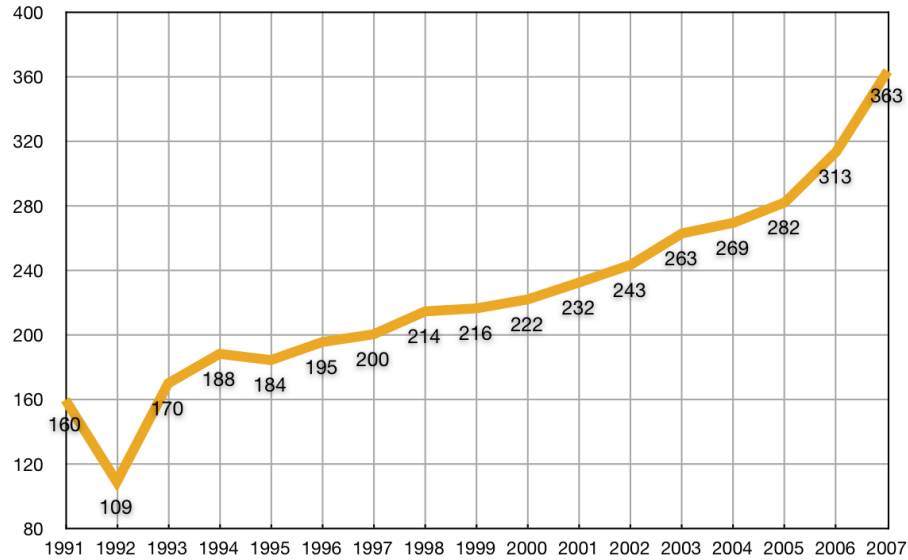


Figure 5.5: Latvia's economic development (average monthly wages), 1991-2007

job and didn't have any money" (Tambov #4, 5/24/07). An older woman in Lipetsk, Russia, complained, "under Yeltsin I didn't get my pension. I worked my whole life and then this happens. Back then they stole our money," referring to the "thieves" in the government (Lipetsk #5, 5/28/07). Another resident of a village outside of Lipetsk was more succinct: "Back then the whole country fell apart"(Lipetsk #7, 5/25/07). In Nizhny Novgorod, Russia, one woman told me that "[during Soviet times] we had a good apartment, we bought a car, we had enough to eat. After [the collapse] we spent it all on food and medicine until we were poor"(Nizhny Novgorod #10, 6/5/07). This story was echoed by a 70 year old woman living in the Russian city of Yaroslavl, approximately 175 miles from Moscow: "Under Soviet power, I had a good apartment, job, wages, everything I needed, but not anymore"(Yaroslavl #3, 6/13/07).

Interview subjects in Belarus were just as frank about the difficulties they faced during the early years of independence. One resident of Minsk, the capital, remembered that "we were in shock from prices. I got things by bribing"(Minsk #8, 7/23/08). A neighbor of this interviewee was similarly outspoken about the problem of inflation during the early 1990s: "In the 1990s, the problem was standing in line to buy clothes and food. Everything



was expensive. . . All day you work, and after work you stand in line for things. . . We would buy and buy, stock up what we could, because there would always be price jumps.” Another Belarusian in the western city of Brest (which sits on the Polish border) said, “There were lots of goods available in the 1990s, but prices jumped - we didn’t have enough money to pay for it”(Brest #15, 8/19/08).

Other parts of Belarus did not witness the flood of new goods that the man in Brest saw but could not buy; for residents of those areas, the shortages of the Soviet era persisted. As one woman in Minsk put it, “it was a scary time, as there was nothing available. After the Soviet Union collapsed there was literally nothing available”(Minsk #14, 7/23/08). Like in Russia, the state was largely unable to fulfill its social services to citizens, as a 65 year old man in the western Belarusian city of Brest remarked: “It was a mess [in the 1990s]. We didn’t get paid pensions, there were meetings, strikes. . .”(Brest #2, 8/19/08). A man in the city of Vitebsk, Belarus summed up the period perhaps most poignantly (if somewhat crudely): “There was nothing to eat. It was f-ing awful”(Vitebsk #11, 8/7/08).

Residents of Ukraine and Latvia had similarly traumatized memories of life during the 1990s amidst one of the greatest social, economic, and political upheavals the modern world has seen. One middle-aged man in the eastern Ukrainian city of Donetsk (at the heart of Ukraine’s coal-producing and Russian-speaking Donbass region) zeroed in on the economic disruptions of the time, stating, “In the 1990s the factories didn’t work, criminal rackets were everywhere, and the wages were low”(Donetsk #1, 8/20/08). Another Ukrainian respondent, this one in the central Ukrainian city of Vinnytsia declared that “everything went to hell, and [Ukraine’s leaders] just put everything into their pockets like always”(Vinnytsia #22, 8/29/08). Despite Latvia’s marginally softer economic collapse and quicker recovery following independence, its residents also shared similar experiences from the 1990s: “life was hard, it was hard to survive, money was a problem”(Riga #3, 9/9/08). Another elderly resident of Riga, an ethnic Russian, remembered that during the 1990s “there wasn’t enough money - money for an apartment, for medicine. My pension wasn’t enough”(Riga #5, 9/10/08). Again and again, residents of Latvia, whether ethnic Latvians or Russians, had the same complaints about the early post-Soviet era: inflation, low wages,

no jobs, low pensions, and so on.

What is remarkable is the fact that the bitter sting of that experience seems not to have faded much in the 15 years or so that has elapsed. While there is no doubt that memories and strong impressions can mellow over time and be revised significantly (overly positive and nostalgic memories of life in the Soviet Union are testament to this), for the subjects that I interviewed, softer memories have not come with time. Nor has time mellowed the visceral reaction to those years of chaos, instability, and disorder. Indeed, many interview subjects became quite emotional when recalling the struggles of their lives during that time, speaking heatedly and vigorously about their experiences. In a few cases, respondents even brought themselves to the verge of tears as they spoke of their troubles. It was perfectly clear that this had been a traumatic event in their lives, one which left a scar that persists unhealed to this day.

These memories of the early 1990s as period of disorder and instability were reflected in the nationwide surveys that I conducted in each country in 2007-2008. In those surveys, I asked respondents, “Please think back to the period of 1992-1995 when [Russia/Belarus/Ukraine/Latvia] became an independent country. Please rate the level of instability and uncertainty in [the country] during that time on a 10-point scale where 1 means ‘very unstable and uncertain’ and 10 means ‘very stable and certain.’”<sup>10</sup> Respondents were then asked to rate the level of stability in their country at the present moment, using the same scale. The results of these survey questions are presented in figure 5.6.

Here we are most concerned with the red bars in figure 5.6, which represent each country’s average level of stability and certainty during the early transition years, as assessed in 2007-2008 by survey respondents. To be sure, this is a subjective measure, and for this reason is not used as an independent variable in the regression analyses that will be presented later. After all, subjective beliefs about the level of stability might be spuriously

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<sup>10</sup>In Russia the question read, “Please think back to the 1990s. Please rate the level of instability and uncertainty in Russia during that time on a 10-point scale where 1 means ‘very unstable and uncertain’ and 10 means ‘very stable and certain.’ While this is technically a broader time period than what was presented in the surveys of Belarus, Ukraine, and Latvia, the results support the broader conclusion that the early period of independence was one of disorder and instability, with very similar results from all four countries despite the difference in wording on the Russian survey.

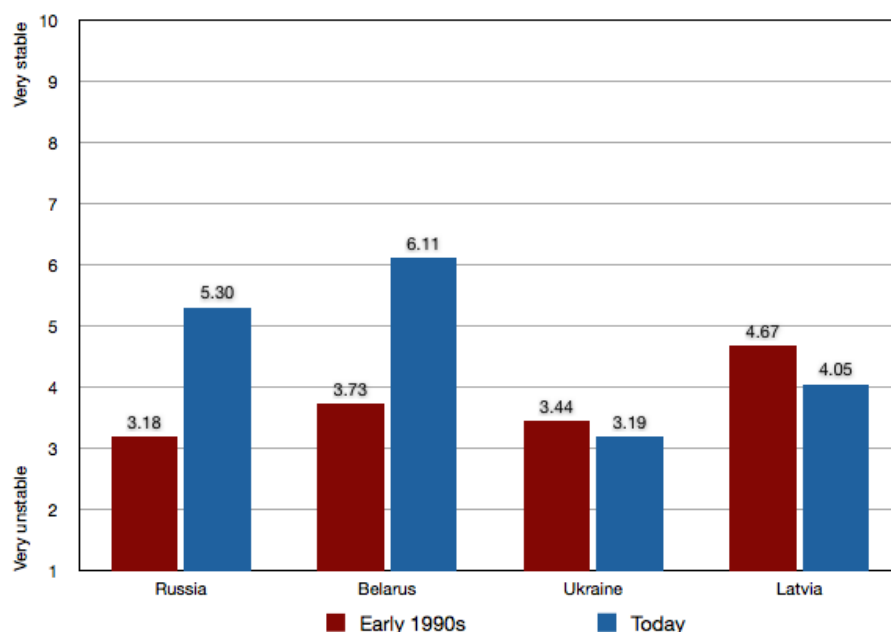


Figure 5.6: Respondents' ratings of stability in the country

correlated with support for democracy. For this reason, the regression analyses will use objective measures of economic conditions. But on some level, the subjectivities of these evaluations are precisely what we are after: how do people remember those years? How do they evaluate them given what they've experienced in their lives since then? They may be subjective reflections on the past, but the ability of those past events to leave an unusually deep impression on the psyches of individuals who experienced them tells us something important about how major society-wide traumatic shocks affect individuals and persist over time.

What figure 5.6 makes clear is that citizens of these countries remember the early 1990s as a period of great instability and disorder. Recalling that 1 is “very unstable and uncertain” and 10 is “very stable and certain,” the average stability rating in Russia is only 3.18. Citizens of Belarus rate the country's stability in the early 1990s at 3.73, and residents of Ukraine rate the period as a similarly dismal 3.44. The median level of stability for each of these countries was 3. Latvia's citizens were slightly more generous in the way they

remembered the early 1990s, likely due to their quicker economic recovery. Nonetheless, a stability rating of only 4.57 (median = 5) out of 10 isn't a resounding affirmation of stability by any means. These quantitative survey results confirm what the qualitative interviews revealed: those first few years of economic and political transition after the collapse of the Soviet Union were a time of unsurpassed disorder, instability, and chaos. Furthermore, the traumatic experience is one that is remembered vividly today by those who lived through it.

It is, of course, interesting to note the blue bars that appear in figure 5.6. What stands out immediately is that citizens of Russia and Belarus - the two more authoritarian countries in this study - rate the present period as much more stable than the 1990s. By contrast, citizens of the more democratic countries of Ukraine and Latvia perceive the present time as being slightly less stable than even the 1990s. This peculiar outcome and its implications for popular support for democracy and authoritarianism will be discussed in greater depth later, as it is closely intertwined with the fundamental paradox presented in this chapter: why are citizens of democratic regimes so much more critical of democracy than citizens of authoritarian regimes?

## 5.2.2 Post-Soviet Political Trajectories

Of course, the incredible changes taking place in the post-Soviet space after 1991 were not limited to the economic sphere as the former Soviet republics sorted through the wreckage of the Soviet planned economy. Massive political changes were taking place and continued to take place for many years thereafter. Of greatest consequence for our purposes was the liberalization and democratization that occurred within many of the post-Soviet countries. To be sure, democratization or liberalization of any kind was not universal: many post-Soviet states, particularly in Central Asia, did not reform their politics significantly after gaining independence. The primary purpose of this research is not to explain why certain republics democratized while others failed to do so, although this central question is addressed in the concluding chapter of this work. Nor is it possible to deal with the regime trajectories of all 15 post-Soviet countries. Rather, the task at hand is to briefly explore the

regime trajectories - particularly with regard to experiences of democracy - among the four cases that have featured throughout this work. In doing so, it is my intention to lay the foundation to a better explanation and understanding of how experiences with democracy and authoritarianism, in conjunction with economic collapse, combine to have a lasting impact on popular support for democracy and dictatorship.

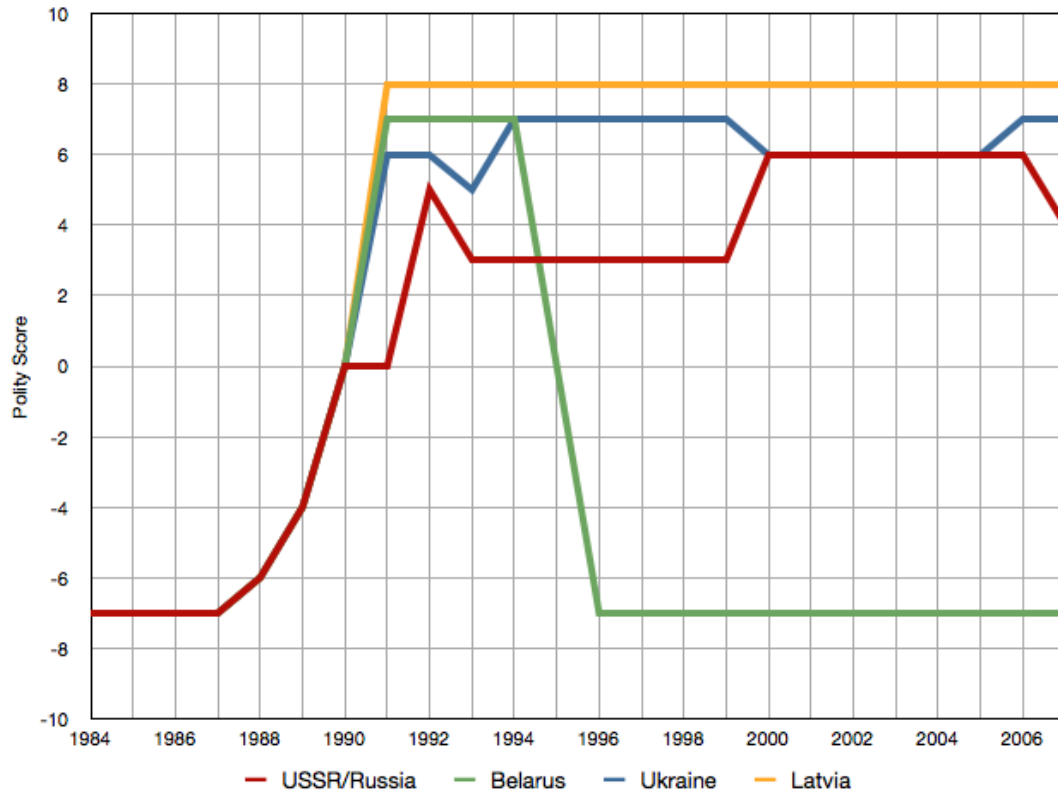


Figure 5.7: Polity Scores, 1984-2007

Figure 5.7 plots each country's Polity IV score from 1984 until 2007 (Marshall and Jaggers 2008). It is unfortunately not possible to provide detailed political histories for each country during the 20-plus years represented in this graph, nor is this the place to debate in great depth the merits or demerits of this or any other coding scheme that seeks to measure democracy or regime type.<sup>11</sup> However, we can trace the general contours of

<sup>11</sup>However, for those who may disagree with particular codings at particular times in each country, it is worthwhile to recall that the most widely used quantitative measures of regime type - Polity IV, Freedom

the political transitions that took place following the Soviet collapse in each country, an exercise that will help readers appreciate the very different experiences the citizens of each country had with democracy and authoritarianism following independence.

Russia began the post-Soviet era as a much more democratic state than the Soviet regime to which it was the successor. And indeed, Boris Yeltsin was seen at the time as a champion of democracy and liberalism in Russia, the result of shrewd political maneuvering that left him at the pinnacle of power in Moscow when the Soviet regime formally ceased to exist in December 1991. Saddled by a Communist-dominated legislature that had been elected under the Soviet regime, Yeltsin soon found his legislative agenda blocked by a parliament that was hostile to the radical economic and political changes Yeltsin sought. This standoff was brought to a head in the fall of 1993 when Yeltsin (technically illegally) dissolved the parliament. By October 1993 the standoff became violent, with the army following Yeltsin's orders to fire on and storm the parliament building. Having emerged victorious in the standoff, Yeltsin then used his political momentum to push through a new constitution in December 1993 through referendum, a constitution that gave the Russian president sweeping political powers and significantly strengthening the institutional power of the presidency. While the maneuvers were justified as a necessary means to break the gridlock and advance the liberalizing and democratizing agenda, they also came to be seen as a moment where the existing rule of law was disposed for new rules that better suited the highest powers in Russia. As such, it is not surprising that the red line representing Russia in figure 5.7 dips in 1993 and remains at a lower level for the duration of Yeltsin's presidency.

With Russia's first post-Soviet change of leaders in 2000<sup>12</sup> and the election of Vladimir Putin, an election that was deemed to be consistent with democratic principles by interna-

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House, PCLA, and the Unified Democracy Scores - all display high correlations with one another. No quantitative measure of regimes is perfect, and no measure will satisfy all observers. Polity IV has been chosen for this study both for its transparent and well-documented methodology and the long time series to which it has been applied. This point is particularly important for calculating an individual's lifetime exposure to democracy, about which I will say more in section 5.3.

<sup>12</sup>Of course, some rightly question whether this was truly a democratic alternation of power, since Putin became acting president on December 31, 1999 when Yeltsin's resignation elevated the then-prime minister to the presidency. Nonetheless, the open contestation of the election, along with its adherence to democratic principles speaks in favor of this as a more or less democratic moment for Russia's polity.

tional observers, Russia's polity score rises correspondingly in 2000. However, the gradual re-authoritarianization of Russia that took place under Putin, especially during his second term as president, is reflected in the decline in Russia's polity score beginning in 2007. During his presidency Putin curtailed the political influence of business leaders, severely tightened restrictions on media, repealed the direct election of regional governors in favor of a system of presidential appointees, modified electoral laws in ways that made it harder for small parties and independents to gain representation in the Duma, and created a political juggernaut in the form of the United Russia party which some have compared to a modern-day CPSU in its level of political dominance. By the 2008 presidential elections "Putin's Plan" was a foregone conclusion thanks to the remarkably complete control that he had gained over Russian politics.

Belarus' political development followed a much different path during the post-Soviet period, represented in figure 5.7 by the green line. While the collapse of the Soviet Union ushered in a brief period of democracy in Belarus under the leadership of Belarusian prime minister Vyachaslau Kebich (1990-1994) and Belarusian Supreme Soviet (parliament) chairman Stanislau Shushkevich (1991-1994), it was turbulent and short-lived. Propelled upwards by a reputation as a no-nonsense foe of corruption, a Belarusian parliamentarian by the name of Alexander Lukashenko successfully ran for president in 1994 on an anti-corruption platform. Lukashenko handily defeated Kebich and Shushkevich, who by then had been tainted by allegations of corruption and disillusionment by the public with life during their leadership.

Unfortunately, the 1994 presidential election in Belarus was the first and the last free presidential election held in that country. Lukashenko quickly moved to exert his control over all facets of Belarusian politics, first securing the authority to disband the Supreme Soviet by decree. When challenged by opposition politicians in 1996 that his actions violated the Belarusian constitution, Lukashenko posed four questions to the Belarusian people in a referendum. One of them was central to his consolidation of power: "To adopt the 1994 Constitution of the Republic of Belarus with amendments and additions (new revision of the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus ) suggested by President of the Republic of

Belarus A.G. Lukashenko.” These amendments lengthened Lukashenko’s term as president and dissolved the unicameral parliament, replacing it with a new bicameral body.

The practical effect of these changes, which passed with 70.45% support in an election that was seen as fraudulent by international observers, was to eliminate opposition parties from the Belarusian parliament and significantly concentrate political power in the president’s hands. In short, within just two years Alexander Lukashenko had made himself dictator of Belarus, a position he holds to this day. As a result, the green line in figure 5.7 drops first in 1995 and then settles at its steadfastly authoritarian level in 1996. And so, the citizens of Belarus had only the briefest of experiences with democracy in the early 1990s before returning to authoritarianism with the anti-corruption “reformer” the elected into office.

Ukraine, represented by the blue line in figure 5.7 entered the post-Soviet era under the leadership of Leonid Kravchuk, who was elected president of Ukraine in December 1991. During the 1990s Ukraine maintained a fairly democratic course despite the massive economic collapse occurring during that time. Kravchuk’s replacement in 1994 through a democratically contested election by Leonid Kuchma resulted in a slight uptick in Ukraine’s polity score, which was maintained until 1999. However, Ukraine was coded as being less democratic beginning in 2000, largely due to pressure on opposition newspapers and the deaths of several journalists in mysterious circumstances that showed some evidence of links to Kuchma. With the Orange Revolution of 2004-05 Ukraine’s polity score once again rose in the democratic direction, a reflection of Viktor Yushchenko’s victory over the Kuchma regime’s preferred (and heavily supported) candidate, Viktor Yanukovich and the more liberal policies that the Orange Coalition implemented.

Finally, Latvia presents the simplest story of all. Upon gaining independence Latvia has succeeded in maintaining a consistently democratic course, one that has remained unchanged during the post-Soviet era as reflected in the yellow line in figure 5.7. This is not to say that Latvian democracy has been without its challenges and flaws, particularly with respect to the rights of those residents of Latvia who have not been granted Latvian citizenship. These so-called “non-citizens” are predominantly ethnic Russians who came



to Latvia during the Soviet era. After independence, they were not automatically granted citizenship and its rights because of Latvia's requirement that citizens must have had Latvian citizenship prior to July 17, 1940 or be descended from those who did. While Latvia's naturalization laws have been relaxed somewhat to make it easier for Latvia's Russian population to gain citizenship, approximately 15% of Latvian residents are non-citizens and lack the right to vote.

Nonetheless, Latvia has built a modern liberal democracy since 1991 and has held five parliamentary elections and five presidential elections, all of which have been carried out according to democratic principles. Thus, we can safely say that of the four countries under consideration, the citizens of Latvia have had the greatest experience with and exposure to democracy during the post-Soviet period.

### 5.2.3 Blaming the Regime: The Intersection of Economic Collapse and Democracy

What is essential to note in figure 5.7 is the fact that each of the four countries under consideration experienced some degree of democratization after the collapse of the Soviet Union and that the citizens of each country had some exposure to democracy (however brief), particularly during the first few years of the post-Soviet era. What is equally important is to note that this period of exposure to democracy coincided with the traumatic economic collapse that was described in section 5.2.1.

I argue that the simultaneity of economic collapse with the experience of democracy in these countries had tremendously strong and long-lasting consequences for individuals' preferences for and beliefs about democracy and authoritarianism. Because they were experiencing democracy for the first time, individuals came to associate democracy with disorder, chaos, instability, and economic collapse. Furthermore, I argue that this wasn't simply a passing association that easily faded over time. Rather, the belief that democracy equals instability is one that, once forged in the fires of the tumultuous early 1990s, became incredibly durable. This belief has left its imprint on how post-Soviet citizens think about democracy and authoritarianism, ultimately shaping their preferences for regimes long after the original political and economic conditions have changed.

This strong and lasting association in the minds of post-Soviet citizens that equates democracy (as they experienced it in the early 1990s) with the economic collapse they experienced was apparent in the open-ended qualitative interviews I conducted with residents throughout each country. In the interviews, I asked subjects to talk to me about some of the positive and negative things that come along with democracy and authoritarianism. To be sure, many respondents did address what they perceived to be positive aspects of democracy - things like free speech, freedom to travel, “they don’t shoot people”(Tambov #10, 5/25/07). Similarly, some subjects were able to talk about negative aspects of authoritarianism, such as the lack of personal freedoms and the inability for people to influence what the leader does. But the vast majority of respondents seized on the opportunity to present a litany of complaints about democracy while often extolling the virtues of authoritarian regimes.

What is most intriguing is not the fact that respondents were so critical of democracy, but rather the grounds on which they criticized it. The language they used and the examples they gave of drawbacks to democracy (and conversely the benefits of authoritarianism) highlight the fact that they operate with a cognitive framework that links democracy with disorder and economic hardship and associates authoritarianism with stability. In other words, they have concluded that the negative things that come along with democracy are precisely those negative things that they experienced in the 1990s during the post-Soviet economic collapse. Rightly or not, many have blamed democracy for that collapse and have come to believe that authoritarian rule, by contrast, is at least a more stable system of government.

The critiques of democracy covered a wide range of social and economic concerns. In Russia, respondents noted things like lack of housing, unemployment, low wages, crime, corruption, and low pensions as among the main drawbacks of democracy.<sup>13</sup> As one respondent in Lipetsk put it, “There’s nothing good about democracy. Just low wages and pensions”(Lipetsk #7, 5/29/07). When asked about authoritarianism, this woman remarked

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<sup>13</sup>Tambov #7, 5/25/07; Lipetsk #3, 5/28/07; Lipetsk #6, 5/29/07, Lipetsk #7, 5/29/07; Lipetsk #9, 5/29/07.

that “If he’s a good leader, it’s a good thing.” Another respondent residing in the city of Nizhny Novgorod overlooking the Volga River told me, “Under democracy there’s food in the stores and we can get sausage, but it’s too expensive to afford”(Nizhny Novgorod #1, 6/4/07). Lack of food was another concern expressed by an elderly man living outside of the city: “Under democracy there’s complete chaos. When there isn’t enough to eat, you can’t have democracy”(Nizhny Novgorod #9, 6/5/07). When pressed to give some positives about democracy, one woman outside of Tambov was at a loss: “God only knows!”(Tambov #10, 5/25/07).

What is fascinating about this list of complaints, as with those in the other countries that will be described below, is the fact that by the standards of most political scientists, these conditions have very little to do with democracy objectively defined. Put another way, I know of no scholarly definitions of democracy that include wage levels and food prices as definitional components of democracy. To simplify a well-known scholarly definition of democracy, it is a political system under which competitive elections are held and incumbents can and do lose elections (Przeworski et al. 2000). But to ordinary citizens living in post-communist countries like Russia, democracy means low wages, high prices, and unemployment because this is what they experienced when they were first introduced to democracy.

The corresponding conclusion that Russians drew from their experiences was that authoritarianism was a more stable political, social, and economic regime than democracy. As a woman in Tambov said, “Authoritarianism is a good thing, it means there’s more order”(Tambov#1, 5/24/07). Nor was she the only one to equate authoritarian rule with order. A 49 year-old man living near Yaroslavl told me that “without a strong hand, nothing gets done”(Yaroslavl #6, 6/14/07). His neighbor was equally direct: “We need a strong leader to guide us”(Yaroslavl #9, 6/14/07). Another respondent in Nizhny Novgorod also claimed that “people’s physical security is better” under authoritarianism, yet another way in which people contrast the virtues of authoritarianism with the supposed drawbacks of democracy.

Interview subjects in Belarus gave similar responses to those of their Slavic brethren

to the east, emphasizing the fact (according to their experiences) that democracy is an unstable system that is unable to meet the living needs of ordinary people. One woman in Minsk sitting on a bench outside her apartment building said, “Under democracy they promise a lot but can do little”(Minsk #2, 7/23/08). She then proceeded to point out the good things in the neighborhood that have been built during Lukashenko’s rule. Pointing to a rickety playground that was falling apart, she commented that “democracy built that.”

Another resident of Minsk criticized democracy, saying, “everything is allowed, people can do whatever they want, and there’s no order”(Minsk #15, 7/23/08). This perception that democracy is an overly permissive system with no control and order was common: “If people are given too much freedom, we don’t know what they’re capable of. It gets to the point where it’s survival of the fittest [under democracy]”(Brest #13, 8/19/08). One resident of Vitebsk echoed this sentiment, saying, “There are no limits under democracy. You can’t shut anyone up, it is quieter without democracy”(Vitebsk #6, 8/7/08). One resident of Brest, while somewhat less eloquent, was sincere in his bluntness when asked about democracy: “Sh-tocracy, as they say. To hell with it”(Brest #2, 8/19/08). An interviewee in Vitebsk, while less vulgar was equally direct, noting, “you give them freedom, you get anarchy”(Vitebsk #10, 8/7/08)

Belarusians, like Russians, were also inclined to associate authoritarian rule with order and stability. One Minsk resident was clear with her logic: “Politically, we have a dictator. Therefore, it’s stable”(Minsk #7, 7/23/08). Another Minsk resident credited authoritarian rule as providing security, noting that “there’s safety above all here in Belarus”(Minsk #6, 7/23/08). This theme of authoritarian stability was prevalent even on Belarus’s western border, where respondents have had more contact with democratic Poland during the post-Soviet era. One Brest resident claimed, “the more police there are, the more stable a country is”(Brest #3, 8/19/08). Others emphasized the fact that things simply get done under authoritarianism, unlike their experience with democracy. A resident of Brest explained that under authoritarian rule “one person is personally responsible for the things that happen in the country. If he says he’ll do something, he’ll do it”(Brest #4, 8/19/08) Another Belarusian remarked that “[Authoritarianism] is good for people who

need to be led and for people who don't have anything because it provides better [material conditions]"(Vitebsk #9, 8/7/08).

It might be tempting to dismiss these responses as the product of propaganda and brainwashing from an authoritarian regime, one that trumpets the virtues of dictatorship while spreading false information about democracy. Two facts argue against such a conclusion, however. First, as we will see below, citizens of more democratic countries of Ukraine and Latvia are just as critical of democracy as are Belarusians and Russians. Secondly, Belarusians were interestingly the most articulate and outspoken in describing the drawbacks of authoritarianism even though many citizens of Belarus quoted above did view it as a positive thing. This fact helps us dismiss concerns that the surveys taken in Belarus are somehow biased or do not represent people's true beliefs. On the contrary, Belarusians seemed quite comfortable talking about the shortcomings of their government and leader. Furthermore, it suggests that experiences do matter: while Belarusians often tend to describe any benefits of democracy in fairly general terms, they are much more specific when it comes to authoritarianism, the system they know best. In other words, their lack of experience with democracy gives them a high but relatively uninformed opinion of democracy, but a fairly well-informed opinion about dictatorship. One resident of Minsk made exactly this point, saying, "we don't know what democracy is, but I don't know any positive things about authoritarianism"(Minsk #5, 7/23/08). This point will be brought up again later as I argue that those with the greatest experience with democracy, those who have known its faults the longest, are the best-informed but sharpest critics of democracy.

To provide a sample of Belarusians' critiques of dictatorship from my interviews, below are a selection of statements that respondents made when asked to talk about the negative aspects of authoritarianism. In several instances they made direct references to the dictator, president Aleksandr Lukashenko. One resident of Minsk said, "Everything depends on the 'power.' He promises one thing and does another"(Minsk #4, 7/23/08). A respondent in Brest was fairly direct: "One big minus [of authoritarianism] is our president"(Brest #8, 8/19/08). One woman in Vitebsk, when asked whether a strong leader unconstrained by elections and parliament is a good thing, replied, "You mean a leader like Lukashenko?"

That's not good"(Vitebsk #7, 8/7/08).

Several Belarusian citizens talked about freedom of speech and individual rights. One complained that under authoritarianism "a person is just a machine in someone's hands. He doesn't think for himself. He exists banally"(Minsk #15, 7/23/08). A Minsk resident, himself a police officer, said, "the police are required to vote for [Lukashenko], we don't have free speech here"(Minsk #6, 7/23/08). Another resident of Minsk asserted, "there should be other voices besides the president's"(Minsk #7, 7/23/08). A woman in Brest conceded, "politically, it's 'shut your mouth and go.' Everyone here is afraid of what will happen if you speak out"(Brest #10, 8/19/08). While this comment again raises the question of the validity of surveys in an authoritarian country like Belarus, it is important to make a distinction between "speaking out" on political matters in public forums and expressing one's opinion privately, even if it is to an interviewer. While most people in Belarus no doubt refrain from the former, my experience showed that they are quite willing to engage in the latter, more private expression of dissent, even toward strangers seeking interviews and surveys.

The concentration of authority in one person was another complaint that several people made. One Minsk resident, a 54 year-old male, stated, "power should never be in one person's hand's hands only... this is like in Stalinist times"(Minsk #12, 7/23/08). A young woman in Brest quipped, "soon we'll have a kingdom [monarchy] here... People make mistakes. One head is good, two is better"(Brest #13, 8/19/08).

To be sure, Citizens of Belarus were not the only ones to criticize dictatorship in the course of interviews. Residents of Russia, Ukraine, and Latvia also mentioned some of these factors as well while also claiming that despite the drawbacks, authoritarianism (in their opinions) brings more stability. But the residents of Belarus who had only the briefest of experiences with democracy and know too well the realities of life under authoritarianism were the most articulate and detailed in their critiques of dictatorship, a point worth taking into account later when we consider the importance of experience in shaping regime preferences.

Returning now to respondents' critiques of democracy and the embedded belief that

democracy is equivalent to disorder, instability, and bad economic conditions, the same pattern appears in the responses of Ukrainian residents as well. This is especially important, as Ukraine's citizens have had more experience with democracy than either the citizens of Russia or Belarus. Like in the other countries, people in Ukraine had several negative associations with democracy when they were asked to talk about the positives and negatives that come with democratic government. Disorder, "a mess," chaos, fighting, no discipline, corruption, criminality, disagreement, low wages, and high prices were among the ways that people described democracy in Ukraine.

When asked whether it would be worth it to have less democracy in Ukraine if it would bring more stability, one resident of Lviv remarked, "as of today, democracy is not part of the stability equation," suggesting that democracy was not contributing any stability to life in Ukraine (Lviv #6, 7/18/08). Others agreed, including another Lviv resident that concurred: "Yes, I think if there were less democracy it would be more stable"(Lviv #7, 7/18/08). While political scientists might wonder what exactly "less democracy" means in practical terms and how it would contribute to "more stability," what is more important here is to note that average citizens have developed a cognitive link between democracy and instability, concluding that less democracy would mean more stability. Even if this is not objectively true, to the degree that what people believe influences their political activities and voting patterns, then the logic, however flawed, could have great political implications.

Others throughout Ukraine harbored clear resentment toward some of the changes that came with democratization in the 1990s. A successful business owner in Vinnytsia warned, "democracy is like a dog that bites, and it can bite people seriously. People should mind it"(Vinnytsia #10, 8/28/08). In Lviv, a man asked, "what did democracy bring for us? Nothing - now there's no order. Authoritarianism is better because the power is concentrated"(Lviv #17, 7/19/08). Farther to the east, in Donetsk, an interview subject recalled, "under democracy they sold all of Ukraine - the factories, the plants... they just closed everything. We need stability before we need democracy"(Donetsk #8, 8/21/08). Another Donetsk resident said of democracy, "there's everything in the shops, but nobody has money to buy things"(Donetsk #3, 8/20/08).

Often respondents in Ukraine contrasted democracy to authoritarianism as a means of expressing their dissatisfaction with the former. One man in Lviv, a former member of the Soviet military, stated, “there’s nothing good about democracy, it only comes with problems. Authoritarianism provides stability of government”(Lviv #11, 7/19/08). The same point was made in more colorful terms by a man interviewed in Donetsk, who said, “under authoritarianism it gets said and it gets done. Democracy just f-s us all”(Donetsk #10, 8/21/08). One resident of Vinnytsia argued that democracy is ineffective and incapable of accomplishing anything, stating, “authoritarianism is much better than what we have now, because now our leaders just talk a lot but don’t do anything”(Vinnytsia #11, 8/28/08). Another respondent in Vinnytsia told me, “democracy doesn’t bring anything good - it just brings chaos and fighting. Authoritarianism is a good thing if it’s the right kind of person, like what they have in Belarus. He’s a good *batka* [“papa”]. They keep the cities clean, their agricultural fields are productive. You look around here and we don’t have these things!”(Vinnytsia #3, 8/27/08).

Interestingly, this wasn’t the only respondent to speak positively of Lukashenko’s regime in Belarus. An ethnic Ukrainian living in Lviv remarked, “a guy like Lukashenko won’t allow corruption to flourish. If Belarus had democracy they wouldn’t be as well off as they are because there’s more corruption under democracy”(Lviv #5, 7/17/08). A 60 year-old woman in Donetsk with fond memories of the stability of the Brezhnev era complained, “everything the communists did, the ‘democrats’ undid and messed up: social services, economic development... People live well in Belarus, everything’s very clean”(Donetsk #15, 8/22/08). When asked about democracy and authoritarianism, a woman in Vinnytsia declared, “we need a strong leader and strict rules, just like Putin and Lukashenko. They have order in Russia and Belarus, but we have chaos in Ukraine”(Vinnytsia #12, 8/28/08).

The sharp criticism of democracy by citizens of a democratic regime was not confined to Ukraine, however. Similar beliefs associating democracy with instability, inefficiency, and disorder were expressed by interview subjects in Latvia, the most consistently democratic country represented in this comparative study.<sup>14</sup> One Russian woman living in Riga said

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<sup>14</sup>One might ask whether nationality has influenced the experience of democracy and therefore opinions



that under democracy there are “poor living conditions and nobody takes care of things. And there’s too much crime and disorder”(Riga #8, 9/10/08). A 48 year-old Latvian man echoed the sentiment, stating that under democracy there’s “disorder and a lack of control”(Riga #23, 9/12/08). A Belarusian woman living in Riga answered, “there are more minuses to democracy than plusses. People live badly under democracy”(Riga #3, 9/9/08). Another respondent, this one a 45 year-old Russian man, identified high unemployment as a defining feature of democracy (Riga #15, 9/11/08). One Latvian man was quite outspoken in his criticism: “Under democracy you can choose who f-s you. In a dictatorship they decide this for you”(Riga #14, 9/11/08). Though some expressed themselves more eloquently than this man, the theme of a difficult, unpleasant life under democracy was widespread among respondents of all nationalities in Latvia.

The inefficiency of the government under democracy and democracy’s inability to get things done was another common theme among interview subjects in Latvia. One young Latvian woman of 22 years who has known democracy for most of her life criticized the system, stating that “democracy slows down decision making”(Riga #4, 9/10/08). Another young Latvian, this one a man, echoed this critique: “Democracy has problems making decisions. Under authoritarianism it’s easier to get things done”(Riga #18, 9/11/08). A Latvian man of Jewish descent claimed “in democracy there’s disagreement and fighting. People can choose their leaders but it doesn’t help make things any better”(Riga #26, 9/12/08). Another Latvian agreed with this sentiment, complaining that “the government can’t make decisions easily” under democracy (Riga #22, 9/12/08). While some may consider this difficulty in making decisions and taking action a hidden virtue of democracy - for it implies the deliberation and consideration of multiple viewpoints - during interviews with subjects in Latvia, it was clear from their words and tone that they did not see

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about democracy in Latvia. In other words, might Russians in Latvia be more critical of democracy because they perceive themselves to be left out? It is a fair question, and there is no doubt that Russians have experienced democracy differently than Latvians in Latvia given the citizenship and language laws of post-Soviet Latvia. However, the interviews cited below suggest that Latvians are equally critical of democracy as Russians. Similarly, the quantitative results comparing the views of ethnic Russians to Latvians in Latvia in chapter 3 (figure 3.12 on page 128) show that while there are some residual differences between the two nationalities, they are fairly small. Thus, it will become apparent in the paragraphs below that democracy has left a bitter taste in the mouths of many in Latvia who have experienced it, Russians and Latvians alike.

inefficiency under democracy as a positive thing. Even one Latvian man with a somewhat more positive outlook told me, “more freedom is a good thing, but sometimes democracy has a hard time getting things done”(Riga #27, 9/12/08). In short, there is a widespread perception among the residents of Latvia that democracy simply doesn’t deliver what it promises in an efficient and effective manner.

Given their apparent disillusionment with democracy, it is not surprising that many interviewees in Latvia held positive connotations of authoritarian rule. One 53 year-old Latvian man said, “Authoritarianism isn’t always a good thing, but it’s stable. It means order and economic development. A strong leader would be good for Latvia - someone like Lukashenko with real guts would be good”(Riga #17, 9/11/08). A Russian respondent named “discipline” as the most important benefit of authoritarian rule (Riga #21, 9/12/08). Finally, one Latvian man looked back to Latvia’s own authoritarian past in the 1930s as an example for how Latvia should be run today, saying, “It was better when there was one president controlling everything, like [dictator Karlis] Ulmanis in the 1930s. That was the best time for Latvia”(Riga #25, 9/12/08).

Even democratic Latvia, the country that was perhaps most predisposed to supporting democratic rule given the historical and cultural factors discussed earlier in this work, has a populace that came to equate democracy with disorder, instability, inefficiency, and economic problems. Conversely, residents of Latvia have come to associate authoritarian rule with stability and order. Both cognitive associations are likely the result of the rocky economic transition that accompanied democratization in Latvia.

Thus, we find support for H1: *Citizens of post-Soviet states will display a strong association between democracy/democratization and conditions of economic hardship, hardship, instability, disorder, and chaos in the social, political, and especially economic realms.* As I will demonstrate below, the durability of these beliefs and their lasting influence on support for democracy and authoritarianism in the post-Soviet states has been a key factor in shaping regime preferences in the post-Soviet era. In the following section I elaborate the empirical strategy that I will use to evaluate the remaining hypotheses under consideration.

### 5.3 Empirical Strategy

The previous section demonstrated through the use of field interviews conducted in Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, and Latvia that the early 1990s were a traumatic period in the histories of these countries and in the lives of their citizens. When people were asked to recall what their lives were like during those early years of transition, they overwhelmingly recalled the poverty, unemployment, inflation, and general social and economic instability of that time. Furthermore, because that economic collapse was taking place concurrently with democratization in these countries, I argued that citizens formed a strong association between democracy and disorder. When interview subjects were asked to talk about the positive and negative characteristics of democracy, they were quick to point out the economic and social deficiencies of the 1990s as key characteristics of democracy. Conversely, many respondents attributed the opposite characteristics of order, stability, and better economic performance to authoritarian regimes. Despite the fact that citizens of all these countries have had different economic and regime development trajectories since the early 1990s, it is apparent that most respondents learned the same lesson and drew similar conclusions about democracy and authoritarianism: democracy goes hand in hand with instability and uncertainty, authoritarianism promises greater order and predictability. But what is perhaps more intriguing is the fact that these assumptions, formed early on during the most painful years of the post-Soviet transition, have remained strong to this day *despite* the fact that subsequent economic and political development has in certain cases presented evidence to the contrary. The reasons for the persistence of these beliefs were theorized above and will be discussed again during the presentation of the statistical results.

Before presenting those results, I will first lay out some of the empirical strategies that I will use to address the questions and concepts under consideration.

#### 5.3.1 The Effect of Economics: Measuring the Collapse

I have argued that the experience of economic collapse, combined with early experiences of democracy immediately following the collapse of the Soviet Union, left a deep

and lasting impact on people's beliefs about and preferences for democracy. In the section above, I presented qualitative evidence suggesting that the dual experience of economic collapse and democracy led individuals to develop a strong cognitive framework that associated democracy with disorder, instability, and chaos in the economic, social, and political realms. Based on these findings, I hypothesize that the severity or scale of the economic collapse matters in influencing people's beliefs about democracy and authoritarianism: people who experience more severe economic collapses during the early post-Soviet period should be more likely to be critical of democracy and more supportive of democracy today, regardless of more recent economic trajectories. This latter point bears further exposition: I argue that it is the severity of the shock of the *early* economic collapse that "locks in" people's beliefs about regime types. As shown above, the economic collapse of the early 1990s turned people's lives upside down, a shock powerful enough to drastically reshape and solidify their beliefs about the new democratic regimes that accompanied the collapse. So powerful was this reorientation and solidification that future information contradicting the assumption that democracy equals disorder was ignored or heavily discounted. This would suggest that economic trajectories *after* the initial post-Soviet collapse should not influence contemporary regime preferences as much as the early collapse trajectories did. In other words, one's views about democracy and authoritarianism today should be a function of the economic collapse of the early 1990s and *not* a function of the economic recoveries of the late 1990s-2000s that are seen in figures 5.1 - 5.5.

### Measuring Economic Indicators

In measuring the scale of the economic collapse and ensuing recovery, the first question that we must resolve is what indicators are most appropriate for measuring respondents' economic conditions. Individual or household-level measures are an obvious choice, given that we are working with individual-level survey data. However, such measures, whether inquiring about a family's average monthly income or their general household material situation, can be problematic when we ask respondents to report on their economic conditions of 15-17 year prior. While these measures are fairly reliable when asking about present con-

ditions, posing the same question to a respondent and asking her to evaluate her material conditions so far in the past risks random measurement error at best and potential bias at worst, depending on how people experienced the post-Soviet era.

Thus, we lack an individual-level measure of the experience of economic collapse that is objective and reliable.<sup>15</sup> What is necessary is an objectively measured indicator for economic conditions as measured by someone other than the survey respondent. Aggregate measures of economic conditions as measured by state agencies are the next logical source, for they at least provide measures that are independent of respondents' political and economic beliefs. However, they come at the cost of less cross-sectional variation and potential aggregation error. In other words, we do not have unique values for all 4,500 respondents; rather, we have values for however many aggregate units (country, oblast, etc.) exist. Furthermore, aggregate measures do not distinguish between the poorest and the richest in any particular geographical unit: all persons living within that unit are assigned the same value for their measures of macroeconomic conditions.

The logical way to address these shortcomings is to use aggregate data at the finest level available. Were that level the country-level, we would be left with only four values: measures of average monthly wages (for example) for Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, and Latvia. Fortunately, economic data for the period 1991-present is available at the oblast/regional level for each country. By using this subnational data, we increase the number of unique values to 80, the number of oblasts and regions that are represented in the national samples. Needless to say, this provides a much finer way of distinguishing between the economic experiences of individuals within each country while avoiding the possible issue of subjectivity of individual-level measures of economic experiences. Interestingly, Peffley, Feldman and Sigelman (1987) note that several investigations of economic voting have revealed that "changing personal financial circumstances affect voting decisions less than changing macroeconomic

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<sup>15</sup>One might be tempted to use individuals' assessment of stability in the country in the 1990s, as summarized in figure 5.6 as a predictor of regime preferences. However, this strategy is risky, given that it involves predicting subjective attitudes with potentially subjective (and biased) beliefs about the stability of the country in the 1990s. The potential for omitted variable bias and spurious correlation are too great to make such an approach worthwhile. Seeking objective predictors, even if less precise due to aggregations, is a preferable strategy.

conditions do”(108). While this study of regime preferences is perhaps a step removed from voting behavior, Peffley et al’s point suggests that there is a substantive reason for favoring the use of aggregate macroeconomic indicators as well.

Of course, even using subnational economic data isn’t without its drawbacks. First, there is again the issue of aggregation error. Although the situation is much improved by only aggregating to the oblast level instead of the country level, we are still assigning the same value to all individuals within a particular geographical area, regardless of how they personally experienced the economic transition and collapse. However, I argue that in fact it is not just individual experiences of collapse that are influential in shaping people’s regime preferences. Rather, it is the experience of society-wide economic hardship, in plain sight for all to see, that has a major influence on the conclusions people draw about democracy. It is not just a case of whether you as an individual became richer or poorer after the collapse of the Soviet Union, but the degree to which you *and everyone around you* were affected by the economic collapse. Thus, the oblast-level measure of economic collapse becomes a rather good indicator for the society-wide economic collapse that characterized the first several post-Soviet years.

Another potential drawback of measuring a person’s economic experiences in the past based on their current region of residence is the problem of internal migration. In other words, someone may have lived through the collapse in one region but is currently living in another. This respondent would be assigned the “economic history” of their present region, not the one that they actually lived in during the key formative years. Gathering the residential histories of respondents since 1991 was not possible, so again there is the potential for some random error due to migration. However, I would point out that this error should be fairly random as people move to and from various regions. In this case, the random measurement error would attenuate our statistical results toward zero; if we still find a significant effect, the real effect should be even larger. Furthermore, it should be noted that internal migration in the former Soviet states, while possible, is still nonetheless quite difficult and costly, making people less likely to leave their familial and social support structures in their native regions. Also, administrative barriers to relocation, while not

insurmountable, still present costly deterrents to the relocation and re-registration of one's place of residence.<sup>16</sup> While we cannot assert that internal migration is nonexistent, we can be confident in concluding that it does not occur on a scale that would render the statistical results invalid.

Once we conclude that regional-level economic indicators are the best compromise for establishing the economic experience to which individuals were exposed, the next question is which indicator is preferable to use. Here the decision is driven partly by practical concerns and partly by theoretical considerations. I have elected to use regional average monthly wages as the base indicator for economic experiences in Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, and Latvia.<sup>17</sup> This was a practical decision, as the regional-level wage data was nearly complete for all regions of all countries from 1991 until the present.<sup>18</sup> The same could not be said for regional-level GDP per capita data, which was not available from published sources for the entire post-Soviet time period in all countries and regions. Not surprisingly, significant portions of the series were missing from the 1990s. Thus, I preferred to use the more complete wage data rather than incomplete GDP per capita data.

There is also an argument to be made that average wage levels are the theoretically

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<sup>16</sup>While significantly scaled back from its Soviet-era form, the *propiska* (registration) system still exists in some form in many post-Soviet countries, including Belarus, Ukraine, and Russia. Residents are required to have a permanent or temporary registration of residence wherever they reside. Failure to have a registration stamp in one's internal passport is considered a punishable offense. Most social services such as medical care, education, and pensions are based on an individual's registered place of residence, as are voting rights and even one's eligibility to work legally. Often, gaining a new registration in a new city is not as simple as just re-registering with the local authorities. Certain cities, particularly Moscow, are known for their difficulty in obtaining registration and the necessity of paying bribes. Thus, the modern incarnation of the *propiska* system still presents significant barriers to internal migration in many countries (author's interview with Dr. Andrei Bochkarev, 5/5/10).

<sup>17</sup>*Regiony Rossii: Statisticheskii Sbornik* (1998, 2000); *Regiony Rossii. Sotsialno-Ekonomicheskie Pokazateli* (2002); *Regiony Rossii. Sotsial'no-Ekonomicheskie Pokazateli; Statisticheskii Sbornik* (2004, 2006, 2008); *Statisticheskii Ezhegodnik Respubliki Belarus* (1997); *Regiony Respubliki Belarus : Statisticheskii Sbornik* (2002); *Statisticheskii Ezhegodnik Respubliki Belarus* (2003); *Regiony Respubliki Belarus : Statisticheskii Sbornik* (2007); *Narodne Hospodarstvo Ukraïny 1993* (1994); *Statistical Information* (2009); *Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania 1991* (1991); *Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania 1993* (1995); *The Baltic States, Comparative Statistics* (1997); *Latvijas Statistika* (2008)

<sup>18</sup>The exception was Latvia, where regional-level wage data was missing for the years 1991-2000. Regional wage levels for those years were multiply imputed based on national average wage levels from 1991-2007 and regional wage levels from 2001-2007. Examination of the regional-level imputations revealed imputed values that were consistent with national-level trends during the 1990s and regional-level trends during the 2000s. In other words, imputations did not produce any sharp outliers, suggesting that we can be quite confident in the accuracy of the imputations.

preferable indicator for economic conditions, as they more closely represent the channels through in which economic crisis affects ordinary people. That is, wage levels measure the average amount of disposable income available to families in a given month, which is directly tied to their quality of life. GDP per capita, by contrast, does not always accurately capture the economic conditions faced by citizens, particularly in areas wealthy in natural resources but where the benefits of those resources do reach residents' pockets. Such is often the case in many parts of Russia. Thus, wages remain the better way to measure how economic conditions affect the lives of ordinary citizens.

### Capturing the Collapse

In order to observe how the scale of economic collapse in the early post-Soviet era solidified regime preferences and shapes them to this day, we must first delineate the temporal boundaries of the early transition period and make calculations using regional wage data for the appropriate period. One possibility is to define a somewhat atheoretical and admittedly arbitrary time period - five years after the collapse of the USSR, for example - and calculate how each region's wage levels have changed. While there are legitimate reasons to expect that views about regimes would become solidified during this time period, it is difficult to justify five years as opposed to, say, four or six years.

Taking a more theoretical approach, I seek to capture the time period in which people were experiencing both economic collapse and a relatively "complete" experience with democracy. The latter condition is intended to select an appropriate amount of time for individuals to have experienced early democracy, participated in national elections, and seen the outcomes of their participation. This period, the "first exposure" to democracy, in conjunction with economic collapse, is the time period that we wish to capture.

I define the "transition period" as the period from 1991 until two years after a country's first post-Soviet presidential election. Importantly, each of these first elections was generally considered to have been consistent with democratic principles.<sup>19</sup> Thus, they were

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<sup>19</sup>See Hyde and Marinov (2010) and Hyde (2010*a,b*). Because use of the term "free and fair" elections has fallen out of favor among scholars and observers, Hyde codes whether a particular election was criticized by international observers. In her dataset the early presidential elections in Russia (1996), Belarus (1994),



an opportunity for post-Soviet citizens to exercise their democratic right to elect their leaders in legitimate elections, and evaluate the results of the democratic process. Using this standard for defining the length of the key transition time period in which views about regimes become solidified, each country has a slightly different transition period. All countries' transition period (as per the definition I've used) begins in 1991 and end as follows: Russia - 1998 (presidential election in 1996); Belarus - 1996 (election in 1994); Ukraine - 1996 (election in 1994); Latvia - 1995 (election in 1993).<sup>20</sup>

We are therefore interested in measuring the economic dynamics throughout each country during these transition periods in an attempt to capture the severity of the economic collapse that took place during that time. As explained above, I use oblast/regional-level data measuring average monthly wages (which are reported annually in official statistical sources). In order to measure the severity of the collapse, I calculate the variable "transition econ collapse" (TEC) using the following formula, where  $wage_{1991}$  is an oblast's average monthly wage in 1991, and  $wage_{endyear}$  is the oblast's average monthly wage at the end of the defined transition period:<sup>21</sup>

$$TEC = 1 - \frac{wage_{endyear}}{wage_{1991}} \quad (5.1)$$

The fraction  $\frac{wage_{endyear}}{wage_{1991}}$  is subtracted from 1 (one) in order to assist with the intuitive interpretation of statistical results: *higher values* of the "transition econ collapse" variable correspond with a *more severe* economic collapse in a given oblast. Values greater than zero indicate that real wages in 1996 (to use Ukraine's transition ending year as an example)

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and Latvia (1993) are coded as having not been criticized. The Ukrainian presidential election of 1994 was criticized by some observers, while the 1994 parliamentary election was not. Indeed, there are scholarly disagreements over the degree to which the 1994 Ukrainian presidential election lived up to democratic standards. For contrasting views, see Kuzio (1996) and Way (2004). While there were irregularities during the electoral process, what is most important to consider when weighing the democraticness of the election is the fact that the incumbent was defeated at the ballot box and power was transferred peacefully to the challenger. As such, I tend to side with the argument that the 1994 Ukrainian elections were a more or less democratic exercise for the people of Ukraine.

<sup>20</sup>In fact, the statistical results and the conclusions derived from them do not change significantly when a fixed period of five years is used to delimit the early transition period as opposed to the approach described here.

<sup>21</sup>As noted above, this transition "endpoint" is marked in 1998 for Russia, 1996 for Belarus, 1996 for Ukraine, and 1995 for Latvia.

were lower than they had been in 1991: the country experienced a more severe collapse. Values less than zero indicate that real wages in 1996 were higher than they were in 1991: the country experienced a less severe collapse, followed by an increase in wages that brought it above 1996 levels. Finally a value equal to zero would indicate that real wages in 1996 matched their 1991 levels: wages remained level during that period, or (as was more likely), wages declined initially but had returned to 1991 levels within a few years. Again, to emphasize the point, the variable is scaled so that *higher positive values indicate a more severe economic collapse, whereas negative values indicate a less severe collapse*.

This calculation therefore gives us a measure of the severity of the economic collapse experienced within a particular oblast during the first several years of independence and transition. As there were 80 oblasts/regions sampled across Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, and Latvia, we have 80 unique values for the transition collapse variable, a count that is far preferable to a possible 4 unique values had we calculated economic collapse at the national level. These oblast-level measures of the severity of the economic collapse are then matched to individual survey respondents depending on the oblast in which they live.

Summary statistics of the “transition econ collapse” variable for each country (including mean, minimum, and maximum) are shown in figure 5.8.

Because higher positive values indicate a more severe economic collapse, figure 5.8 tells us that on average, oblasts in Ukraine experienced the most severe collapse in wage levels from 1991-1996 (mean = 0.55). This is followed by Russia, whose collapse in wages from 1991-1998 was on average somewhat less severe (mean = 0.41). The collapse in Belarus from 1991-1996 was slightly milder (mean = 0.30). Finally, the *negative* value for Latvia (mean = -0.19) indicates that on average, wages in Latvia’s regions recovered from their initial steep decline and by 1995 had exceeded their 1991 levels.

Since my argument states that the severity of the initial economic shock in the early transition period “locks in” a lasting effect on individuals’ regime preferences that is evident long after the initial shock, it will also be necessary to control for the economic trends in a given oblast from the end of the transition period until the present day. In other words, how has the economy performed in the post-transition period? If we can show statistically

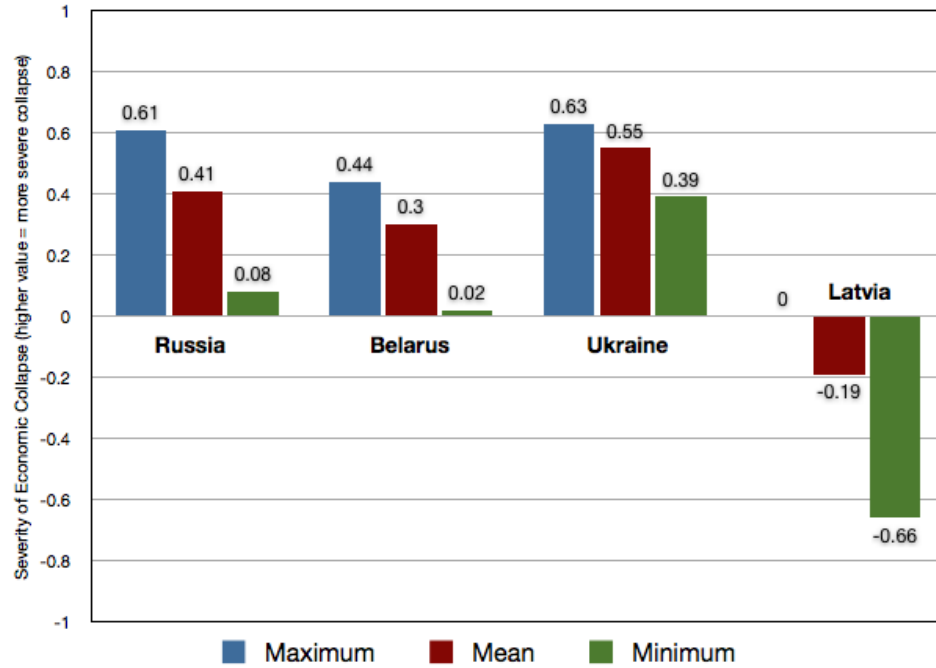


Figure 5.8: Summary statistics of "transition econ collapse" variable by country

using regression analyses of survey data that it is the economic collapse of the transition period that explains contemporary beliefs about democracy and authoritarianism and *not* the economic recovery of later years, then we will have provided evidence in support of the hypothesis that the initial trauma of economic collapse left an enduring mark on the regime preferences of post-Soviet citizens.

For reasons of consistency, this “post-transition econ” (PTE) variable is calculated using a similar formula as for the transition economic collapse variable:

$$PTE = 1 - \frac{wage_{2007}}{wage_{endyear}} \quad (5.2)$$

As will be seen when the statistical results are presented, the scale of the economic recovery (measured through the “post-transition econ” variable) fails to provide any explanatory power in any of the models. In other words, citizens’ views about democracy and authoritarianism are not seriously influenced by the macroeconomic performance of the last 10-15 years. Rather, we will see that it is the scale of the initial economic collapse that predicts

attitudes about regimes today. For this reason and to save space, I refrain from presenting summary statistics for the “post-transition econ” variable here. Readers can infer the dynamics of countries’ economic recoveries in the late 1990s and 2000s by returning to figures 5.1 - 5.5.

### 5.3.2 Measuring Regime Experiences and Exposure to Democracy

Having established the variables that I will use to measure respondents’ economic experiences following the Soviet collapse in 1991, I now turn to the measures that will capture an individual’s regime experiences and his exposure to democracy. Such measures are necessary, as I have hypothesized that it is in fact those individuals with the *greatest* experience with democracy in the post-Soviet period who become the most critical of democracy over time. Having concluded that democracy equals chaos, disorder, and economic hardship based on their own traumatic experiences and the experiences of those around them, individuals develop a cognitive framework that is resistant to updating. I also argue that once this framework is set, individuals are likely to ignore disconfirming information in the future while accepting confirming information. In other words, while conditions may improve later on, democracy will not get the credit for the improvement thanks to the strength of the prior belief that democracy equals disorder. However, future instability and turmoil - even that that is normal for a democratic polity and a liberal market economy - may be taken as further evidence of democracy’s shortcomings. Thus, the people who have the greatest experience with democracy and who have seen the most of it - especially its downsides - will, I hypothesize, become more critical of democracy than those living in more authoritarian regimes who lack additional “data” about democracy.

It therefore becomes necessary to measure an individual’s regime experiences and exposure to democracy. Here we encounter a familiar problem: because regime types are more or less a national-level characteristic, we have at our disposal only 4 unique values for regime type for all 4,500 survey respondents - one value for each country. Unlike the case of economic trends, it is not really possible (or necessarily logical) to create subnational measures of regime type, thus limiting the variation on the independent variable that we

desire for statistical precision.

However, we must recognize that not all individuals within a given country have the same regime experiences: an 85 year-old woman in Russia who lived during Stalin's rule has no doubt had a different set of regime experiences across her lifetime than a 22 year-old who was born the year Gorbachev came to power. Although these two individuals have lived under the same regime type since 1985, we must acknowledge that their regime experiences and resulting exposure to democracy are different.

This discussion suggests that what is required is a measure of an individual's regime experiences (IRE) that takes into account both cross-national variation between countries as well as the variation that is the result of an individual's age. To do so, I use the following equation:

$$IRE = \frac{1}{z - y} \sum_{i=y}^z PolityIV_{ij} \quad (5.3)$$

In this equation,  $i$  denotes a given year,  $j$  is the country in which a respondent lives,  $y$  is a respondent's year of birth, and  $z$  is the year for which we wish to calculate an individual's regime experience score. The quantity  $(z - y)$  therefore equals an individual's age in the year for which the regime experience score is being calculated.

Expressed in words, the individual regime experiences (IRE) score is the average PolityIV score in a respondent's country of residence from their year of birth ( $y$ ) until the current year or other earlier reference year ( $z$ ). For example, consider a man who in 2007 is 60 years old ( $z - y$ ) and lives in Russia ( $j$ ). Having been born in 1947 ( $y$ ), his individual regime experience (IRE) score in 2007 ( $z$ ) would be calculated as follows:

$$IRE_{2007} = \frac{PolityIV_{1947:USSR} + PolityIV_{1948:USSR} + ... PolityIV_{2007:Russia}}{(2007 - 1947)} \quad (5.4)$$

We can also calculate an individual's regime experience score in a reference year other than the current year. In other words, what was an individual's accumulated regime experience in 1991, for example? This calculation would take the following form:

$$IRE_{1991} = \frac{PolityIV_{1947:USSR} + PolityIV_{1948:USSR} + \dots PolityIV_{1991:Russia}}{(1991 - 1947)} \quad (5.5)$$

Thus, this method allows us to calculate an individual's accumulated experience with regime types, as measured by country-level PolityIV scores each year, for any given year during their lifetime. It is no accident that the reference years of 2007 and 1991 were used as examples above. The value calculated for individuals as of 1991 represents their accumulated regime experience at the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union. Since all respondents in my sample were citizens of the Soviet Union, their scores vary only by age based on changes in the Soviet Union's PolityIV scores over time. The value calculated for individuals in the year that the survey was taken therefore takes into account respondents' experiences with democracy and authoritarianism in the post-Soviet era. Having calculated a person's accumulated regime experience in 2007 and that same person's regime experience in 1991, we can then calculate the difference:

$$\Delta IRE = IRE_{2007} - IRE_{1991} \quad (5.6)$$

This difference between a person's regime experiences in 1991 and 2007 ( $\Delta IRE$ ) is thus a measure of a person's regime experiences in the post-Soviet period. Because the PolityIV scale ranges from -10 (authoritarian) to 10 (democratic), higher positive values for  $\Delta IRE$  (referred to in the regression tables as "post-1991 dem experience") indicate greater experience with and exposure to democracy after 1991. Conversely, lower positive values or negative values indicate less experience with democracy (and greater experience with authoritarianism) after 1991.

Summary statistics by country for our measure of post-1991 regime experience are presented in figure 5.9.

As expected, residents of Latvia have the highest scores on average (country mean=5.79), reflecting their greater experience with and exposure to democracy since 1991. Residents of Ukraine have a slightly lower average (country mean=5.17), a fact that recognizes that Ukraine too has hewn a fairly democratic path since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

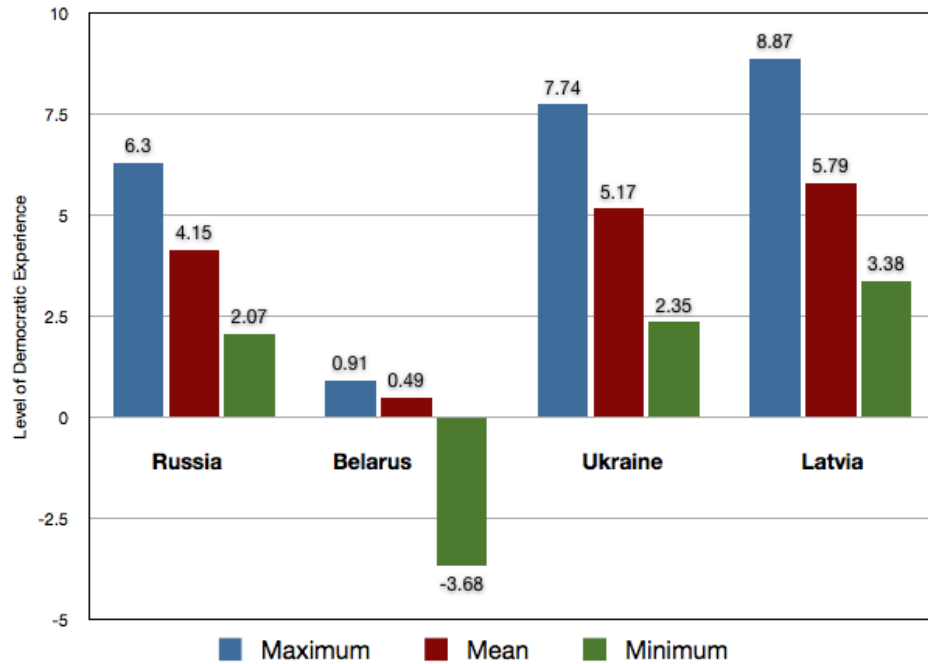


Figure 5.9: Average Democratic Experience (individual), 1991-2007, by country

Russia's mixed path between democracy and authoritarianism is reflected in the lower average score among its citizens (country mean=4.15), while the dictatorship of Alexander Lukashenko in Belarus accounts for Belarusians' average score of 0.49. These statistics reflect what we observed in figure 5.7: residents of Latvia and Ukraine have had the greatest experience with democracy, whereas residents of Russia have somewhat less experience with democracy. Belarusian citizens have the least experience with democracy in the post-Soviet era.

This measure of individuals' post-1991 regime experience is thus the result of variation across the four countries under consideration and variation among individuals based on their age. This allows us to meet the goal set at the outset of this section: 1) to develop a measure of an individual's experience with democracy and authoritarianism that provides more variation (and more unique values) than simply using four country-level measures of regime type; and 2) to develop a measure of regime experiences in the post-Soviet period that takes into account the "weight of the past." Because individual regime experience

(IRE) scores are an average of PolityIV scores across an individual's lifetime, the marginal ability of another year to move an individual's IRE score declines with each successive year. In other words, an additional year of democracy will move an 80 year-old's lifetime average less than it will move a 20 year-old's average. For an 80 year-old citizen of Latvia, 17 years of democracy is but a fraction of her lifetime experience with various regimes, but for the 20 year-old, democracy is practically the only regime type he knows. In this example, the 20 year-old Latvian will therefore have a larger IRE score than the 80 year-old Latvian. While their exposure to democracy (in years living under democracy) may be equal at 17 years, democracy has constituted a much higher percentage of the 20 year-old's life than it has for the 80 year-old. Thus, the 20 year-old's higher IRE score signals the fact that he has had more life experience with democracy (as a percentage of his life) and less experience with authoritarianism than the 80 year-old, who spent most of her life under authoritarianism.

In section 5.4, I will present statistical evidence from the surveys that suggests that those with larger  $\Delta IRE$  scores (greater exposure to democracy post-1991) are more critical of democracy than those who have had less experience with democracy during that time. Because our measures of regime experiences are constructed based on an individual's age and because we know from the previous chapter that age and generations have an independent effect on shaping preferences for democracy and authoritarianism, it may be confusing to reconcile the various age-related influences. In the regressions that follow, I control for age while including the measure of post-1991 regime experience. The results will show that people with greater democratic experience post-1991 are more critical of democracy while controlling for age. Analytically, we can imagine two people of the same age with different regime experiences - one who has lived in Latvia and had more experience with democracy and one who has lived in Belarus and had little experience with democracy. Paradoxically but consistent with my theory, the resident of Latvia will be much more critical of democracy than the resident of Belarus. I will return to this theme below.



### 5.3.3 Independent and Dependent Variables

The two key independent variables that interest us - the scope of the early post-Soviet economic collapse and individuals' regime experience since 1991 - have been discussed in great detail above. In the regression tables that appear in the appendix to this chapter, these variables appear as "transition econ collapse" and "post-1991 dem experience," respectively. I also control for an individual's regime experience score in 1991 ("pre-1991 dem experience"). In order to measure the effect of economic growth after the initial collapse, I include the variable "post-transition econ," which was described above as well. A current household measures of material situation (centered by their oblast means) is also included: "material sit. early 1990s."<sup>22</sup> Summary statistics for these variables appear in the statistical appendix of this chapter. Additional controls for employment status, urbanization, gender, age, and education are also included.

The dependent variables to be analyzed below, already familiar to readers, are given in table 5.1. Summary statistics for these variables appear in the statistical appendix of this chapter.

Using these survey questions as dependent variables, along with the key independent variables discussed above will allow us to evaluate the remaining hypotheses under consideration, the task to which we turn in the next section.

## 5.4 Results and Discussion

Full regression results of the models analyzed and discussed here can be found in tables 5.8-5.11, which appear in the statistical appendix to this chapter on pages 294-297.

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<sup>22</sup>This is measured using the following question: Tell me, please, to which of the following categories would you refer your household income in the last month? Answer categories: 1) We're unable to obtain even food; 2) We can obtain food, but getting clothes is a serious problem; 3) We can obtain food and clothes. But it's a problem to get durable household appliances; 4) We can obtain durable household appliances. But we can't get a car ; 5) We can obtain almost everything, excluding an apartment or country house; 6) We don't have problems obtaining anything. We can get everything. These measures of household material conditions are deviated from the oblast mean. This serves two important purposes: first, it reduces collinearity between the individual-level and macro-level measures of economic development. Second, it rescales values so that they represent one's situation relative to others within the same oblast. This makes sense, as one's point of reference is more likely to be others nearby rather than across the entire nation.

Table 5.1: Table of Dependent Variables

Question	Answer Set
Q21. Democracy may have problems but is better than other forms of government	1) strongly disagree; 2) disagree; 3) agree; 4) strongly agree
Q22. In democracy the economic system runs badly	
Q23. Democracies are indecisive and have too much squabbling	
Q24. Democracies aren't good at maintaining order	
Q26. Authoritarian rule is more decisive and gets things done	
Q27. Under authoritarian rule the economic system is more stable	
Q30. Sometimes it's better to have less democracy in order to have more stability in the country.	
Q5. Please rate the current political system of government in our country on a 10-point scale	1 = very bad, 10 = very good
TOOFREE. There is too much freedom in the country	1 = agree, 0 = disagree
TOOWEAK. The state is too weak	

As in previous chapters, here I will present graphs of predicted probabilities in which the key independent variables of interest are varied in order to display graphically the effect they have on the dependent variable.<sup>23</sup> In the figures that follow, I focus on two variables and the effect that they have on beliefs about democracy and authoritarianism. The first is the severity of the economic collapse that was experienced in each country in the early 1990s. This variable, which appears in regression tables as “transition econ collapse” is varied along the x axis of figures 5.10-5.19. As was discussed in section 5.3, this variable is scaled so that higher values (on the right hand side of the x axis) indicate a *more severe* economic collapse; lower values (on the left hand side of the axis) indicate a *mild* economic collapse. In the figures below, I vary the scale of the economic collapse from the minimum observed value (least severe) to the maximum observed value (most severe).

The second variable of interest that is allowed to vary in the figures below is an individual’s experience with democracy in the post-Soviet period (post-1991 dem experience). This variable, described in section 5.3, captures a person’s regime experiences since 1991, with higher values representing a person who has had greater experience with and exposure to democracy (as a fraction of their lifetime) from 1991 to the present. In figures 5.10-5.19 I plot two lines: one is the predicted probability for a person who has very high experience with democracy;<sup>24</sup> the second line is the predicted probability for a person how has very low experience with democracy.<sup>25</sup> The y axis of figures 5.10-5.16 and figures 5.18-5.19 measure the predicted probability that a respondent would agree or strongly agree with the statement expressed in the dependent variable. In figure 5.17 the y axis measures a respondent’s predicted rating of the system of government on a 1-10 scale (q5). Q5 is also the only model where the economic collapse variable is interacted with the democratic experience variable, for reasons that will be explained below.

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<sup>23</sup>In this chapter, the key independent variables that will be varied in the calculation of predicted probabilities are those measuring the scale of the economic collapse in the early 1990s (transition econ collapse) and an individual’s exposure to democracy since 1991 (post-1991 dem experience). The remaining continuous control variables (pre-1991 dem experience, post-transition econ, age, and education) are held at their sample means. Dichotomous control variables (unemployed, urban, and male) are held constant at values representing an employed female city dweller.

<sup>24</sup>This is calculated using the maximum observed value of “post-1991 dem experience” in the data set.

<sup>25</sup>This is calculated using the minimum observed value of “post-1991 dem experience” in the data set.

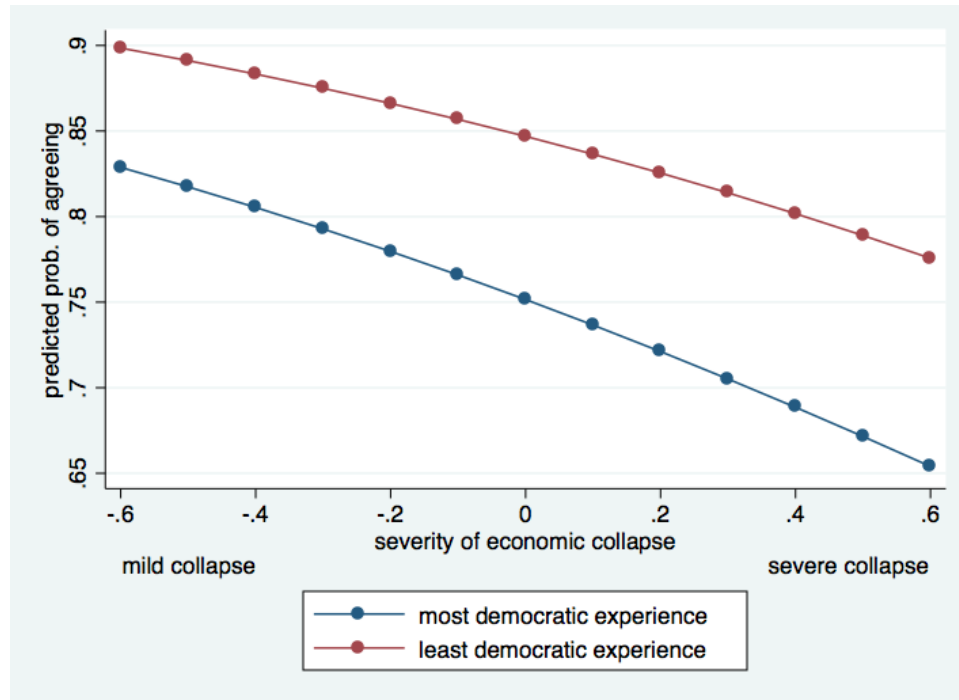


Figure 5.10: Q21 - Democracy may have problems but is better than other forms of government.

By presenting the results in this fashion, it is easy to observe the effect of the two key variable we're interested in: the slopes of the plotted lines tell us what effect the scale of the early economic collapse has on beliefs about democracy and authoritarianism for citizens with both high and low experience with and exposure to democracy. Similar, by observing the vertical distance between the plotted lines, we can see how an individual's first-hand experience with democracy affects his preferences for democracy and authoritarianism.

#### 5.4.1 The Effect of the Post-Soviet Economic Collapse

Using qualitative evidence from field interviews in section 5.2, I made the case in favor of H1: *citizens of post-Soviet states will display a strong association between democracy/democratization and conditions of economic hardship, hardship, instability, disorder, and chaos in the social, political, and especially economic realms.* This was apparent in respondents' open-ended comments about their experiences under democracy and their an-

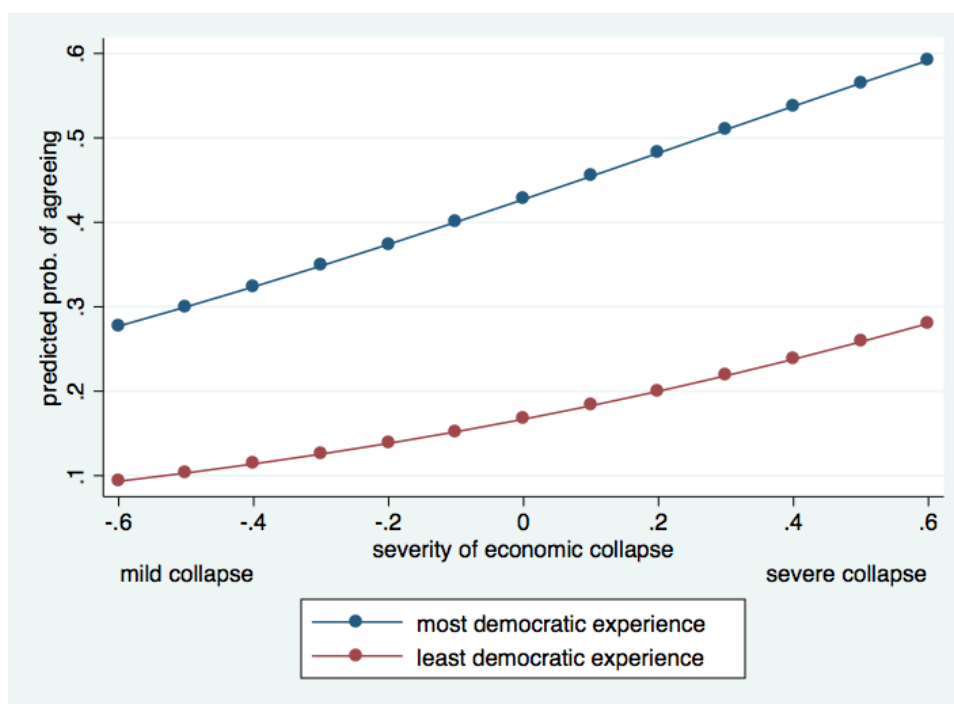


Figure 5.11: Q22 - In democracy the economic system runs badly.

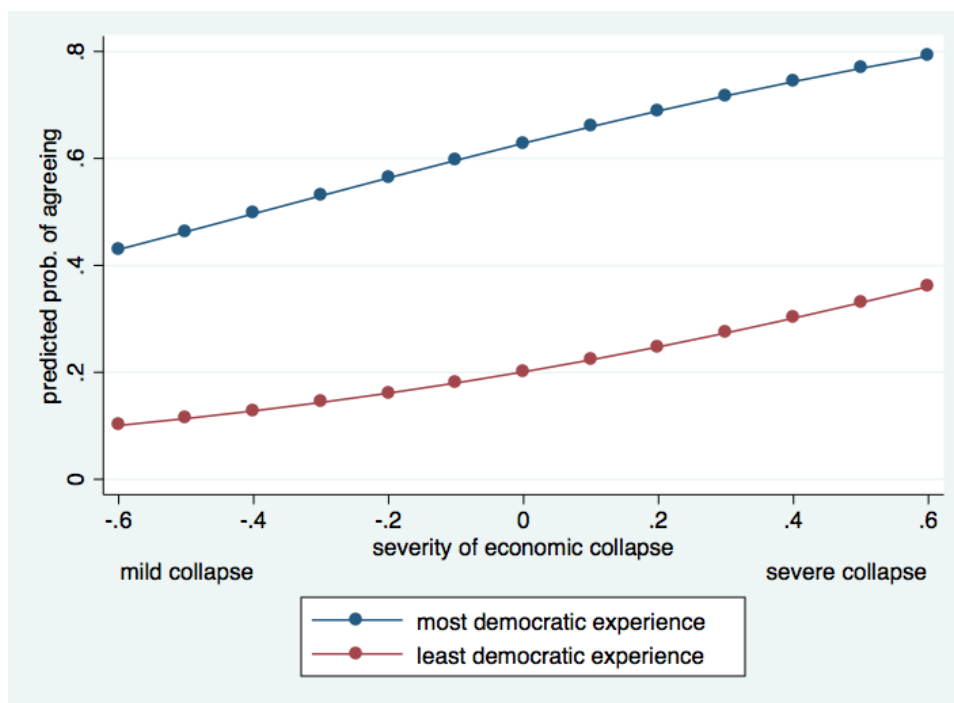


Figure 5.12: Q23 - Democracies are indecisive and have too much squabbling.

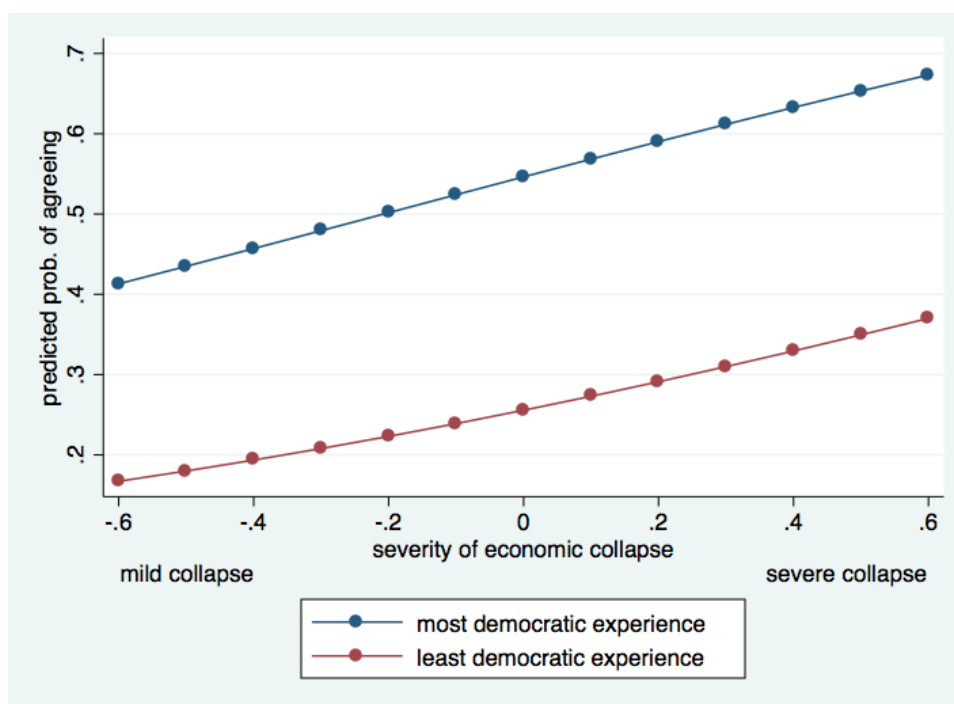


Figure 5.13: Q24 - Democracies aren't good at maintaining order.

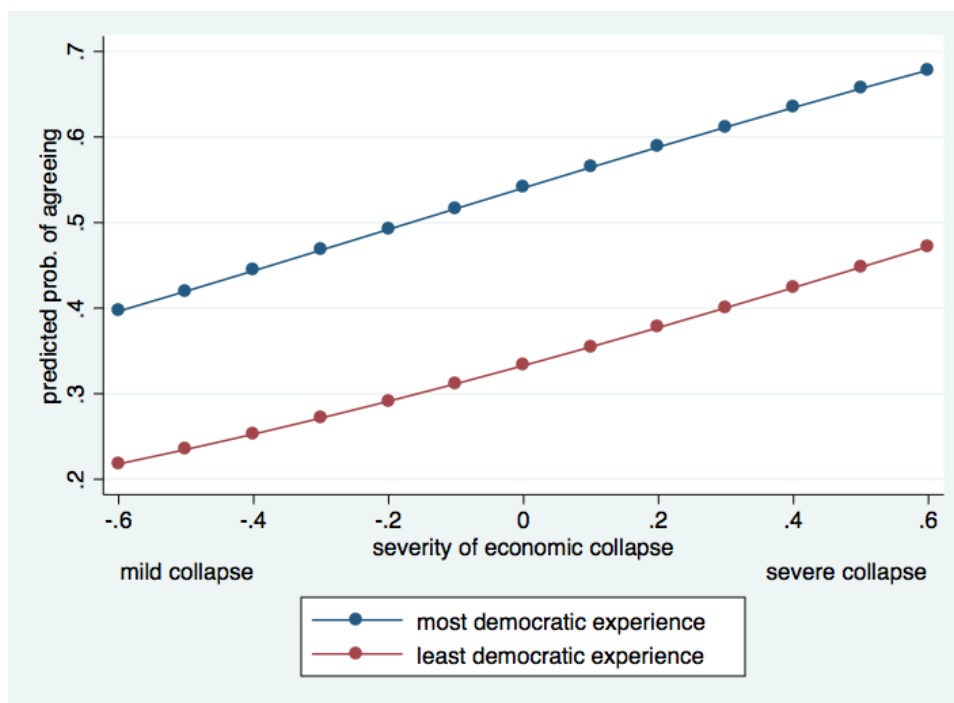


Figure 5.14: Q26 - Authoritarian rule is more decisive and gets things done.

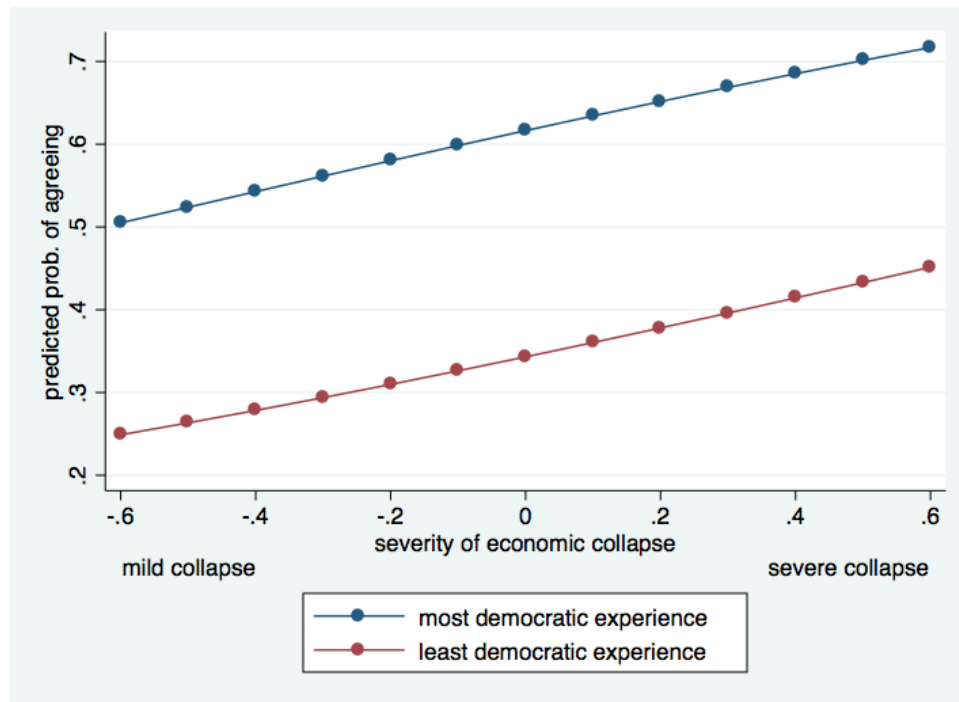


Figure 5.15: Q27 - Under authoritarian rule the economic system is more stable.

swers to my request for the “good and bad things that come along with democracy.” For citizens of the post-Soviet space, democracy was inseparable from the hardship brought about by the dual political transition and economic collapse.

This point is also reflected in figures 5.10-5.19, which display the link between beliefs about democracy and economic collapse early in the post-Soviet period. These figures also provide strong support for H2: *the more severe the economic collapse experienced by an individual in the early 1990s, the more critical of democracy she will be today. Similarly, a more severe economic collapse under democracy will make individuals less critical of authoritarian rule.* The severity of the early post-Soviet economic collapse (transition econ collapse) is a statistically significant predictor of regime attitudes for nearly all of the dependent variables; in the two cases where it fails to reach significance, it is close to significance and the coefficient is in the expected direction (see tables 5.8-5.11 in the appendix).

The results are unambiguous: the scale of the economic collapse you experienced in the aftermath of the dissolution of the Soviet Union affects what you believe about

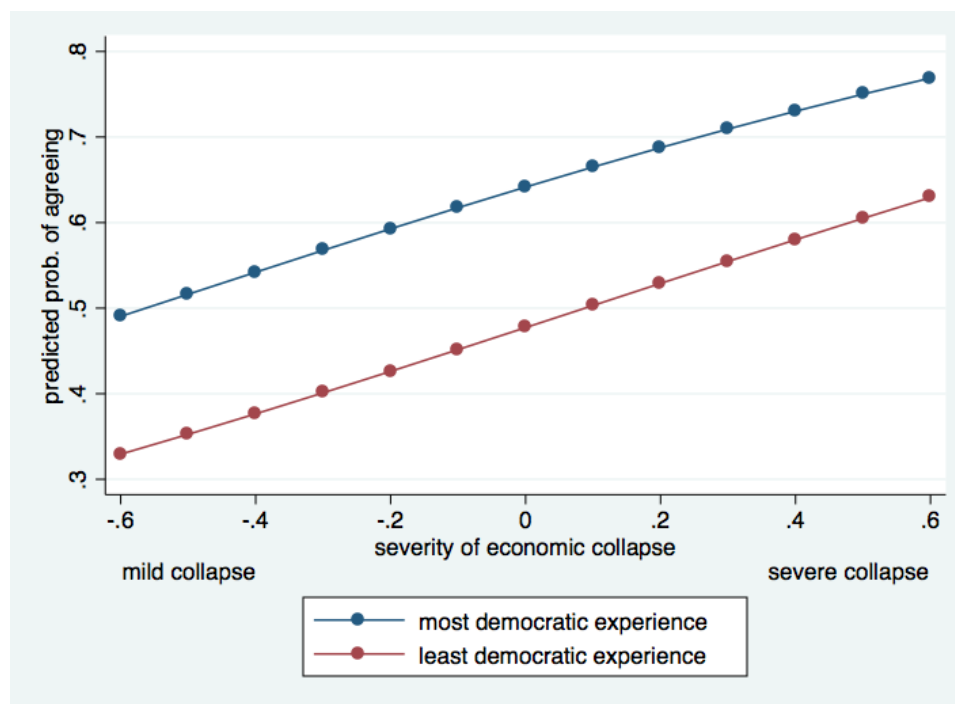


Figure 5.16: Q30 - Sometimes it's better to have less democracy in order to have more stability in the country.

democracy today. Relative to those who experienced mild collapses in the early 1990s, individuals experiencing severe collapses are less likely to agree that “democracy is better than other forms of government” (q21, figure 5.10). Similarly, they are more likely to agree that “in democracy the economy runs badly” (q22, figure 5.11), that “democracies are indecisive and there’s too much squabbling” (q23, figure 5.12) and that “democracies are not good at maintaining order” (q24, figure 5.13). In short, people who experienced severe economic collapse in the early 1990s are much more critical of democracy today than those who experienced milder economic contractions.

Such individuals are also more sympathetic to authoritarianism. Experiencing a severe economic collapse back then makes an individual today more likely to agree that “authoritarian regimes are more decisive and get things done” (q26, figure 5.14) and that “sometimes it’s better to have less democracy in order to have more stability in the country” (q30, figure 5.16). While q27 (“under authoritarianism the economy is more stable,”



figure 5.15) falls short of statistical significance, the direction and size of the coefficient are consistent with expectations. These results therefore suggest that those individuals who experienced more severe economic collapses in the early post-Soviet years are more sympathetic to authoritarian rule today.

One characteristic of the graphs presented here that may seem puzzling are the relatively parallel lines for individuals with high and low levels of democratic experience. While I will discuss the way in which exposure to democracy has shaped regime preferences in greater detail below, it is best to briefly address the puzzle of parallel lines here. Why might we expect these lines to *not* be parallel in these figures? Simply because citizens of authoritarian regimes might blame economic collapse on authoritarianism, not on democracy. In other words, a severe economic collapse might not necessarily make a citizen of an authoritarian regime more critical of democracy. In fact, it might even make her more critical of authoritarianism and sympathetic toward democracy. In that case, the line representing those who have little democratic experience (who are living in an authoritarian regime) would have a slope with the opposite sign of the line representing those living in more democratic regimes.<sup>26</sup>

And yet the lines are parallel: severe economic collapse in the early 1990s makes people more critical of democracy, even those living in authoritarian regimes. Why? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to recall that all four countries under study had elements of liberalization that were labeled “democratization” during the early 1990s, precisely during the period of the economic collapse. Thus, even Belarusians got a taste of “democracy” alongside catastrophic economic performance prior to the rise of the Belarusian

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<sup>26</sup> Rephrased in the language of statistical analysis, we might expect a significant interaction term between the scale of the economic collapse and one’s regime experiences in the post-Soviet period. In fact, this hypothesis was tested and an interaction term was added to the models presented in this chapter. In most cases the interaction term was jointly significant with its component variables, indicating a difference between how economic collapse affects citizens of democratic and authoritarian regimes. However, the scale of the interaction term was exceedingly small. In other words, even when the interaction term was accounted for, the plotted lines of predicted probabilities were virtually parallel. For the sake of simplicity, the interaction term was dropped from the model, as it did not lend additional explanatory power. The interaction term was preserved in three instances where its scale was large enough to make a more substantively significant difference. The model for q5, presented in table 5.10 and figure 5.17 includes the interactive effect. The remaining models with interaction effects evaluate individuals’ attitudes toward opposition political parties and independent media and are discussed in the concluding chapter.

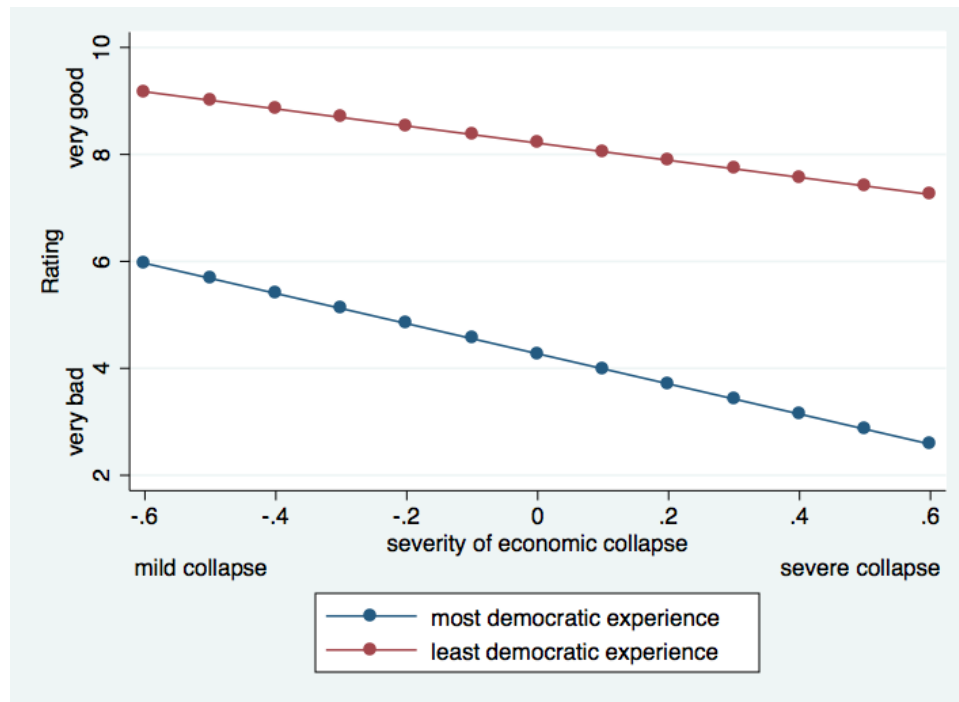


Figure 5.17: Q5 - Please rate the current political system of government in our country on a 10-point scale (10=very good, 1=very bad).

dictator, Alexander Lukashenko. Consistent with my theory that these “first impressions” were sticky, they seem to hold even for those who have had relatively little experience with democracy since then. An interesting counterfactual would be a post-Soviet country that experience economic collapse but no liberalization or democratization during that the period of collapse; in such a case we would certainly expect different dynamics between economic collapse and democratic support. Countries in Central Asia seem to meet these criteria and would thus make informative cases for future research on this point.

In figure 5.17 I present respondents’ predicted rating of their current system of government. Because the system government they currently have is not necessarily the system under which they experienced the collapse, I include an interaction effect between democratic experience and economic collapse (see footnote 26 on page 274 of this chapter). The regression results in table 5.10 show that democratic experience and the transition economic collapse are statistically significant, and are jointly significant with the interaction

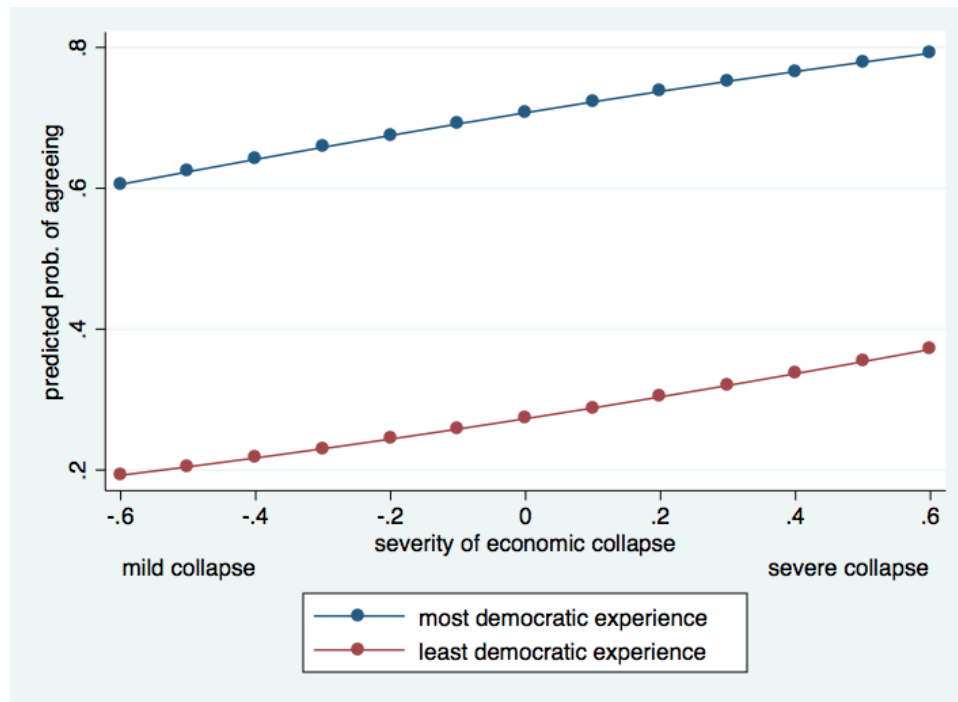


Figure 5.18: TOOFREE - There is too much freedom in the country.

term. We would expect the line representing those living in authoritarian regimes today (who have the least democratic experience) to be relatively flat - the initial collapse, which took place under a more liberal regime shouldn't be held against the current authoritarian regime. In fact, the line in figure 5.17 representing authoritarian citizens slopes downward, but only slightly so. By contrast, the line representing those who have the most experience with democracy and live in democracies today has a noticeably steeper slope: for those individuals who have lived under democracy during most of the post-Soviet period, a more severe initial economic collapse has made them more critical of their system of government even to this day.

Finally, we see in figures 5.18 and 5.19 that the scale of the economic collapse has a modest effect on people's views about freedom and state strength, with a more severe collapse predicting an attitude that "there is too much freedom in the country" and that "the state is too weak." Far more stunning, however, is the wide gap between those who have high democratic experience and those who have low democratic experience, which will

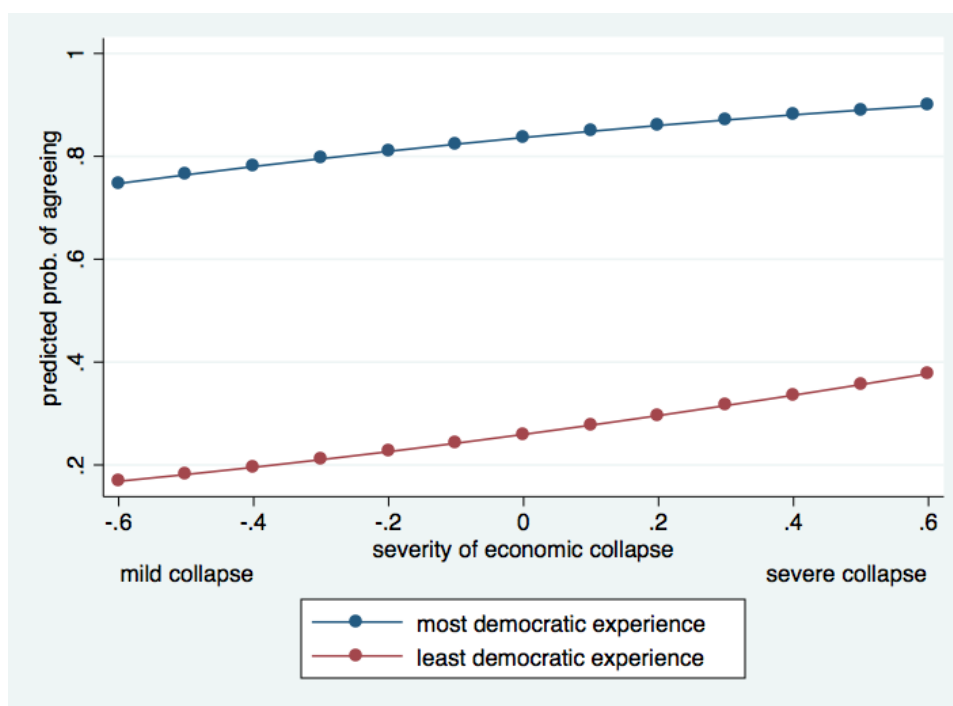


Figure 5.19: TOOWEAK - The state is too weak.

be addressed below.

Thus, we have strong evidence confirming H2: *the more severe the economic collapse experienced by an individual in the early 1990s, the more critical of democracy she will be today. Similarly, a more severe economic collapse will make individuals less critical of authoritarian rule.* It is equally important to note in tables 5.8-5.11 what is *not* a statistically significant predictor of regime attitudes: the scale of the economic recovery that took place *after* the transition collapse. While the “transition econ collapse” variable measures the scale of the collapse that took place from 1991 until the end of the early transition period (see p. 257), the variable “post-transition econ” measures regional-level economic performance from the defined endpoint of the transition period to 2007. In other words, it captures at the regional level the economic recovery that citizens experienced during the late 1990s and 2000s.

The “post-transition econ” variable fails to reach statistical significance in all of the models estimated in this chapter. In other words, the more recent economic trends of the last

10-15 years do not help us explain current preferences for democracy and authoritarianism. This finding cannot be explained away by collinearity between the scale of the collapse and the scale of the recovery, whereupon the collapse variable might “soak up” the effect of the recovery variable. Indeed, the two are only weakly correlated ( $r=0.1$ ). This fact therefore provides evidence in favor of H3: *Contemporary beliefs about and preferences for democracy and authoritarianism will be affected by the scale of the early economic collapse and will not be affected by the scale of economic recovery after the recent collapse. In other words, contemporary attitudes were solidified by early economic experiences and have not been affected by recent economic developments, evidence of the “stickiness” of such beliefs.*

Taken together, the confirmation of H1, H2, and H3 speak to the ability of the traumatic economic collapse to fundamentally re-orient mass beliefs about democracy and authoritarianism among post-Soviet citizens. They also provide evidence of widespread resistance among individuals to update their beliefs and preferences following the initial traumatic collapse. The statistical results shown here demonstrate that beliefs about democracy and authoritarianism today are best explained by the dynamics of the early economic collapse, not by subsequent events that came after the collapse. In other words, people do not appear to have updated their views on democracy to take into account the economic recovery of the late 1990s and 2000s, a recovery that should have made citizens of democratic countries more sympathetic to democracy. The available data unfortunately does not allow us to separate out the occurrence of confirmation bias from conservatism bias in an attempt to better understand what is driving this resistance to preference updating. However, following from Steenbergen’s (2002) “Updating Resistance Model” it is likely that both types of bias are at work among the population. Future experimental study of this topic may allow us to explore the question further and lend more insight into the dynamics of political belief updating among populations that experience major social, political, and economic dislocation. In the meantime, the evidence presented here strongly suggests the lasting impact of the collapse on how people view democracy and authoritarianism: once the framework was set associating democracy with instability, disorder, and bad economic performance, people in the former Soviet Union became highly resistant to revising those

assumptions.

#### 5.4.2 The Effect of Democratic Experience

The polarization thesis discussed in section 5.1.2 argues that in the presence of these cognitive biases, people's beliefs may become more extreme as they process additional information. This is because biases lead them to overweight confirming evidence and ignore or misinterpret disconfirming evidence. The discussion above provided evidence of cognitive biases at play in the post-Soviet population. In this section I will present evidence that polarization of beliefs is also taking place, resulting in heightened skepticism of democracy among those citizens that have the greatest exposure to democracy.

Why should we expect citizens of new democracies like Latvia and Ukraine to become more critical of democracy than citizens of less democratic countries like Russia and Belarus? The polarization thesis is about the effect that new information has on one's beliefs when that information is processed in a biased way. Recall that the cognitive framework established during the economic collapse of the early 1990s equated democracy with instability, chaos, and disorder. An individual characterized by confirmation bias would be likely to process new information in a way that conforms to that prior belief set. In other words, she is likely to ignore disconfirming evidence (for example, that eventually economic growth and prosperity emerge under democracy) while over-weighting confirmatory evidence (like focusing only on instances of instability and disorder and blaming them on democracy, regardless of their real cause). As long as this individual is exposed to a stream of information that allows her to process information about democracy, she is likely to do so in a way that reinforces her prior beliefs.

From this it would follow that actually living in a democratic system would be a key condition for continued reinforcement of one's priors and the ensuing polarization of beliefs. Put another way, a citizen of democratic Latvia can continue to blame democracy for his troubles, whereas a citizen of authoritarian Belarus cannot. This would lead us to expect citizens of democratic countries to become more critical of democracy and less critical of authoritarianism compared to citizens of authoritarian countries, who will be less critical

of democracy and more critical of authoritarianism. This is basically a restatement of H4.

To evaluate this hypothesis, we return to figures 5.10-5.19 and tables 5.8-5.11 in the statistical appendix. The key variable of interest is “post-1991 dem experience,” the variable that measures an individual’s post-1991 exposure to democracy (see section 5.3.2). Recall that two lines are plotted in each graph: 1) a line showing the predicted probability of agreeing for an individual with the *maximum exposure to democracy* since 1991; and 2) a line showing the predicted probability for an individual with the *minimum exposure to democracy* during that time. Of primary interest here is the vertical distance between each line, for this represents the effect that life experience with democracy has on an individuals’ preferences for democracy and authoritarianism.

The evidence in favor of H4 is strong - more experience with democracy makes people more critical of democracy and more sympathetic to authoritarianism. Statistically significant results are found suggesting that people with greater democratic experience are more likely to agree that “in democracy the economic system runs badly” (q22, figure 5.11). They are also more likely to agree that “democracies are indecisive and have too much squabbling” (q23, figure 5.12) and that “democracies aren’t good at maintaining order” (q24, figure 5.13). Democratic experience also makes individuals more likely to agree that “under authoritarian rule the economic system is more stable” (q27, figure 5.15). Similarly, citizens with high democratic experience are more critical of their current system of government, (q5, figure 5.17) rating it approximately 3 points lower on a scale from 1-10. In few cases where the democratic experience fails to reach statistical significance, the effect is always in the expected direction.

These differences between people with high levels of democratic experience and low levels of experience are substantively significant as well: the difference in predicted probabilities between the two groups ranges from approximately 18 percentage points to 32 percentage points. In other words, a person with high democratic experience is approximately 25 percentage points more likely to agree or strongly agree that “democracies aren’t good at maintaining order” than a comparable person with low democratic experience. The most extreme differences between the groups are seen in figures 5.18 (“there is too much

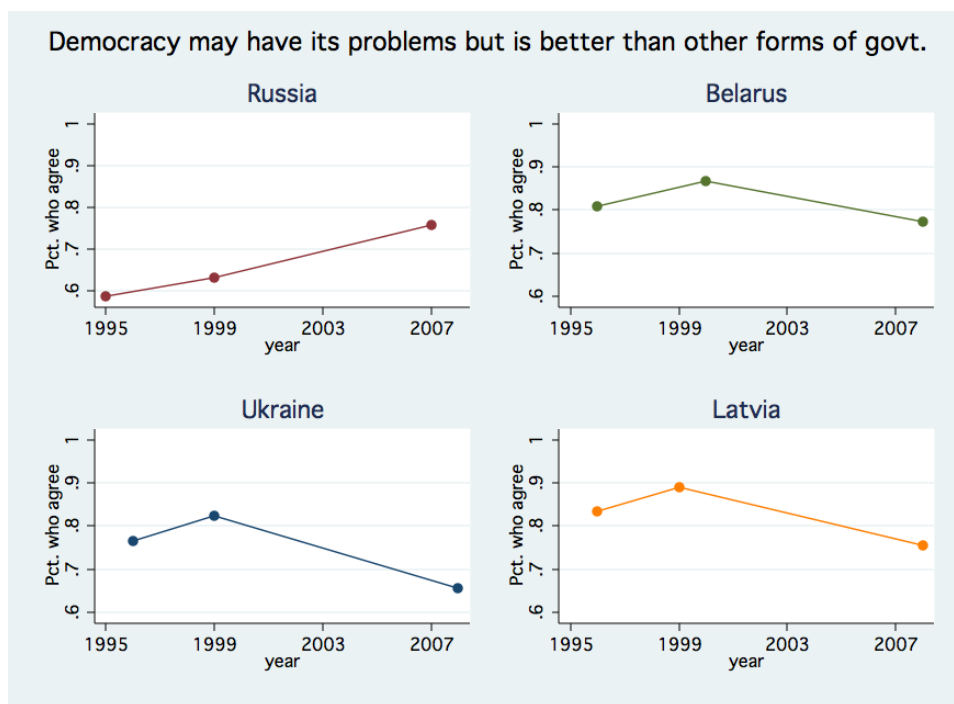


Figure 5.20: Q21 over time - Democracy may have problems but is better than other forms of government.

freedom in the country”) and 5.19 (“the state is too weak”). People with high exposure to democracy are much more likely to agree that there is too much freedom in the country today (difference  $\sim 40$  percentage points), and they are also much more likely to agree that the state is too weak (difference  $\sim 60$  percentage points).<sup>27</sup>

If, as I have argued, greater experience with democracy has made residents of these post-Soviet countries more critical of democracy, this implies that aggregate levels of dissatisfaction with democracy should increase over time in more democratic countries (H5). Conversely, they should remain more constant in more authoritarian countries that have

<sup>27</sup>Of course, state strength is not always directly linked to democracy, and the fact that people living under democracy think that their state is too weak is not in itself an antidemocratic criticism. One can easily imagine proponents of democracy wanting a stronger state that can function more effectively as a democratic state. However, this is a part of the world where democratic states have traditionally been weak states and authoritarian states have been strong. Thus, when the population believes that the state is *too* weak, and when their comments during field interviews suggests that they see authoritarian states as stronger and more able to fulfill stabilizing functions, it certainly is cause for concern. Thus, I include these results in this chapter because of their broader implications for the question of mass preferences and beliefs about regimes.



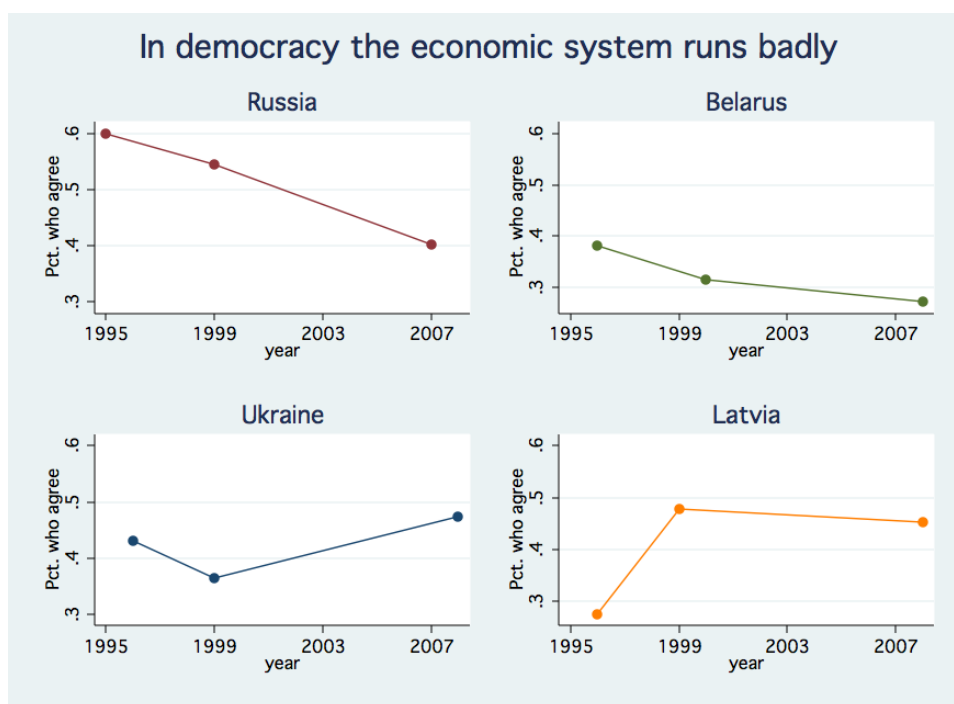


Figure 5.21: Q22 over time - In democracy the economic system runs badly.

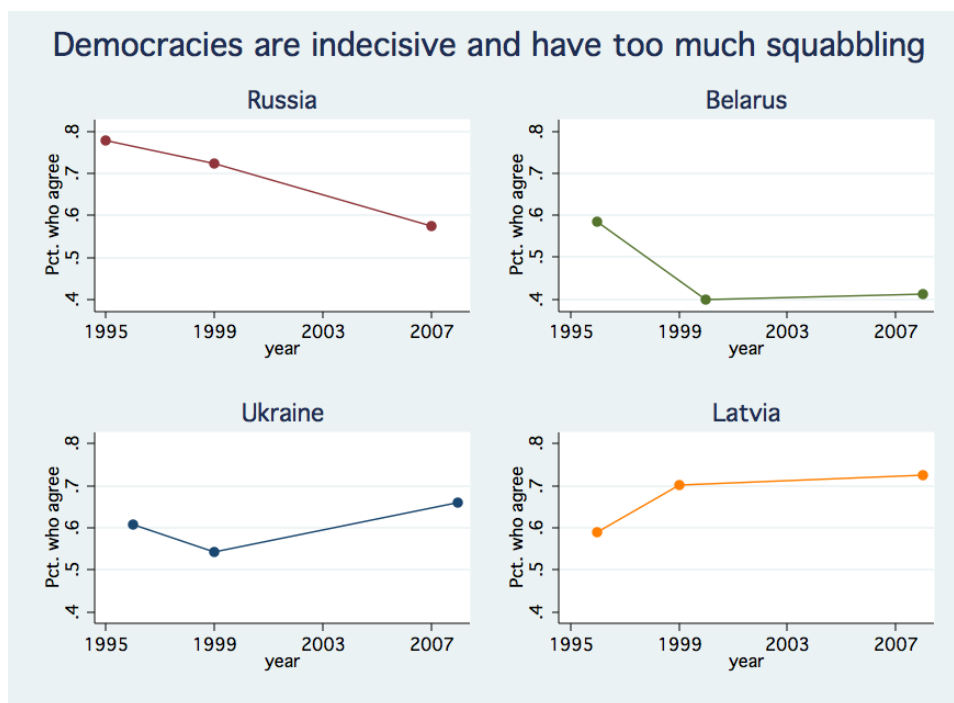


Figure 5.22: Q23 over time - Democracies are indecisive and have too much squabbling.

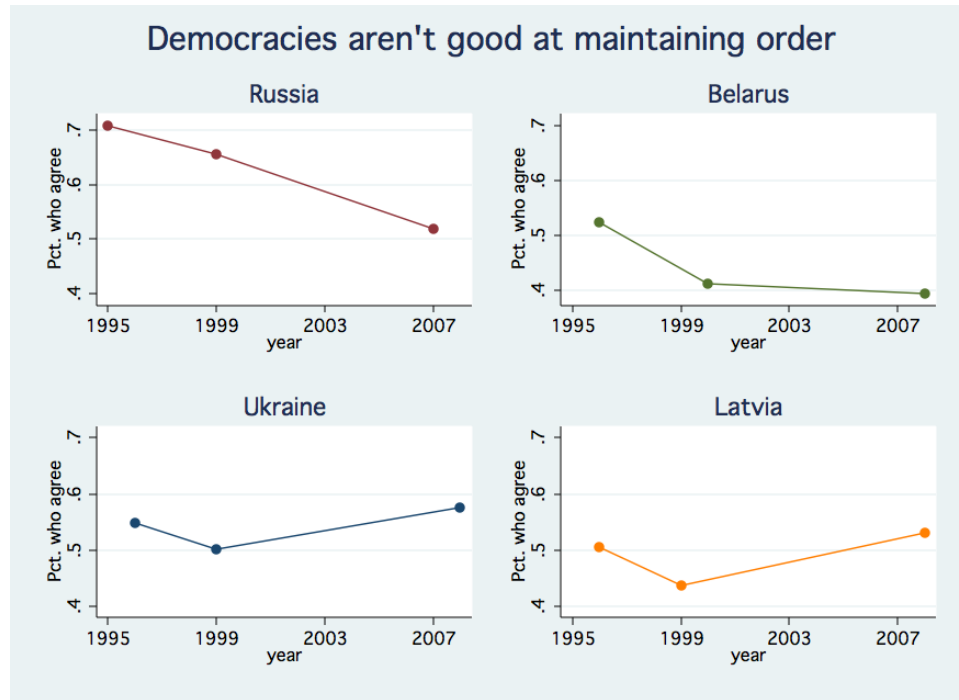


Figure 5.23: Q24 over time - Democracies aren't good at maintaining order.

lacked greater exposure to democracy.

Unfortunately, there are few sources of openly available survey data from these countries that track answers to the same questions over time. Nor were the questions asked on post-Soviet surveys in the 1990s necessarily the type of questions that are best suited for the issues that are of greatest interest today. For example, very few post-Soviet surveys carried out in the 1990s explicitly asked about the desirability of authoritarian rule, focusing more on evaluations of democracy. However, we do find some useful information in the World Values Survey/European Values Survey, which was carried out in multiple waves in Russia (1995, 1999), Belarus (1996, 2000), Ukraine (1996, 1999), and Latvia (1996, 1999) (European Values Study Group and World Values Survey Association 2006). While it would be ideal to have data for each country for the period 1991-1993 as well, unfortunately the survey was not carried out in these countries at that time. Because I replicated certain relevant questions from the WVS/EVS, I am able to add observations from 2007-2008 to the timeline.

Differences in sampling methods and selection probabilities make it impermissible to pool the survey data from the different surveys. However, we can simply measure the proportion of each sample that gives a particular answer and plot those proportions over time. It is not a perfect method, but it does at least give a rough idea of how public opinion on these questions has changed over time. The results of these exercises are presented in figures 5.20-5.23, which plot the percentage of the representative sample that agrees or strongly agrees with the statement.

These figures, though not perfect, do seem to provide some evidence in support of H5: over time, publics in more democratic Latvia and Ukraine seem to have gotten more critical of democracy. Interestingly, we find that the trend lines for more authoritarian Russia and Belarus are not flat as expected, but actually indicate publics that have become more sympathetic to democracy over time. This fact could be a sign that those whose views have not been polarized by the constant influx of information about democracy are slowly revising their initial beliefs as the memory of democracy's woes fade with time. Viewed from another angle, as citizens of these authoritarian regimes have grown more critical of their own governments, they have translated their dissatisfaction with their own governments into an expressed support for democracy. Thus, while the memories of the economic shock and political transition still remain strong predictors of attitudes for citizens of more authoritarian regimes, it is possible that the priors formed by that shock are slowly decaying. Of course, future waves of survey research will be required to assess this scenario more fully. In the meantime, we can conclude that there is at least moderate support for H5: over time, the citizens of democratic post-Soviet countries have become increasingly critical of democracy.

Table 5.2 attempts to present predicted and observed levels of democratic support based on each country's unique interaction of economic collapse and democratic experience.

## 5.5 Chapter 5 Conclusion

Scholars studying public opinion in the post-Soviet countries in the early- and mid-1990s were well aware that the enormous changes taking place in the political, economic,

Table 5.2: Predicted and observed democratic support after transition (2007-2008)

Case	Severity of economic collapse	Level of democratic experience	Predicted democratic support	Observed democratic support
Latvia	Mild	High	Med/Low	Low
Ukraine	Severe	Med/High	Low	Low
Belarus	Moderate	Low	High	High
Russia	Severe	Med/Low	Medium	Medium/High

and social systems in these countries would have significant effects on many facets of public opinion. Many understood the difficulty for politicians attempting to carry out simultaneous economic and political reforms, for the pain inflicted by economic reforms (and the attendant collapse) was likely to undermine support for political reforms. Perhaps more dangerously, the pain caused by “shock therapy” was likely to undermine support for reformist leaders, opening the door for politicians opposed to further economic and political liberalization. The first generation of post-Soviet leaders were thus stuck between a rock and a hard place: carrying out unpopular but necessary reforms was extremely difficult in a democratic polity. This conundrum led to the debate over sequence of reforms: should political liberalization be delayed until the trauma of economic reform had subsided? In truth, sequencing political and economic reforms in this manner was not an option, as the collapse of the Soviet Union was brought about by demands for both political and economic change. Thus, many of the first generation of post-Soviet leaders were caught in the unenviable position of presiding over economic collapse while being subject to public’s dissatisfaction.

With the advantage of nearly two decades between now and the momentous events that brought about the death of the Soviet empire, this study lends new insight into just how shocking “shock therapy” was. The proponents of quick, deep, and painful economic

reform argued that getting through the pain quickly - however intense it may be - was the only way to move beyond the socialist system and into a new market economy and democratic political system. This chapter has demonstrated that the trauma of economic collapse had a profound impact on mass beliefs about democracy and authoritarianism. Part of the profundity of this impact was the way in which the collapse reoriented beliefs about democracy, especially among those populations that were historically predisposed to supporting democratic rule. Equally profound is the durability of this reorientation and the long-lasting impact of the economic collapse. In fact, the pain of transition turned out to be not so quick. Nor is it clear that more gradual economic reforms would have produced a smaller economic decline. What is apparent that the post-Soviet population was “once bitten, twice shy.” Not only do they remember the pain of the dual economic and political transition, their views about what democracy and authoritarianism are able to deliver are influenced by that memory to this day.

In this chapter I have presented evidence supporting the hypothesis that the dual political transition and economic collapse created a strong association in the minds of post-Soviet citizens that equated democracy with instability, disorder, chaos, and poor economic performance. This was especially evident in qualitative field interviews where subjects were asked to list some of the positive and negative aspects of democracy and authoritarianism. Time and again subjects described democracy as being a disorderly system characterized by high prices, low wages, insufficient social services, and inefficient government. Conversely, authoritarianism was characterized as an orderly, stable, and often prosperous system.

I have also argued that once set, these beliefs about democracy and authoritarianism became remarkably durable and resistant to change. This resistance to belief updating that individuals displayed was largely induced by the depth of the socioeconomic trauma induced by the Soviet collapse. However, many studies of political beliefs have demonstrated resistance to preference updating among ordinary people even on more mundane political issues. Other works in political science have shown how major political events can leave a lasting imprint on the political beliefs and behaviors of citizens. This study adds to the body of evidence in support of this point.

In this chapter I presented two possible cognitive explanations that would account for resistance to preference updating among post-Soviet citizens: confirmation bias and conservatism bias. While my current data does not allow a thorough investigation into which of these mechanisms is dominant (or, more accurately, in what proportion they coexist among respondents), it is a question that is open to future promising experimental research in the region. Nonetheless, I have shown evidence from survey analysis that is consistent with the claim that post-Soviet citizens' beliefs about democracy were strongly influenced by the scale of the early economic collapse and that these beliefs have been resistant to revision in the face of contradictory evidence.

Individuals operating with these cognitive biases are likely to find evidence in support of their beliefs, either by ignoring contrary evidence or twisting such evidence to support their prior beliefs. Importantly, this may not even be a conscious decision - the literature suggests that most people are unaware of their biased interpretation of evidence. Thus, some individuals may become more extreme in their beliefs based on the stream of new information they process. I have argued and provided evidence that those who have lived longer under democracy have continued to apply their critical beliefs to democracy in a way that citizens of more authoritarian regimes have not. Put another way, we can consider the shock of the economic collapse to have produced a particular effect - skepticism toward democracy and sympathy for authoritarianism - that has decayed unequally among citizens of different regimes. The evidence suggests that the effects of the collapse on mass regime preference, while still strong, may be starting to decay among citizens of authoritarian regimes who no longer have daily exposure to democracy. However, the effects of the collapse appear not to decay among the citizens of democratic regimes; in fact these effects even seem to strengthen as citizens continue to experience the ups and downs of democracy. As a result, it is precisely those individuals who have the most experience with democracy that are today the most critical of it and the most sympathetic to authoritarianism.

The broader implications of this surprising and troubling conclusion will be discussed in the final chapter.

## 5.6 Statistical Appendix

Table 5.3: Summary statistics: Russia (2008)

Question	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Agree	Agree strongly
Q21: Democracy may have problems but is better than other forms of government	6.4 <sup>a</sup> (6.7) <sup>b</sup>	17.8 (18.3)	46.7 (46.2)	29.2 (28.8)
Q22: In democracy the economic system runs badly	16.5 (16.3)	43.2 (43.0)	26.3 (25.8)	14.0 (14.8)
Q23: Democracies are indecisive and have too much squabbling	11.9 (12.2)	30.6 (30.1)	33.9 (33.5)	23.6 (24.3)
Q24: Democracies aren't good at maintaining order	11.7 (11.7)	36.6 (36.0)	33.2 (32.9)	18.6 (19.4)
Q26: Authoritarian rule is more decisive and gets things done	12.1 (11.6)	34.1 (33.6)	36.8 (37.0)	17.0 (17.3)
Q27: Under authoritarian rule the economic system is more stable	14.0 (13.8)	30.2 (29.5)	37.6 (37.2)	18.2 (19.5)
Q30: Sometimes it's better to have less democracy in order to have more stability in the country	10.1 (10.3)	22.2 (22.4)	40.3 (39.1)	27.4 (28.2)
TOOFREE: There is too much freedom in the country		38.2 (37.9)	61.9 (62.2)	
TOOWEAK: The state is too weak		27.3 (27.6)	72.7 (72.4)	
	Mean	Standard error		
Q5: Please rate the current political system of government in our country on a 10-point scale (10=very good)	5.0 (5.0)	0.10 (0.06)		

<sup>a</sup> Cells display sample-corrected percentage of respondents giving a particular answer.

<sup>b</sup> Value in parentheses is the unweighted, uncorrected percentage.



Table 5.4: Summary statistics: Belarus (2008)

Question	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Agree	Agree strongly
Q21: Democracy may have problems but is better than other forms of government	6.7 <sup>a</sup> (6.7) <sup>b</sup>	15.7 (15.9)	50.4 (50.5)	27.2 (26.9)
Q22: In democracy the economic system runs badly	22.6 (22.5)	50.3 (50.4)	19.3 (19.3)	7.9 (7.8)
Q23: Democracies are indecisive and have too much squabbling	18.9 (18.7)	40.4 (40.8)	27.6 (27.5)	13.2 (13.0)
Q24: Democracies aren't good at maintaining order	17.8 (17.8)	43.4 (43.8)	26.7 (26.6)	12.1 (11.9)
Q26: Authoritarian rule is more decisive and gets things done	14.6 (14.4)	33.8 (33.9)	35.1 (35.3)	16.5 (16.4)
Q27: Under authoritarian rule the economic system is more stable	17.3 (17.5)	35.6 (35.4)	32.5 (32.6)	14.7 (14.4)
Q30: Sometimes it's better to have less democracy in order to have more stability in the country	13.4 (13.4)	25.4 (25.5)	41.3 (41.4)	19.9 (19.7)
TOOFREE: There is too much freedom in the country		62.4 (62.2)	37.6 (37.8)	
TOOWEAK: The state is too weak		48.9 (49.0)	51.1 (51.0)	
	Mean	Standard error		
Q5: Please rate the current political system of government in our country on a 10-point scale (10=very good)	6.1 (6.1)	0.07 (0.07)		

<sup>a</sup> Cells display sample-corrected percentage of respondents giving a particular answer.

<sup>b</sup> Value in parentheses is the unweighted, uncorrected percentage.

Table 5.5: Summary statistics: Ukraine (2008)

Question	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Agree	Agree strongly
Q21: Democracy may have problems but is better than other forms of government	10.0 <sup>a</sup> (10.8) <sup>b</sup>	26.4 (25.3)	41.2 (41.3)	22.4 (22.5)
Q22: In democracy the economic system runs badly	15.9 (16.1)	35.3 (35.0)	31.5 (30.9)	17.3 (18.0)
Q23: Democracies are indecisive and have too much squabbling	9.3 (10.9)	22.8 (24.4)	33.6 (33.7)	34.3 (31.0)
Q24: Democracies aren't good at maintaining order	11.7 (12.3)	29.7 (28.9)	35.2 (34.8)	23.5 (24.0)
Q26: Authoritarian rule is more decisive and gets things done	10.2 (11.0)	23.3 (23.5)	44.0 (42.5)	22.5 (22.9)
Q27: Under authoritarian rule the economic system is more stable	12.2 (12.9)	25.9 (24.5)	39.9 (39.5)	22.0 (23.1)
Q30: Sometimes it's better to have less democracy in order to have more stability in the country	9.2 (9.3)	17.3 (18.4)	40.1 (40.7)	33.4 (31.6)
TOOFREE: There is too much freedom in the country		36.1 (36.5)	63.9 (63.5)	
TOOWEAK: The state is too weak		12.4 (13.0)	87.6 (87.0)	
	Mean	Standard error		
Q5: Please rate the current political system of government in our country on a 10-point scale (10=very good)	3.3 (3.4)	0.21 (0.07)		

<sup>a</sup> Cells display sample-corrected percentage of respondents giving a particular answer.<sup>b</sup> Value in parentheses is the unweighted, uncorrected percentage.

Table 5.6: Summary statistics: Latvia (2008)

Question	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Agree	Agree strongly
Q21: Democracy may have problems but is better than other forms of government	4.5 <sup>a</sup> (4.5) <sup>b</sup>	19.9 (19.8)	59.5 (59.3)	16.1 (16.4)
Q22: In democracy the economic system runs badly	11.9 (12.0)	42.6 (43.0)	36.2 (36.0)	9.4 (9.1)
Q23: Democracies are indecisive and have too much squabbling	5.4 (5.5)	22.1 (22.3)	47.2 (47.3)	25.2 (24.8)
Q24: Democracies aren't good at maintaining order	8.2 (8.0)	38.8 (39.3)	39.5 (39.3)	13.5 (13.3)
Q26: Authoritarian rule is more decisive and gets things done	8.6 (8.5)	29.5 (29.6)	45.6 (45.5)	16.3 (16.4)
Q27: Under authoritarian rule the economic system is more stable	8.0 (8.2)	30.0 (30.3)	44.2 (43.9)	17.8 (17.6)
Q30: Sometimes it's better to have less democracy in order to have more stability in the country	9.2 (9.3)	17.3 (18.4)	40.1 (40.7)	33.4 (31.6)
TOOFREE: There is too much freedom in the country		33.7 (34.2)	66.3 (65.8)	
TOOWEAK: The state is too weak		8.1 (8.3)	91.9 (91.7)	
	Mean	Standard error		
Q5: Please rate the current political system of government in our country on a 10-point scale (10=very good)	4.1 (4.1)	0.11 (.06)		

<sup>a</sup> Cells display sample-corrected percentage of respondents giving a particular answer.

<sup>b</sup> Value in parentheses is the unweighted, uncorrected percentage.

Table 5.7: Summary statistics: Chapter 5 key independent variables (2008)

Variable name	Variable description	Russia	Belarus	Ukraine	Latvia
pre-1991 dem experience <sup>a</sup>	Measure of an individual's democratic experience up to 1991 (higher positive values = more experience)	-6.0 <sup>c</sup> (0.04)	-5.9 (0.03)	-5.9 (0.04)	-5.9 (0.04)
post-1991 dem experience <sup>a</sup>	Measure of an individual's democratic experience, 1991-present (higher positive values = more experience)	4.23 (0.03)	0.48 (0.02)	5.04 (0.03)	5.67 (0.04)
transition econ collapse <sup>b</sup>	Measure of early transition economic collapse (higher positive values = more severe collapse)	0.41 (0.01)	0.30 (0.02)	0.55 (0.004)	-0.19 (0.08)
post-transition econ <sup>b</sup>	Measure of economic performance after initial collapse (higher positive values = worse performance)	-0.96 (0.05)	-1.57 (0.06)	-1.00 (0.01)	-1.02 (0.10)
household material sit. today	Reported household material situation (higher positive values = wealthier)	0.03 (0.03)	-0.003 (0.03)	-0.04 (0.04)	-0.03 (0.05)

<sup>a</sup> See section 5.3.2 beginning on page 261 for the complete discussion of how the democratic experience variables are calculated.

<sup>b</sup> See section 5.3.1 beginning on page 257 for the complete discussion of how the economic performance variables are calculated.

<sup>c</sup> See page 266.

<sup>d</sup> Cells display sample-corrected country means. Standard errors are in parentheses

Table 5.8: Regression Results

	(1) Q21	(2) Q22	(3) Q23	(4) Q24
pre-1991 dem experience	-0.013 (0.815)	-0.063 (0.161)	0.032 (0.460)	0.005 (0.899)
post-1991 dem experience	-0.047 (0.185)	0.105*** (0.008)	0.151*** (0.001)	0.098** (0.045)
transition econ collapse	-0.783** (0.027)	1.101*** (0.001)	1.346*** (0.001)	0.904** (0.015)
post-transition econ	-0.149 (0.546)	-0.074 (0.790)	-0.023 (0.947)	0.032 (0.927)
household material sit. today	0.057 (0.323)	-0.091* (0.074)	-0.120** (0.018)	-0.145*** (0.009)
unemployed	-0.243 (0.390)	0.398 (0.103)	0.549** (0.020)	0.040 (0.853)
urban	-0.122 (0.471)	-0.076 (0.649)	-0.058 (0.734)	-0.064 (0.680)
male	0.017 (0.857)	-0.150** (0.029)	-0.028 (0.715)	0.006 (0.941)
age	-0.016*** (0.004)	0.018*** (0.005)	0.030*** (0.000)	0.022*** (0.000)
education	-0.007 (0.917)	-0.187** (0.019)	-0.193** (0.010)	-0.111* (0.087)
cut1	-3.732*** (0.000)	-0.371 (0.554)	-0.554 (0.448)	-0.812 (0.228)
cut2	-2.154*** (0.000)	1.660** (0.012)	1.180 (0.120)	1.140* (0.096)
cut3	-0.141 (0.772)	3.174*** (0.000)	2.733*** (0.002)	2.750*** (0.001)
<i>N</i>	4501	4501	4501	4501

*p*-values in parentheses

Models: ordered logit

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 5.9: Regression Results

	(1) Q26	(2) Q27	(3) Q30
pre-1991 dem experience	0.026 (0.581)	0.024 (0.734)	-0.076* (0.054)
post-1991 dem experience	0.068 (0.112)	0.088** (0.033)	0.054 (0.294)
transition econ collapse	0.969** (0.023)	0.766 (0.144)	1.035* (0.051)
post-transition econ	-0.022 (0.948)	-0.107 (0.800)	0.176 (0.643)
household material sit. today	-0.129** (0.021)	-0.057 (0.378)	-0.130** (0.012)
unemployed	0.227 (0.499)	0.163 (0.537)	0.087 (0.663)
urban	-0.306** (0.039)	-0.166 (0.306)	-0.169 (0.318)
male	-0.133 (0.124)	-0.254*** (0.002)	-0.062 (0.479)
age	0.021*** (0.003)	0.028*** (0.000)	0.012** (0.035)
education	-0.108 (0.205)	-0.173** (0.015)	-0.115* (0.094)
cut1	-1.288 (0.132)	-0.932 (0.263)	-1.400* (0.076)
cut2	0.517 (0.528)	0.704 (0.384)	0.043 (0.954)
cut3	2.374** (0.013)	2.552*** (0.006)	1.826** (0.026)
<i>N</i>	4501	4501	4501

*p*-values in parentheses

Models: ordered logit

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 5.10: Regression Results

	(1) Q5
pre-1991 dem experience	0.024 (0.689)
post-1991 dem experience	-0.313*** (0.000)
transition econ collapse	-1.969* (0.068)
dem experience X collapse	-0.100 (0.539)
post-transition econ	-0.057 (0.858)
household material sit. today	0.287*** (0.000)
unemployed	0.133 (0.593)
urban	-0.116 (0.581)
male	-0.191** (0.020)
age	-0.023*** (0.001)
education	-0.190** (0.018)
constant	9.070*** (0.000)
$N$	4501
$P1 > F$	0.000

$p$ -values in parentheses

Model: OLS

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 5.11: Regression Results

	(1) TOOFREE	(2) TOOWEAK
pre-1991 dem experience	0.023 (0.644)	0.038 (0.566)
post-1991 dem experience	0.148*** (0.000)	0.211*** (0.000)
transition econ collapse	0.764* (0.064)	0.954** (0.014)
post-transition econ	0.136 (0.569)	0.277 (0.385)
household material sit. today	-0.002 (0.970)	-0.155** (0.017)
unemployed	0.204 (0.469)	-0.080 (0.753)
urban	0.012 (0.958)	-0.183 (0.433)
male	-0.165 (0.114)	0.072 (0.574)
age	0.024*** (0.000)	0.014** (0.017)
education	0.067 (0.369)	0.090 (0.249)
cut1	-1.490** (0.031)	-0.549 (0.332)
<i>N</i>	4501	4501

*p*-values in parentheses

Logit models

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$



## CHAPTER 6

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### Conclusion

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#### The Broad Dynamics of Popular Support for Democracy and Authoritarianism

Throughout this work I have argued for the importance of looking at multiple layers of influence – some historical, some contemporary – that blend, interact, and sometimes conflict to shape the political values and regime preferences of individuals caught at the crossroads of empires, ideologies, and history. As my work has shown, each of these factors plays an important and significant role in influencing what people believe about democracy and authoritarianism today and ultimately whether each is a desirable political system to rule over them. We simply cannot explain the structure of democratic and authoritarian support in the post-Soviet states without giving weight to the power of national identity, Soviet-era political socialization, and post-transition economic trauma in forming long-lasting beliefs about regimes. But just as importantly, I have argued for the importance of understanding how these layers interact with each other, at times in complementary ways, at other times in conflicting ways. How does a population's history of nationalism influence its reaction to hegemonic political indoctrination when it comes to support for democracy? And how are the promises of a better democratic future, developed over decades

by populations yearning to be free of foreign occupation, upended when that future turns out to be a tarnished one? Only by looking at the complex and sometimes confusing combination of these multiple factors can we find answers to these questions and unravel the puzzle that introduced this dissertation: under what conditions will people in post-transition societies prefer authoritarian rule to democracy?

The first layer of influence that I explored is perhaps the one that runs deepest: national identity. In chapter 2 I put forward the theory that when a population with an already-developed strong national identity comes under foreign occupation by an authoritarian hegemonic power, the occupied population will seek to delegitimize the occupier's rule by building and maintaining identity "boundaries." This form of passive resistance builds barriers between "us" and "them" by emphasizing attributes of national identity that are meant to highlight the foreignness of the occupier's rule. Through this process, I argued, existing distinguishing attributes of identity gain added importance and new attributes can develop to further the cultural distance between occupied and occupier. This includes attributes of political culture that can become embedded in certain national identities. Thus, the occupied nation can come to define themselves as democratic, western, European, and civilized in opposition to the (perceived) authoritarian, eastern, Asiatic, and barbaric occupier.<sup>1</sup> As such, certain nationalities can come to understand themselves as fundamentally democratic in culture, a fact that can increase democratic support during the occupation period. This suggests that the timing and sequencing of nationalism and occupation, as well as the historical development of national identity are important factors in understanding how a democratic self-perception can develop. Thus, chapter 2 also presented a history of national identity development in Latvia, Ukraine, and Belarus, as well as the outlines of Russian imperial and Soviet nationalities policy in the periphery of the empire.

My theory predicted that resistance to Soviet occupation and the development of a democratic self-conception should be strongest among the native nationalities of the Baltic republics and the western Ukrainian region of Galicia. Using qualitative interview data as

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<sup>1</sup>To be clear, I don't intend to suggest that an occupier, Russian or otherwise, is objectively any of these things. But a nationalist of an occupied nation might not be inclined to the same degree of objectivity.

well as survey data from 1990 and 2007-2008, in chapter 3 I showed that indeed, these populations understood their identities in dichotomous terms with sharp contrasts drawn between the democratic “us” and the authoritarian “them.” I also showed that democratic support among the Baltic nationalities and Galician Ukrainians was higher, as predicted, than among the relevant comparison groups. This difference in democratic support, while strongest at the end of the Soviet period, nonetheless persisted through the first two post-Soviet decades. Where cultural differentiation did not take place for historical reasons – namely, in Belarus – national identity did not play a role in shaping support for democracy and authoritarianism.

The second layer of influence that I explored was Soviet-era political socialization that took place largely through the education system. If attempts to indoctrinate citizens with Marxist-Leninist ideology (ideology that was fiercely hostile to western-style liberal democracy) left a lasting impact on citizens’ views of democracy, and particularly if the ideological environment changed over time, I argued that we should see distinct generational differences in levels of democratic support. However, these differences would be apparent only among the populations that were open to Soviet political socialization and its evolving content and intensity. The populations that had developed nationalist movements prior to Soviet occupation, on the other hand, would be more resistant to Moscow’s political socialization attempts, regardless of their generation. Since this nationalist reaction would prevent the Soviet message from getting through, I argued that we would be unlikely to find generational differences in these populations. Chapter 4 developed this theory and tested it using survey data from 2007-2008. As expected, generational differences were strongest (with the “Stalin” generation being the most authoritarian in its views) among the residents of Russia, Belarus, and eastern Ukraine. Results among Latvians and western Ukrainians also confirmed the theory, with those populations displaying little evidence of generational differences. Importantly, chapter 4 also presented evidence supporting a generational political socialization-based explanation rather than a life cycle (age) explanation.

Chapter 5 engaged the great paradox of the post-Soviet era. Why, given the high support for democracy in the late Soviet era in Latvia and western Ukraine, did democratic

support plummet the most among the populations that were culturally primed to embrace democracy? Similarly, why did support for democracy remain high among those living under more authoritarian systems in Belarus and Russia? Conventional wisdom would suggest that democratic support would remain highest among the citizens of democratic Latvia and lowest among the citizens of authoritarian Belarus. But in reality, the inverse was true. How do we explain this puzzling fact?

My answer to this puzzle lay at the intersection of early economic and democratic experiences immediately following the 1991 Soviet collapse. I argued that the painful and traumatic dual economic and political transition fundamentally reoriented peoples' beliefs about the qualities of democracy and the desirability of living under democracy. During this time citizens, all of whom experienced some degree of democratization and economic collapse of varying severity, came to associate democracy with chaos, disorder, instability, and economic hardship. Once this cognitive framework was set, it became remarkably durable. I explain this drastic revision of priors about democracy and the durability of the resulting posteriors as the result of two important facts. First, this was the first direct, first hand experience that individuals had with democracy; first impressions, especially strong ones last. Second, the widespread, deep, and traumatic effect of such a major socioeconomic and political transformation was sufficiently large to reorient political beliefs even where support for democracy was high, consistent with literature on the long-lasting impact of major events on political behavior.

Thus, chapter 5 showed that the severity of the initial economic collapse can explain individuals' enduring beliefs about and support for democracy and authoritarianism to this day. More severe collapses (as measured at the subnational level) produce citizens that are more critical of democracy and more supportive of authoritarianism today, regardless of the nature of the economic recovery that took place later. In other words, it was those early experiences that shaped and solidified regime preferences. Once set, people were resistant to updating their beliefs in the face of new evidence that might have made them more forgiving of democracy. I attributed this resistance in belief updating to the cognitive biases known as conservatism bias and confirmation bias. Furthermore, these cognitive biases

helped explain the other puzzling aspect of contemporary regime preferences: once these frameworks were set, individuals in democratic countries were likely to overweight evidence in support of their priors and underweight evidence that contradicted them. In other words, citizens in democracies were more likely to find additional evidence that democracy is chaotic while overlooking new information suggesting otherwise. The result is that as they gained more exposure to and experience with democracy, citizens of Latvia and Ukraine became increasingly of democracy. By contrast, where individuals had less experience with democracy in the post-Soviet era, namely Belarus and Russia, they did not become so skeptical of democracy. The paradoxical result, explained by my theory, is that democratic support today is highest in authoritarian post-Soviet countries and lowest in the countries that were the most successful in democratizing.

### Theoretical Contributions

This work has contributed to our theoretical understanding of the dynamics of democratic support, regime preferences, and public opinion in post-transition societies in several ways. First, it has advocated the rejection of monocausal explanations for these complex phenomena. Democratic support is not simply a question of political culture or economics, but rather a combination of multiple layers of influence. Nor are these influences independent of one another. In order to understand why some people might prefer to live under an authoritarian government, we must be willing to delve into the deep political culture that lies in people's hearts, the trauma of an empty pocketbook and hungry stomach, and the biased reasoning that takes place in imperfect minds. We must recognize that these influences sometimes complement and often contradict each other; only by understanding how, when, and why they interact can we understand the overall structure of individual preferences for democracy and authoritarianism. Any only by first understanding the individual can we explain aggregate support for democracy or dictatorship in a population, support that can have an important influence on a variety of phenomena in a country's political realm.

This work has also contributed to a wider literature on the long-lasting and deep

effects of political socialization, whether it takes place in the family, in the school, or as a result of turbulent social changes. Each of these events can leave a lasting mark on the belief structures of humans, emphasizing that we are not goldfish swimming in circles with no memory of what happened moments ago. Put another way, some of our most fundamental beliefs about who can legitimately rule us are not simply the product of current stimuli and prevailing political winds. Rather, they are some of our deepest and most durable political beliefs. If we are to understand them fully, I argue, we must look beyond the year's economic growth, unemployment rate, or campaign slogans for an explanation. This work has attempted to emphasize the legitimacy and consequence of such an approach, joining an important literature in doing so.

Finally, my work should give us pause to reconsider our own biases and beliefs about democracy and its value to ordinary individuals. Conventional wisdom would suggest that democracy is an objective good, that it is desirable and desired by most people because freedom is preferable to subjugation. We would also expect that though there may be bumps along the way, over time citizens of democracies will become more supportive of democracy, not less so. My work questions all of these assumptions. While I do believe that freedom and democracy are normatively good, we must be willing to take a broader view of freedom. Is freedom to protest a policy worth it if one is still bound by oppressive poverty and hunger? This is a question that I can only answer for myself, not for others. But my work has suggested that given the perceived tradeoffs between democracy and authoritarianism, some individuals will inevitably set aside the political freedom of democracy in favor of the predictability of dictatorship. Furthermore, these preferences may appear where we least expect them, among populations that *should* welcome democracy with open arms. That they do not is an important lesson that should be kept in mind especially by policy makers who expect to be met with roses on the road, whether it is the road to Baghdad, Kabul, or some other capital that has yet to be given the "gift" of democracy. Political leaders should recall that democracy is not always a gift and not always welcomed, particularly when it appears in the form of foreign occupation. While my work has explored the consequence of imposing authoritarian rule on foreign populations, future research may one day reveal

surprising consequences of the export of democracy to foreign populations.

## Empirical Contributions

Beyond these theoretical and normative contributions, my work has made contributions to our empirical understanding of some of the post puzzling political developments in the former Soviet Union during the last two decades. It has lent new insights to the understanding of the political trajectories of post-Soviet countries, helping to address the key question of the post-Cold War era: why did democracy succeed in some parts of the former USSR but fail in others? In an influential 2002 article published in *World Politics*, Michael McFaul seeks to answer this central question. In taking on an earlier literature that argues that pacted transitions between competing elites will produce democratic transitions, McFaul argues that in the post-communist sphere, it is not a balanced and pacted distribution of power that produces democracy, but rather an imbalance of power that leads to democratization. He summarizes his argument as follows:

“It was situations of unequal distributions of power that produced the quickest and most stable transitions from communist rule. In countries with asymmetrical balances of power, it was the ideological orientation of the more powerful party that largely determined the type of regime to emerge. Democracy emerged therefore in countries where democrats enjoyed a decisive power advantage. And hence institutions of power sharing or checks and balances did not result from compromises between the ancien regime and democratic challengers but rather emerged only if the hegemonic democrats chose to implement them. Conversely, in countries in which dictators maintained a decisive power advantage, dictatorship emerged. In between these two extremes were countries in which the distribution of power between the old regime and its challengers was relatively equal. Rather than producing stalemate, compromise, and pacted transitions to democracy, such situations in the post-communist world resulted in protracted confrontation, yielding unconsolidated, unstable partial democracies and autocracies.”(McFaul 2002, 213-14).

McFaul’s typology of regimes and the states that belong in those categories is consistent with the categorization of regimes that I’ve used in this work: he identifies Latvia as a country where the balance of power favored democratic challengers and thus resulted in democracy; Belarus as a country where power favored dictatorial elements in the ancien regime and thus eventually produced dictatorship; and Russia and Ukraine as countries

where there was an uncertain balance of power, resulting in what he describes as “partial democracies” as of 2002 (McFaul 2002, 227).

However, McFaul does not comprehensively address the question of *why* democrats enjoyed hegemony in some countries like the Baltics and not elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> He writes, “the true causal significance of the transition moment can be fully understood only when the deeper causes of these [modes of transition] are fully specified”(McFaul 2002, 243). My work has addressed one of these deeper causes – the dynamics of national identity and democratic political culture – helping to answer the question of why ideological democrats were in a dominant position in the Baltics at the end of the Soviet era and why such democrats were lacking in countries like Belarus. Thus, my work contributes to our understanding of the early political trajectories of the post-Soviet countries by identifying the historical processes that made early democratization more likely to succeed in some parts of the Soviet empire than others. It should be noted that Darden and Grzymala-Busse (2006) precede me with an important contribution on the deep causes of the post-communist political transitions in their study of literacy, nationalism, and the exit patterns of communist rule following the collapse of communism. Their work argues that the timing of mass literacy explains why some populations rejected communist rule and others did not. My work has built on theirs by exploring how these dynamics of national identity development and foreign occupation resulted in not just the rejection of communism, but the development of a democratic self-perception among some populations.

While my work has provided answers for some outstanding questions, it has raised new questions about the politics of the post-Soviet region. First and foremost, we must ask why democracy has been able to survive in countries like Latvia where publics have become highly skeptical of democracy. Why, despite this skepticism, have Latvians not chosen to vote democracy out of existence? I would posit that the answer to this question lies in the early institutionalization of democracy in Latvia in the early 1990s when support

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<sup>2</sup>In a comment that echoes the arguments I’ve made, however, McFaul does note, “In the post-communist cases the different historical responses to Soviet imperialism most certainly influenced the balance of power between friends and foes of the ancien regime at the time of transition”(McFaul 2002, 243). He does not elaborate on this, though.



for democracy was still high. It is possible that the culturally conditioned democratic support was strong enough to buffer Latvia's democratic development from the pressures of democratic disillusionment long enough to consolidate functioning democratic institutions that would survive on their own once the glow of democracy faded. This suggests that further research on the early institutionalization of democracy – and the public opinion climate in which it took place – is warranted if we hope to produce an answer to this puzzling question.

Results from my own surveys also point to an important characteristic of populations of democratic countries that may help explain the survival of democracy despite skeptical publics. In my surveys, respondents were asked, “do you think that opposition political parties and groups that criticize the state’s policies help or hurt the state’s ability to perform its functions?” They were also asked the same question of media that is critical of the state’s policies. Individuals who answered that these organizations *hurt* the state’s ability to function were then asked whether such organizations should be tolerated or forbidden. Thus, I was able to produce a 3-point scale that seeks to measure an individual’s political liberalism. A “1” on this scale corresponds to an individual who thinks that opposition parties or critical media hurt and should be forbidden; a “2” is assigned to a person who thinks that these organizations hurt but should be allowed to exist nonetheless; a “3” indicates an individual who believes that opposition parties and critical media help the state fulfill its functions. Regression analyses similar to those performed in chapter 5 were conducted with the inclusion of an interaction effect between the scale of economic collapse and democratic experience. Predicted probabilities are presented in figures 6.1 and 6.2, with regression tables appearing in table 6.3 at the end of this chapter.

The results reveal important differences about how people in democracies view political opposition and criticism in relation to economic collapse compared to people living in authoritarian regimes. A majority of the people with little democratic experience (represented in the top panels of figures 6.1 and 6.2) are likely to advocate the banning of opposition parties and critical media, particularly where their economic collapse was mild. Only where economic collapse is severe do these citizens of authoritarian regimes see a

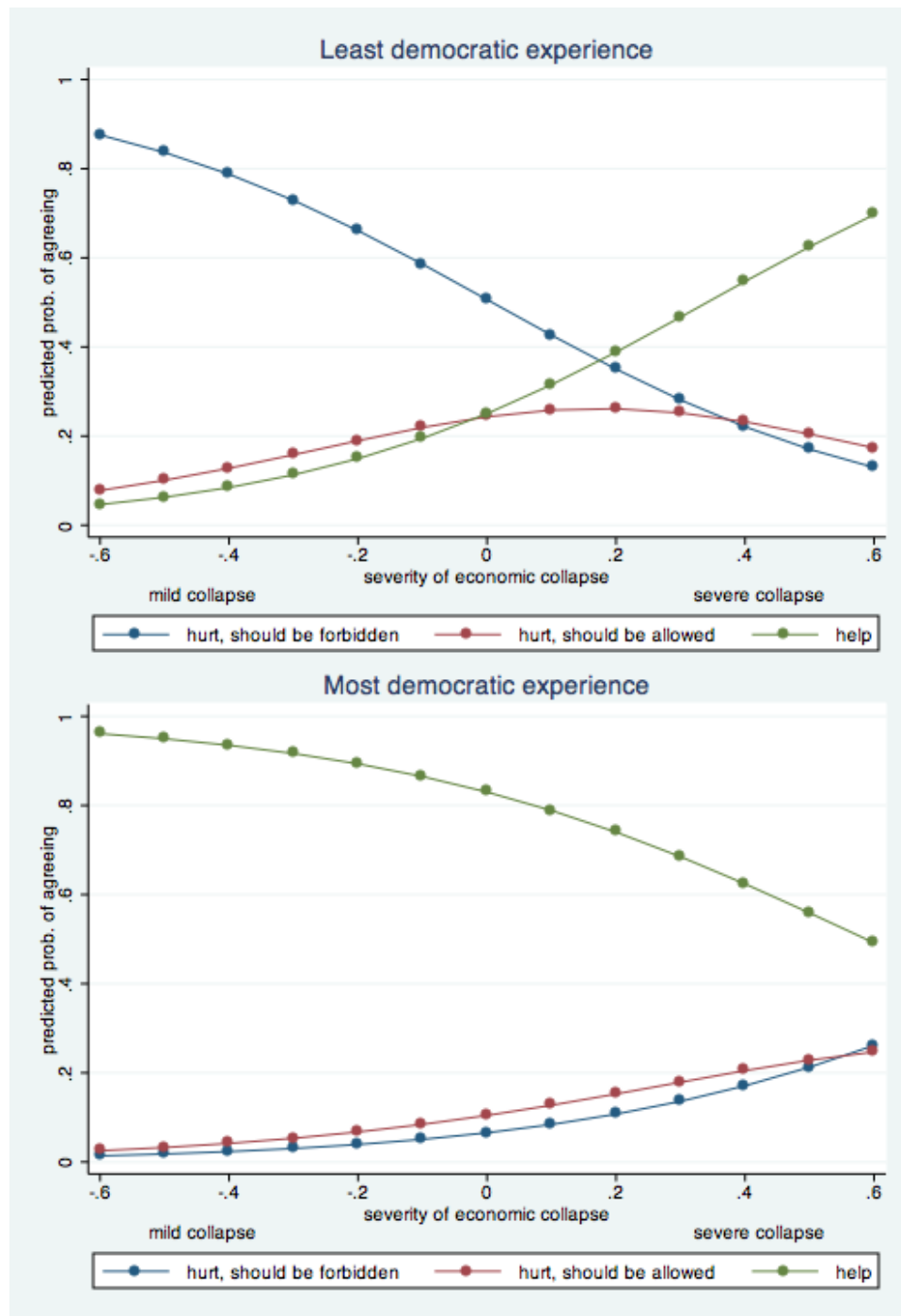


Figure 6.1: Do you think that opposition political parties and groups that criticize the state's policies help or hurt the state's ability to perform its functions?

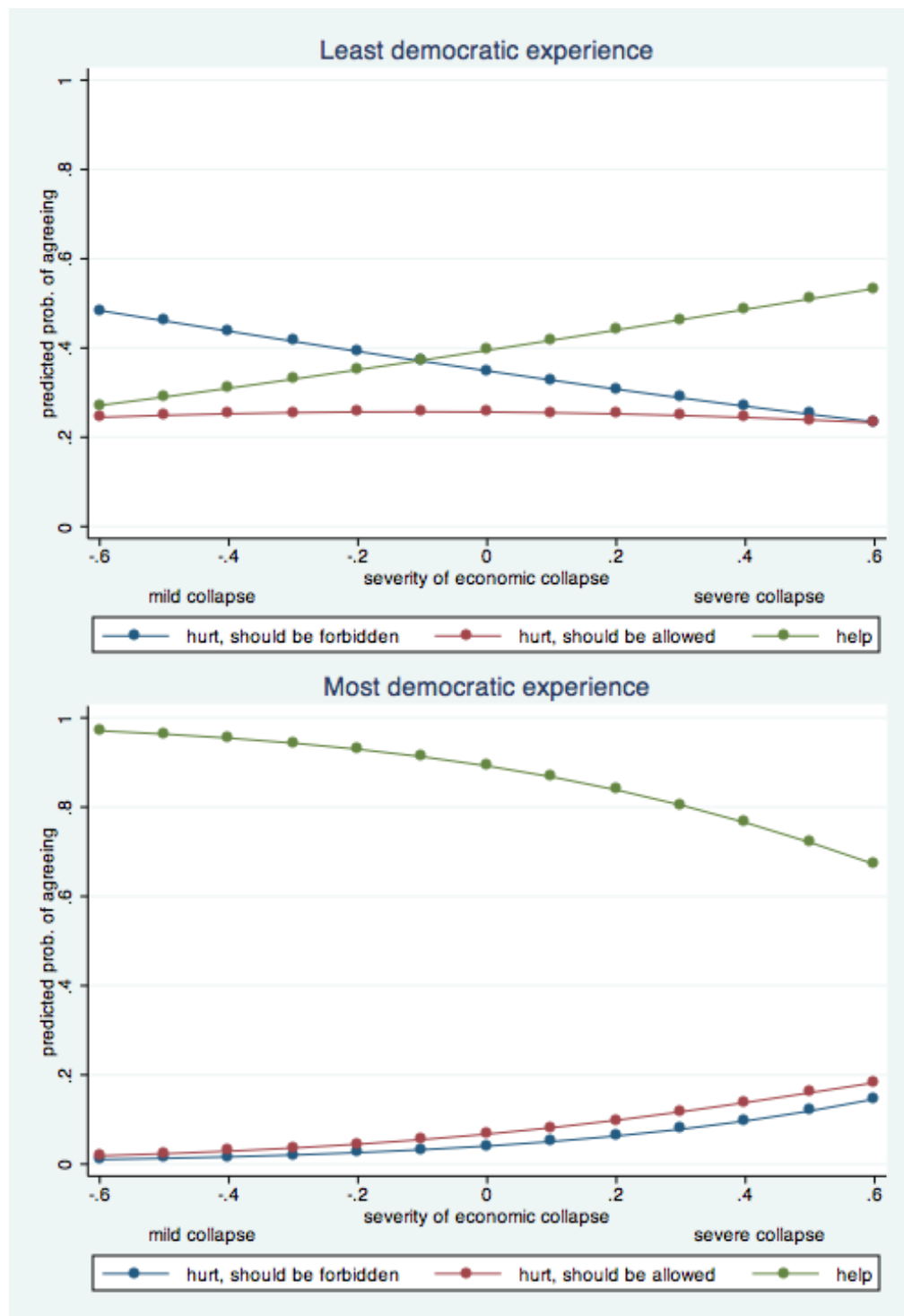


Figure 6.2: Do you think that media which is critical of the state's policies help or hurt the state's ability to perform its functions?

positive role for political opposition and critical media.

This contrasts sharply with the results for people with extensive democratic experience, represented in the bottom panels of figures 6.1 and 6.2. Regardless of the nature of the economic collapse, a majority of the citizens of democratic regimes believe that political opposition and a vocal media *help* the state fulfill its responsibilities. It is true that this optimism declines somewhat among people who experience a particularly severe collapse, but at no point do people who want to forbid opposition and independent media outnumber those who wish it to be maintained.

This suggests that individuals who have the greatest exposure to democracy, though they may be the most critical of its drawbacks, have nonetheless internalized the liberal values that many consider to be an important bedrock of stable democracy. In other words, while the citizens of Latvia may be the first to criticize democracy's inability to provide stability and security, they have developed a strong commitment to political pluralism and individual liberties that ultimately supports the democratic system despite skeptical publics. Future research to uncover whether these liberal values were present at the beginning of Latvia's independence or whether they developed during the last two decades would lend further insight into the questions I've raised here.

The results presented in 6.1 and 6.2 also help answer another practical question that is raised by my work: is Belarus prone to a democratic revolution from below, given the right conditions? The answer, unfortunately for those who hope for the restoration of democracy in Belarus, is that such a democratic revolution led by the masses is highly unlikely. First, we cannot discount the repressive capacity of the Lukashenko regime, which has done a thorough job of eliminating meaningful political challengers. Any opposition leaders or movements that seek democratization in Belarus will have a difficult time mobilizing support among the population, a population that is already suspicious of opposition political groups.

Furthermore, the inquiry into the liberal values of individuals with little democratic experience suggests that these people's democratic support – while numerically high – is somewhat superficial. Recall that citizens living under democracy are the most critical of it because they have the most information about it. The flip side is that citizens of au-

thoritarian regimes have the least information about democracy. Thus, their high support is perhaps a case of the grass being greener on the other side, as they don't see the many drawbacks that come with democratic rule. Furthermore, their democratic support is not buttressed by liberal ideals that value the presence of opposition political parties and critical, independent media. Even if regime change were to come to Belarus exogenously, it is likely that democratic disillusionment would quickly set in if severe economic contraction accompanied a new wave of democratization. Given Belarus' largely unreformed state-run economy, such contraction would almost be a certainty in such a circumstance.

Stepping outside the post-Soviet context, this speaks to the threat of particularly vicious circles: political transition often is accompanied by economic dislocation, which can undermine popular support for democracy, leaving some societies exposed to the threat of re-authoritarianization. Two circumstances might break the cycle: 1) the presence of factors that "buffer" the nascent democratic regime from pressure long enough to solidify (as I've suggested may have happened in Latvia); and 2) conditions that allow for democratization without economic collapse. Policymakers interested in democratization have little control over the cultural characteristics that may make the first circumstance possible. Thus, the one way to effect democratization without democratic disillusionment is to prevent economic dislocation during and after political transitions. To be sure, it is easier said than done.

### Looking Ahead: Possible Futures of the Post-Soviet States

What, then, does the future hold for the development of democratic support and ultimately the survival or withering of democracy in the post-Soviet states? Are Latvia and Ukraine "out of the woods" and able to sustain democratic rule? Are Belarus and Russia consigned to decades more of authoritarian rule by strongmen who at best pay lip service to democracy?

At the risk of being labeled a pessimist, I would argue that nobody is out of the woods yet, not even Latvia where democracy does seem to be well institutionalized. Figures 6.3 - 6.6 help explain my pessimism. In my surveys, I asked respondents to select three issues from a list of 20 that were the most important problems facing the country at the current

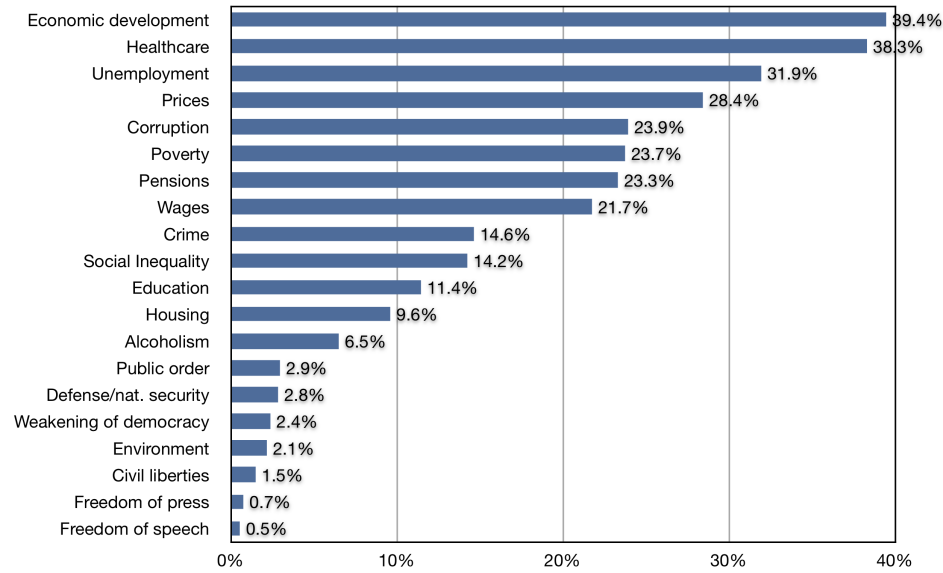


Figure 6.3: Latvia: Please select the three most important problems facing the country today from the list below

time. Figures 6.3 - 6.6 display the percent of respondents that considered each problem to be important.

The overall message to take away from all four countries is that “it’s the economy, stupid.” In each country, issues like economic development, wages, prices, housing, unemployment, and healthcare are at the top of citizens’ list of concerns. This is certainly true for Latvia, where nearly 40 percent of citizens see economic development as a major problem for the country, along with questions of healthcare, unemployment, and prices. Recall the results of chapter 5: Latvians are inclined to believe that democracies are not particularly good at providing any of these things, yet these are the problems that they see as most important facing the country. When push comes to shove in a hypothetical economic crisis, would Latvians’ skepticism about democracy’s ability to solve these problems (which would be exacerbated by a crisis) lead them to seek better results from a less democratic government? It is not outside the realm of possibilities, though it is probably less likely for Latvia than it is for Ukraine.

Indeed, Ukraine gives the greatest cause for worry. Economic problems are also at

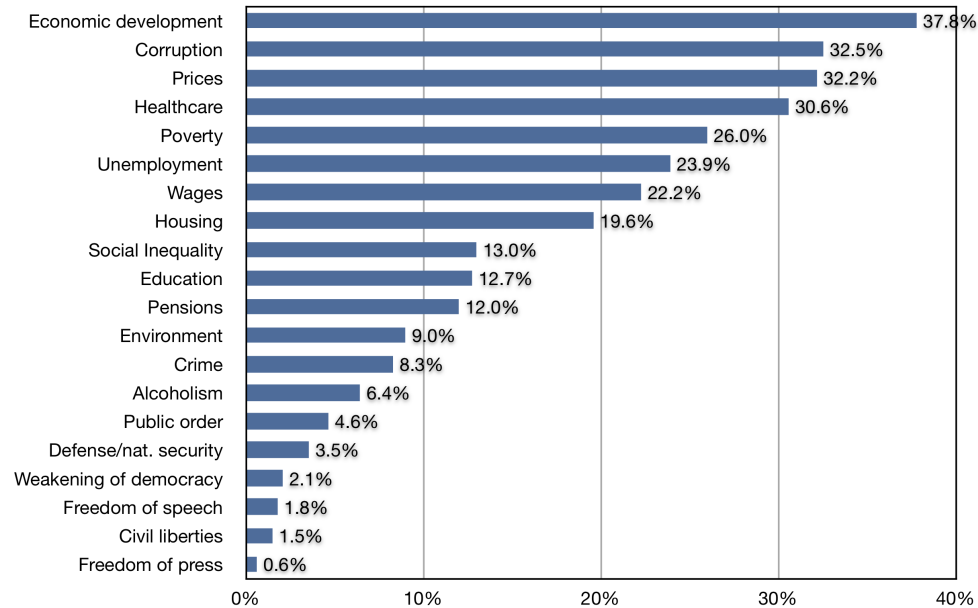


Figure 6.4: Ukraine: Please select the three most important problems facing the country today from the list below

the top of Ukrainians' list of concerns, as is the corruption that seems endemic to Ukrainian politics. Ukraine's economy has struggled throughout the post-Soviet period and continues to struggle to establish a strong foundation for growth today. While Latvia's economic situation is likely robust enough to weather a severe downturn, the same cannot be said for Ukraine. It is not inconceivable that economic crisis, coupled with a public skeptical of democracy and fed up with corruption, could lead Ukraine's citizens to embrace the kind of no-nonsense strongman that took the helm of Belarus in 1994 on promises to wipe out corruption and raise the standard of living. Indeed, many interview subjects in Ukraine told me (unprompted) that someone like Lukashenko would be good for Ukraine.

What about Lukashenko's own citizens in Belarus? Of course, interpretation of the results in figure 6.5 takes on different meaning given Belarus' authoritarian system. The demand for higher wages, lower prices, or better healthcare does not threaten democracy since there is no democracy to be had. These demands threaten the authoritarian regime only insofar as the regime fails to meet the basic economic needs of its citizens in the long

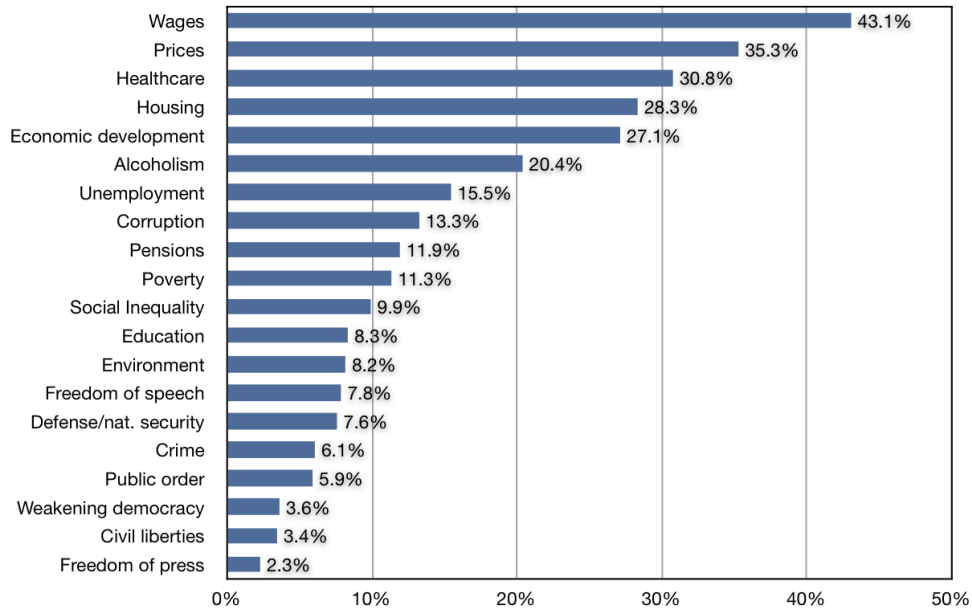


Figure 6.5: Belarus: Please select the three most important problems facing the country today from the list below

run, keeping in mind the regime's capacity to repress dissent and mass political action. Belarus' increasingly desperate behaviors as it is caught between two neighbors (the EU and Russia) that have little patience for Lukashenko's diplomatic games suggest that this may be a problem for Minsk down the road. Whereas Russia has long subsidized Belarus' economy by selling Minsk cheap gas, Moscow's new hard line in its relations with Minsk may threaten Lukashenko's ability to provide for his subjects. In the meantime, however, genuine demand for democracy seems unlikely to threaten the regime in Belarus: only 7.8 percent of Belarusians considered freedom of speech to be a top problem facing the country, nor did many consider things like weakening democracy (3.6 percent), civil liberties (3.4 percent), and freedom of the press (2.3 percent) to be major problems. This again speaks to the superficiality of Belarusians' professed enthusiasm for democracy and a relative lack of liberal political values in Belarus.

Finally we come to Russia, whose citizens, like those in the other countries seem most concerned about socioeconomic conditions. In fact, the more authoritarian system put in



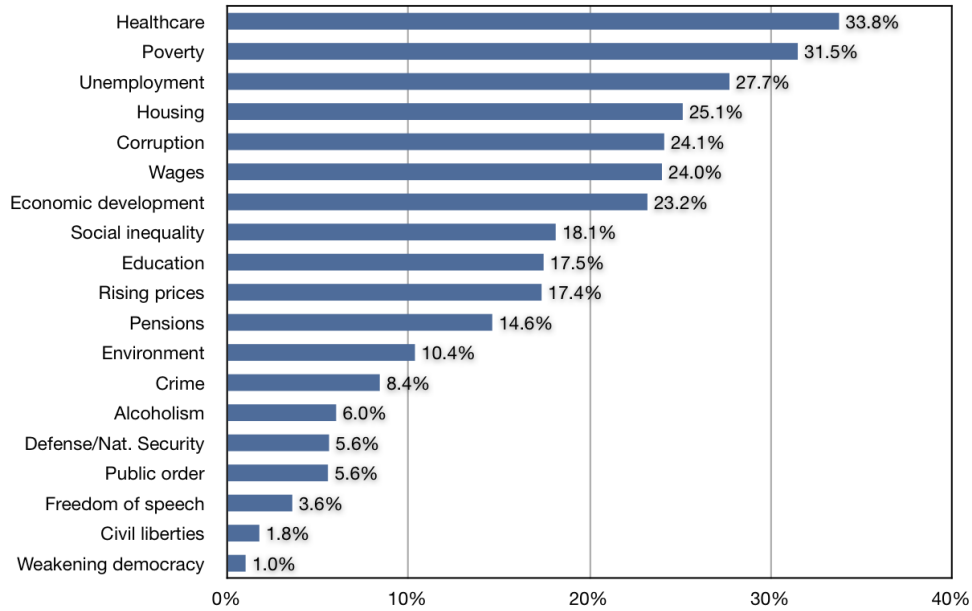


Figure 6.6: Russia: Please select the three most important problems facing the country today from the list below

place by Vladimir Putin has been able to deliver on its promises for a more prosperous society characterized by order and stability. To be sure, this success has had more to do with high oil prices than anything inherent in the neo-authoritarian political system (McFaul and Stoner-Weiss 2008). But the regime has been successful in convincing the public that it is responsible for the restoration of order and stability,<sup>3</sup> likely confirming the belief that more authoritarian forms of government are better at providing things like stability, order, and economic performance. The lack of concern among Russians for things like freedom of speech (3.6 percent consider this to be a top problem), civil liberties (1.8 percent), and weakening democracy (1.0 percent) suggests for the time being that Russians are relatively content to enjoy the material comfort that the last decade has brought while willingly sacrificing some political rights.

But support for democracy is on the rise in Russia, as the results in chapter 5 showed.

<sup>3</sup>In my 2007 survey, over 80 percent of respondents in Russia selected Putin as the individual most responsible for the political and economic stabilization in Russia since the late 1990s.

There is reason to believe that this support is less superficial than in Belarus, as well. After all, Russia has had substantially more experience with democracy than Belarus, so current levels of democratic support likely take into account the still-fresh memories of the instability of the Yeltsin era. At the same time, Russia's population (especially in Moscow and St. Petersburg) is becoming increasingly affluent and westernized. In the long term, the generational turnover as the more authoritarian older generations pass on may also contribute to an aggregate liberalizing of the population, assuming that individuals socialized during the "Putin generation" are not inclined toward strong authoritarian preferences. Whether these dynamics will combine to eventually produce a population that wishes to reclaim some of the political liberties it has lost remains to be seen. Too many variables are involved to predict the timing (or even the occurrence) of such an outcome, but I would suggest that it is not outside the realm of possibilities.

### Directions for Future Research

I have already suggested possible directions for future research, including a deeper exploration of the conditions that allow for quick solidification of democratic rule that is resistant to future democratic skepticism. This research ultimately should be oriented toward providing a deeper understanding link between mass regime preferences and regime outcomes. How and under what conditions does support for democracy or authoritarianism influence the type of regime that a country has? The present work can be considered a first step in answering this question, but it is clearly the case that additional research is required to link popular support for democracy and authoritarianism to regime outcomes and other political phenomena of interest.

The exploration of regime preferences outside the cases I've explored here is another obvious extension of this research. I expect my explanation for regime preferences to function well in other post-Soviet and post-communist countries throughout Eastern Europe that were subject to many of the same influences as the countries I've studied here. Out of sample testing using existing survey data in other countries would therefore be a useful endeavor that I plan to carry out in the near future.

Similarly, the application of this research beyond the post-communist world provides intriguing opportunities. Of course, the historical processes of national identity development, political socialization, and foreign occupation will differ considerably, but similar modes of democratic culture formation may exist in other regions, particularly those with histories of occupation or colonization. Furthermore, the insights I've generated on economic and political transitions – and the long-lasting effects that these traumatic events have on citizens – are ripe for exploration in other political and geographical contexts. The present work will serve as a foundation to these future research efforts and thus represents a key step toward a more complete understanding of a question that has perplexed and confounded scholars and policy makers alike for decades: under what conditions will the seed of democracy germinate, grow, and thrive and how can we ensure that it does not wither and die? Understanding the structure and causes of democratic and authoritarian support in new democracies is an important step in this endeavor.

## 6.A Chapter 6 Statistical Appendix

Table 6.1: Summary statistics: Do you think that opposition political parties and groups that criticize the state's policies help or hurt the state's ability to perform its functions? (2008)

Country	Hurts, should be forbidden	Hurts, should be allowed	Helps
Country	Hurts, should be forbidden	Hurts, should be allowed	Helps
Russia	17.8 <sup>a</sup> (17.8) <sup>b</sup>	20.9 (21.2)	61.4 (61.0)
Belarus	34.6 (34.6)	24.5 (24.5)	40.9 (40.9)
Ukraine	25.5 (25.3)	24.4 (23.4)	50.1 (51.3)
Latvia	12.8 (12.6)	21.6 (21.8)	65.6 (65.6)

<sup>a</sup> Cells display sample-corrected percentage of respondents giving a particular answer.<sup>b</sup> Value in parentheses is the unweighted, uncorrected percentage.

Table 6.2: Summary statistics: Do you think that media which is critical of the state's policies help or hurt the state's ability to perform its functions? (2008)

Country	Hurts, should be forbidden	Hurts, should be allowed	Helps
Russia	12.9 <sup>a</sup> (13.1) <sup>b</sup>	17.3 (17.7)	69.7 (69.2)
Belarus	25.0 (24.6)	20.3 (20.5)	54.8 (54.9)
Ukraine	12.5 (11.8)	15.2 (14.8)	72.3 (73.3)
Latvia	9.6 (9.4)	16.3 (16.4)	74.1 (74.2)

<sup>a</sup> Cells display sample-corrected percentage of respondents giving a particular answer.

<sup>b</sup> Value in parentheses is the unweighted, uncorrected percentage.

Table 6.3: Regression Results

	(1) OPPOSITION	(2) OPPOSITION	(3) MEDIA	(4) MEDIA
pre-1991 dem experience	0.002 (0.973)	0.002 (0.980)	0.132* (0.078)	0.131* (0.081)
post-1991 dem experience	0.046 (0.139)	0.220** (0.014)	0.099* (0.050)	0.164** (0.030)
transition econ collapse	-0.731** (0.035)	1.466 (0.108)	-0.347 (0.500)	0.520 (0.562)
trans. econ X dem. experience		-0.489** (0.025)		-0.189 (0.224)
post-transition econ	0.143 (0.557)	0.148 (0.562)	0.213 (0.510)	0.219 (0.501)
household material sit. today	-0.050 (0.420)	-0.052 (0.403)	-0.073 (0.343)	-0.073 (0.342)
unemployed	0.045 (0.874)	0.051 (0.859)	-0.149 (0.667)	-0.148 (0.671)
urban	0.247 (0.165)	0.250 (0.158)	0.206 (0.371)	0.207 (0.368)
male	0.077 (0.458)	0.080 (0.445)	0.232* (0.066)	0.233* (0.064)
age	-0.005 (0.350)	-0.008 (0.145)	0.012* (0.095)	0.011 (0.153)
education	0.157** (0.028)	0.162** (0.024)	0.236** (0.020)	0.238** (0.019)
cut1	-1.054* (0.070)	-0.412 (0.511)	-0.903 (0.220)	-0.663 (0.353)
cut2	0.017 (0.976)	0.662 (0.294)	0.150 (0.828)	0.390 (0.570)
$N$	4501	4501	4501	4501
$P1 > F$		0.061		0.101

*p*-values in parentheses

Models: ordered logit

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

## APPENDIX A

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### Appendix: Data and Methods

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Field research for this study took place throughout 2007-2008 in Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, and Latvia. Research in Russia was conducted primarily from January-October 2007, and research in Belarus, Ukraine, and Latvia was conducted primarily from May-October 2008.

#### Qualitative Field Interviews

Qualitative field interviews were conducted throughout Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, and Latvia. The purpose of these interviews were to generate qualitative data for use in this research, as well as refine concepts in the development of closed-ended survey questions. Specific interview locations were selected throughout these countries based on particular characteristics of interest of the regions. In Russia, interviews were conducted in the oblasts of Tambov and Lipetsk, regions that are geographically close, share similar social characteristics, but have very different levels of GDP per capita, with Tambov's GDP per capita nearly twice that of Lipetsk. Thus, we obtain views from citizens living in regions characterized by very different levels of economic development. The Russian regions of Yaroslavl and Nizhny Novgorod were also selected because while they share a similar level of economic

development and other social characteristics, the competitiveness of regional elections differs significantly, with Nizhny Novgorod being a much more competitive regions. Thus, this comparison gives us variation in political environments that interview subjects live in. Initially these comparisons were designed before funding was secured for a large-n nationally representative survey. Once such a survey was possible, these particular comparisons and variations became less important, as the survey made it possible to test hypotheses using representative survey data. Nonetheless, the qualitative responses obtained during these interviews remained useful in illuminating the survey results and further refining concepts for future survey research.

In Belarus, the cities of Minsk, Vitebsk, and Brest were selected in order to provide geographical diversity within the interviewed population. In Ukraine, interviews were conducted in the cities of Lviv, Vinnytsia, and Donetsk, cities that were selected for their geographical positioning in the western, central, and eastern portions of the country, a historical geographical division that is central to the development of national identity in Ukraine. Finally, interviews in Latvia were conducted entirely in Riga, as approximately 32 percent of Latvia's population lives in the city. Additionally, the population of Riga is balanced between ethnic Latvians and Russians (with each group consisting of approximately 41 percent of the city's population), ensuring that both ethnic groups would be well-represented among interview subjects. This was particularly important because nationality is an important explanatory variable in my account of regime preferences.

In each location I was accompanied by a local research assistant, often a university student or local survey interviewer. Research assistants were instrumental in selecting several neighborhoods throughout each city in which to conduct interviews, having been instructed to select a mix of wealthy, middle-class, and lower-class neighborhoods. In Riga, the local assistants were also instructed to ensure that interviews were conducted in predominantly Latvian and predominantly Russian neighborhoods. Research assistants also served as translators in areas where interviews were not conducted in Russian, such as western and central Ukraine and Latvia. Translation was not necessary where interviews were conducted in Russian.



In each neighborhood, the research assistant and I selected an apartment building as the starting point of the route. We then proceeded to knock on doors in numerical order with no skipping. No more than 5 interviews were conducted in a single apartment building before moving on to a different building. Interviews were conducted during the evening to ensure that working individuals would be home and available for interviews. Usually the adult family member that answered the door was the individual interviewed; while a quota procedure was not used for qualitative interviews, there was generally gender parity among the interviewed population. Subjects were told that they were taking part in a sociological survey of political attitudes, that their participation was voluntary, and that their answers would remain confidential. All interviews were conducted according to Yale University IRB protocol number 0701002201.

### Survey Sampling Methodology

nationally representative surveys were conducted in Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, and Latvia by the independent survey research firm *Bashkirova and Partners* under the supervision of Dr. Elena Bashkirova, the firm's direct and former Head of Department of the Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences.<sup>1</sup> Survey questions were pilot tested in Russia in May-June 2007 in Tambov, Lipetsk, Yaroslavl, and Nizhegorod Oblasts under my direct supervision and with my participation. The sampling methodologies used for each country are as follows:

#### Russia Survey

The Russia survey was conducted in November 2008 and follows a multi-stage clustered sampling design with the raion <sup>2</sup> as the primary sampling unit. Raions were stratified

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<sup>1</sup>Quality control was ensured for each of the four surveys by verifying the participation of randomly selected individuals among those that were reported as having completed the survey. This verification was conducted by the staffs of country-level project directors in each country.

<sup>2</sup>In the Russian political hierarchy, raions correspond roughly to counties in the American context. They are nested within Russia's 83 "federal subjects" (oblasts, republics, krais, autonomous oblasts, autonomous okrugs, and federal cities) which are roughly comparable to American states. These federal subjects are nested within Russia's seven federal districts. The federal district is the highest level of political aggregation below the national level.

by federal district (Central, Southern, Northwestern, Far Eastern, Siberian, Urals, Volga, and North Caucasus Federal Districts) and population of the raion center and sampled according to the principle of probability proportionate to size (PPS). Towns and rural soviets were sampled at the second level using PPS; voting districts (urban) and villages (rural) were sampled at the third level, again by PPS;<sup>3</sup> households were sampled at the fourth level according to a route method with a skipping pattern; and individuals were selected at the fifth level using the “last birthday” method. Interviewers made up to three attempts during different times of the day to contact the selected individual if that individual were not available at the first point of household contact. A total of 1,501 individuals in 44 federal subjects (heretofore referred to as oblasts for simplicity) and 97 raions (PSU) were selected and interviewed face to face in Russian. 1501 interviews were completed out of 5999 contact attempts (doors knocked on) and 3667 successful contacts (doors opened). Thus, the response rate of interviews/contact attempts is 25.0 percent and the rate of interviews/successful contacts is 40.9 percent. During statistical analyses, the Russian survey data was weighted according to age, gender, education, and region.

### Belarus Survey

The Belarus survey was conducted in June-July 2008 according to a multi-stage clustered sampling design. Settlements serve as the primary sampling unit and are stratified by oblast (Minsk, Brest, Vitebsk, Gomel, Grodno, Mogilev) and settlement size. Settlements within each stratum are randomly selected at the first level according to PPS. At the second level sampling units (streets) were selected from a complete list of streets for a given settlement according to PPS. At the third level households are sampled according to a route method so that 7 interviews are conducted in every TSU; the number of TSUs is selected in order to maintain proportionality. At the fourth level individuals are selected according to the “last birthday” method, with interviewers making up to 3 attempts to contact the selected individual. A total of 1,000 individuals in 6 oblasts and 83 settlements (PSUs) were selected and interviewed face to face in Russian. 1,000 interviews were completed

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<sup>3</sup>A maximum of 12 interviews were conducted in each voting district.

out of 9,442 contact attempts (interviews/contact attempt rate = 10.6 percent) and 8,122 successful contacts (interviews/successful contacts rate = 12.3 percent).<sup>4</sup> For statistical analyses, the Belarusian survey data was weighted according to age, gender, education, and region.

### Ukraine Survey

The Ukraine survey was conducted in September 2008 according to a multi-stage clustered sampling design. Settlements serve as the primary sampling unit and are stratified by geographical region (Central, Western, Southern, Eastern) and settlement size. Settlements within each stratum are randomly selected at the first level according to PPS. At the second level secondary sampling units (usually a street or intersection) were randomly selected. Households were sampled according to a route method at the third level and individuals were sampled at the fourth level using the “last birthday” method. Interviewers made up to three attempts during different times of the day to contact the selected

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<sup>4</sup>The response rate for the Belarus survey was admittedly lower than the response rates for the other countries. This fact can be explained by an unfortunate incident that took place while the survey was in the field, the July 4, 2008 bomb explosion at a Minsk concert during (Belarusian) Independence Day celebrations. According to the Belarusian project directors, this incident in a society unused to such violence made individuals wary of strangers and thus more reluctant than usual to open their doors to survey interviewers. The fieldwork timeline for the Belarus survey had to be extended in order to obtain the required number of interviews given this situation. An alternative explanation, of course, is that individuals in authoritarian Belarus are simply less likely to complete surveys out of fear of negative consequences. Two facts counter this claim: first, individuals approached for qualitative field interviews in a similar manner seemed no less likely to agree to be interviewed than individuals in other countries. Secondly, typical response rates (interviews/successful contacts) for the Belarusian omnibus surveys is approximately 30 percent, in line with rates in Russia and Ukraine.

But is it possible that individuals particularly critical (or supportive) of the regime are more likely to agree to be interviewed? Since individuals do not know the content of survey questions prior to agreeing to be surveyed, it is unlikely that they did not make their decision to participate based on the subject of the survey, which was advertised as a political study. Thus, I maintain that we can be confident that individuals did not select into the sampled population based on their political views, such as regime support or dissent. As such, I believe that the Belarus survey remains a reliable sample of public opinion in Belarus.

Hovering over this entire discussion is the broader question of whether surveys of authoritarian countries are valid measures of public opinion. To this protest I would answer that every authoritarian country is different, and it is true that in some countries a political survey would be an unreliable instrument. However, Belarus is not Stalin’s Soviet Union, and people are more or less free to criticize the regime as long as they do not have the power, influence, or exposure to reach many people and therefore threaten the regime. And so people in Belarus are willing to complain about Batka (“papa” Lukashenko) in their courtyards and doorways, as evidenced by the critical remarks gathered in qualitative interviews. As an additional bit of evidence in support of surveys in authoritarian Belarus, consider that 31 percent of the sampled residents of Belarus have little or no confidence in the president, 38 percent have little or no confidence in the government, and 43 percent have little or no confidence in the parliament. This is hardly a marker of a terrified population cowed into silence.

individual if that individual were not available at the first point of household contact. A maximum of 15 interviews were conducted within each SSU, with the number of sampling points and respondents selected so as to maintain the appropriate sampling proportion. A total of 1,000 individuals were surveyed in 62 settlements (PSUs) across 22 of Ukraine's oblasts, as well as the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Kyiv. Interviewers were equipped with questionnaires in Russian and Ukrainian and conducted interviews in the respondent's preferred language. 1,000 interviews were completed out of 3510 contact attempts (interviews/contact attempt rate = 28.5 percent) and 2881 successful contacts (interviews/successful contacts rate = 34.7 percent). For statistical analyses, the Ukrainian survey data was weighted according to age, gender, and region.

### **Latvia Survey**

The Latvia survey was conducted in October 2008 according to a multi-stage clustered sampling design. Settlements serve as the primary sampling unit and are stratified by region (Riga, Vidzeme, Kurzeme, Latgale, and Zemgale) and settlement size. Settlements within each stratum are randomly selected at the first level according to PPS. At the second level, secondary sampling units (streets or intersections) are randomly selected. Households are sampled according to a route method at the third level, and individuals are selected at the fourth level based on a "last birthday" method. No more than 10 interviews were conducted within each SSU, with the number of units selected so as to maintain the appropriate sampling proportion. A total of 1,000 individuals were interviewed in 44 settlements in 26 districts across the 5 regions of Latvia. Interviewers were equipped with questionnaires in Latvian and Russian and conducted interviews in the respondent's preferred language. 1,000 interviews were completed out of 1,457 contact attempts (interviews/contact attempt rate = 68.6 percent) and 1310 successful contacts (interviews/successful contacts rate = 76.3 percent). Survey data from Latvia was weighted according to gender, age, and region.

## Other Survey Data

In the course of this dissertation, additional data from other surveys is used at times. This includes Gibson and Duch's 1990 survey of the European Soviet Union (Gibson and Duch 1990) and the multiple waves of the World Values Survey/European Values Survey that were conducted in the former Soviet countries throughout the 1990s and 2000s (European Values Study Group and World Values Survey Association 2006). Readers are encouraged to see the documentation for those surveys, available at ICPSR,<sup>5</sup> for more information on the sampling designs used for those surveys.

## Multiple Imputation of Missing Data

The problem of missing data is also a source of concern in the analysis of public opinion surveys. At best, missing data due to nonresponse leads to inefficiency as valuable (and costly) observations are eliminated due to missing values of the independent and dependent variables. Suddenly a sample size of 1,000 can be cut by a third or even worse if there are even moderate levels of missingness across a large set of independent variables. Valuable information in the non-missing data contained in observations subject to listwise deletion is wasted and estimate errors are increased by virtue of the smaller sample size. Even more troubling is the potential bias that arises from listwise deletion of missing data if missingness of variables is not random (King et al. 2001; King and Honaker 2009). In order to address the problem of missing data, I utilize the Amelia II program developed by King et al. to generate five sets of multiply-imputed data.<sup>6</sup> The rate of missingness, calculated as the number of missing cells (answers of "don't know" or "refuse") divided by the total number of cells in the data matrix (number of variables  $\times$  number of respondents) is presented in table A.1.

Clearly there is not a high level of missingness in any of the countries surveyed. Nonetheless, the benefits of greater efficiency and avoidance of possible bias through listwise

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<sup>5</sup><http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR>

<sup>6</sup>Data from all four surveys was combined into one unified data set prior to imputation, while preserving all required information identifying individuals at each sampling level.

Table A.1: Missingness in survey data

Country	Percent missing
Russia	9.3
Belarus	12.6
Ukraine	10.3
Latvia	7.9

deletion are worth the sometimes laborious process of data imputation.

### Analysis of Survey Data

Analysis of the survey data was conducted in Stata using methods for design-based estimation for complex multi-stage surveys.<sup>7</sup> These methods make it possible to produce weighted means suitable for producing point-estimates, as well as variance corrections that are true to the underlying clustered design of the national samples. To restate that in less technical language, in order to achieve unbiased estimates for regression coefficients and unbiased standard errors, we must account for the bias inherent in clustered survey sample designs. Thus, I conduct all analyses of the 2007-2008 survey data using methods that correct for survey design effects at the PSU level in order to produce unbiased estimates.<sup>8</sup> Responses of national samples are weighted according to the weighting variables described above for each country. When analyses were conducted on the combined data set of all four countries, a global weight that scaled these within-country weights according to each country's population size was used. Failure to utilize these methods could potentially produce biased coefficients and standard errors, as well as misleading significance levels.

The multiply-imputed survey data was analyzed in Stata using the `-mim-` package (Royston, Galati and Carlin 2008). Regression results for the analysis of categorical and limited dependent variables were often presented graphically throughout this work in the form of predicted probabilities. These predicted probabilities were calculated using the

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<sup>7</sup>These methods are utilized through the `-svy-` commands in Stata.

<sup>8</sup>Unfortunately sampling design information suitable for sample corrections was not available for the Gibson and Duch survey or the World Values/European Values Surveys. Weighting variables were used for those surveys when available.

-SPost- Stata module (Long and Freese 2003). Regression tables suitable for print were produced using the -estout- package in Stata (Jann 2007).

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