

Russian Attitudes towards Dictatorship and Democracy

Michael McFaul

A new narrative about Russia in the 1990s is beginning to take hold in academic and policy circles. It sounds a lot like a very old story about Russians and their love of order, strong hands, and paternalistic leaders. Russia experiment with democracy and markets has not succeeded, so the new conventional wisdom holds. Democracy has become a dirty word in Russia today. This failure in turn has fueled disenchantment with democratic norms within Russian society. Instead of democracy, Russians now want law and order and are willing to give up a lot to achieve these ends. A national poll conducted by the Center for the Study of Public Opinion (VTsIOM) in January 2000 found that 75 percent of respondents agreed with the statement that order was more important than democracy, even if the pursuit or more required some violations of democratic principles and limits on personal freedoms.¹ Citing these public attitudes as evidence, some even posit that authoritarian rule is what Russians have always wanted. Russians are culturally predisposed to a desire a strong paternalistic state and an authoritarian leader.² Hundreds of years of tsarist rule and Orthodox Christianity made them that way. From this perspective, Russia's inability to institutionalize democracy in the past decade demonstrates continuity not only with Russia's communist legacy, but also with authoritarian political

¹ Yurii Levada, "Rukha Putina okazalos' ne zhestkoi,"

² Stephen White, *Political Culture and Soviet Politics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979).

culture in pre-Revolutionary Russia.³ Russia's recent failed attempts at creating democratic institutions reflect continuity with Russia's past and the persistence of culture as the explanation for these failures. As Biryukov and Sergeyev have summarized:

So far there have been six failures during the last ninety years. These take into account the First-Second, and Fourth State Duma in 1906, 1907 and 1917; the Constituent Assembly in 1918; the Congress of Peoples' Deputies and the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and the Russian Federation in 1991 and 1993. Given this, it is more than appropriate to ask why all attempts to institute representative authority in Russia seem to come to an apparently inevitable dramatic, not to say, tragic end? Since these events occurred under different historic circumstances and different regimes, it is also appropriate -- in our inquiry concerning factors that prevent development of representative democracy in Russia -- to turn to those features in Russian society that undergo slow changes and remain relatively invariable under all political regimes. Political culture is presumably, the first to be considered.⁴

According to some analysts, the communist interlude between these democratic failures at the beginning and end of the century only reinforced anti-democratic tendencies that had been part of Russian life for centuries.⁵ Homo Sovieticus was Homo Russicus and the

³ For a comprehensive argument from this perspective, see especially Nikolai Biryukov and Victor Sergeyev, *Russia's Road to Democracy: Parliament, Communism and Traditional Culture*, (London: Edward Elgar, 1993).

⁴ Biryukov and Sergeyev, *Russian Politics in Transitions*, p. 3.

⁵ Robert Tucker, "Sovietology and Russian History," *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (1992), pp. 175-196; and Sergeyev and Biryukov, *Russia's Road to Democracy*, p. 208.

burden of this past was extremely heavy.⁶ Formal institutions could be changed relatively quickly, but changing habits and attitudes would take a long time.⁷ Such cultural explanations of Russia's difficult attempt to create new democratic institutions are pervasive in Western analyses.⁸ Vast and unruly Russia can only be ruled, so the argument goes, by a dictatorial leader in the center.

This emphasis on Russian culture casts the people as co-conspirators in causing "democratic failure." Because democratic societies produce and support democratic institutions,⁹ the absence of a democratic society means that democratic institutions also cannot take hold. This explanation for Russia's poor attempt at democracy building also implies that Russia is not (and never will be) part of the West. Democracy is a Western concept and its failure to take hold in Russia is cited as another sign that Russia is not a Western nation and Russians not a Western people.¹⁰ Closely related to this argument is

⁶ The most brilliant rendition of this approach is Ken Jowitt, *The New World Disorder: The Leninist Extinction*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992).

⁷ Steele, *Eternal Russia*, p. 58; Murray, *Democracy of Despots*, p. 224.

⁸ Important cultural approaches include Tim McDaniel, *The Agony of the Russian Idea* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Victor Sergeyev and Nikolai Biryukov, *Russia's Road to Democracy: Parliament, Communism and Traditional Culture*, (London: Edward Elgar, 1993); and Nikolai Biryukov and Victor Sergeyev, *Russian Politics in Transitions* (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 1997). In the policy-making community, cultural arguments are especially prevalent. See, for instance, Chuck Hagel and Jack Reed, "Russia at a Crossroad," *Journal of Commerce*, February 2, 1999; and George F. Will, "The Primacy of Culture," *Newsweek*, January 18, 1999. On the role of culture in democratization more generally, see Seymour Martin Lipset, "The Social Requisites of Democracy Revisited," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 59 (February 1994) pp. 1-22.

⁹ Robert Dahl, *A Preface to Democratic Theory* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1956) p. 143.

¹⁰ On democracy as a Western idea, see Samuel Huntington, "After Twenty Years: The Future of the Third Wave," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (October 1997), pp.3-12; and Russell Bova, "Democracy and Liberty: The Cultural Connection," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 8, No. (January 1997) pp. 112-126.

the claim that Russia is unique. Russian leaders, Russian scholars, and Russia area specialists in the West frequently return to this refrain as an explanation for why theories derived from analyses of other countries do not work for the Russian experience.¹¹ The famous lines from Fedor Tyutchev, the nineteenth-century poet, succinctly captures this approach to the study of Russia: "Russian cannot be understood with the mind, nor can she be measured with a common yardstick; she has her own way of being; in Russia one simply believes."¹² Some make the same uniqueness arguments when explaining Russian attitudes toward private property and markets. Stephen Cohen, for instance, argues, that "a fully capitalism system is in conflict with Russia's tradition."¹³ Others cite the absence of a rule-of-law culture to explain crime and corruption in contemporary Russia.

Putin's rise to power seems to confirm this interpretation of Russian culture and history. After a decade of chaos and anarchy, Russians yearned for a military man in the Kremlin who would deliver order and stability. Putin's decisive use of force against the Chechens made him popular and the easy winner of the March 2000 presidential election. The correlation of his assault on democratic institutions and his sustained popularity is cited as confirming evidence for support for dictatorship in Russia. The drift towards authoritarian practices in Russia, so the argument goes, is exactly what the Russians want. This argument is convenient for President Putin, and is, not surprisingly, propagated by analysts and politicians supportive of him.

¹¹ See for instance, the interview with Yeltsin in *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, August 19, 1995, pp. 1-2; quoted here from *What the Papers Say*, August 21, 1995, p. 11.

¹² Quoted here from *The Economist*, July 3, 1999, p. 43.

¹³ Stephen Cohen, *Failed Crusade: America and the Tragedy of Post-Communist Russia* (New York: Norton, 2000), p. 48.

This paper challenges this new narrative on Russian politics. Using data on Russian public opinion collected during the 1999-2000 electoral cycle, we offer a more nuanced and complex picture of Russian attitudes toward democracy.¹⁴ We do not challenge the observation that Russian democratic institutions are performing poorly and that Russian leaders, especially since Putin's rise to power, have done much to erode and undermine democratic practices.¹⁵ However, our data suggests that this democratic backsliding is not caused or even supported by public attitudes about democracy. Russian voters share our negative assessment of the way that Russian democratic institutions work today. However, it is wrong to extrapolate from this assessment the Russian voters

¹⁴ The information reported in this paper come from three surveys conducted during the 1999-2000 electoral cycle. A total of 1,919 voters were interviewed between November 13 and December 13, and 1,842 of them were interviewed again after the Duma election, between December 25 and January 31. A third wave of the survey of 1,755 people was completed in April-May 2000 soon after the March 2000 presidential election. They were selected in a multistage area-probability sample of the voting-age population, with sampling units in thirty-three regions of the Russian Federation. The work was carried out by the Demoscope group at the Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, headed by Polina Kozyreva and Mikhail Kosolapov, and was funded by the National Science Foundation and the National Council for Eurasian and East European Research.

¹⁵ On the weakness of Russian liberal institutions, see Michael McFaul, "What Went Wrong in Russia? The Perils of a Protracted Transition," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (April 1999) pp. 4-18; McFaul, "Russia's 'Privatized' State as an Impediment to Democratic Consolidation," Part II, *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (Summer 1998), pp. 219-236; and McFaul, "Russia's 'Privatized' State as an Impediment to Democratic Consolidation," Part I, *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (Spring 1998), pp. 25-33. On Putin's corrosive role for democratic consolidation, see McFaul, "The Power of Putin," *Current History* (October 2000) pp. 307-314; and Russian Under Putin: One Step Forward, Two Steps Backward, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (July 2000) 19-33.

also reject democratic values and ideas. Even Putin's own electorate is more pro-democratic than the new narrative on Russia's authoritarian drift assumes.

To make these arguments, this paper proceeds in ??? part. Section One explores attitudes among voters about the way Russian democracy works. This section demonstrates that people in Russia are not satisfied with their government. Section Two discusses attitudes towards the general idea of concept of democracy as a system. This section demonstrates that democracy is not a dirty word among Russian voters. Section Three describes Russian attitudes about specific components of a democratic system, demonstrating that support for these more concrete aspects of democracy is even more robust than the abstract concept of democracy. Section Four turns to the difficult issue of hypothetical tradeoffs between order and democracy. Our results offer a somewhat different picture than previous polls and suggest that Russians are not so eager to give up their individual liberties as we once suspected. Section Five concludes.

I. Popular Assessments of the *Practice* of Democracy in Russia

For the last decade, Russian leaders in power have told the Russian voters that the system in government in place in Russia is democracy. To date, Russians do not like what they see. As Table 1 indicates, when asked about the level of satisfaction with the practice of democracy in democracy, the overwhelming majority of Russians are displeased.

TABLE ONE HERE

When asked about whether the political system could be considered a democracy at all, half of all respondents answered no.

TABLE TWO HERE

Frustration with the operations of the government is extremely high. The vast majority of respondents believe that the system of government in place in Russia today does not work.

TABLE THREE HERE

When asked about government responsiveness and accountability, 24.5 percent fully agreed and 59.6 percent agreed with the statement, government officials do not care about what the people think. In reaction to the statement, "people like me have no say in what the government does," 14.4 percent fully agreed, and 41.8 percent agreed. While only 28.9 percent disagreed and completely disagreed. Given this level of satisfaction with the current order, it should not be surprising that many in Russia are nostalgic for the old Soviet system.

TABLE FOUR

When asked specifically about the Soviet collapse, 37.9 percent fully agree and 35.2 percent agree that the Soviet Union should never under any circumstances have been dissolved while only 11.8 percent disagreed and only .9 percent fully disagreed with this statement. If Russia was to have experienced a democratic revolution after the collapse of Soviet communism, it appears to have been a rather unpopular one. To be sure, the sources of nostalgia are many. Likewise, the causes of dissatisfaction regarding the political system may have as more to do with very high negative attitudes towards the economy than any political factor. Democracy as the polity in Russia is called has failed to deliver a better economic life for the vast majority of Russian citizens, so it is only logical that this political system received low scores. Nonetheless, these levels of dissatisfaction with the post-communist governance in Russia are alarming.

II. Popular Attitudes about the *Idea* of Democracy

In all democracies, especially new democracies, dissatisfaction with the practice of democracy often leads an erosion in the support for democracy as a political system.¹⁶ In Russia, this is most certainly the case. For instance, support for democracy writ large declined considerably in the immediate aftermath of the confrontation between the parliament and president in October 1993.¹⁷ People did not like the practice of politics they were witnessing. Since this practice of politics was called democracy, their support for democracy and the "democrats" declined. Over time, however, Russian votes seem to

¹⁶ Diamond, *Developing Democracy*,

¹⁷ See McFaul, *Russia's Unfinished Revolution*, chapter four.

have recognized the difference the democracy practiced in Russia and the ideal or norm of democracy that Russia's political system had failed to achieve. As already noted, votes expressed extreme dissatisfaction with democracy in our polls. When asked about support for the idea of democracy, the results were very different.

To try to capture attitudes about the democracy from all different angles (and avoid leading questions), we asked several different kinds of questions. In answer to the most straightforward question, 'do you in general support the idea of democracy or do you not support the idea of democracy,' 62.9 percent supported the concept, while only 18.6 percent were against democracy, and another 17.8 percent answered that it was hard to say. As a general idea, then, Russians overwhelmingly embrace democracy. Contrary to many journalistic reports, 'democracy' has not become a dirty word for most Russian voters. In the abstract and as a binary question -- democracy or not -- to answer in the affirmative may not tell us much about either the respondents understanding of or deep commitment to the concept. Consequently, we asked the several variations of the same question. For instance, we asked if democracy is an appropriate way for Russia to be governed. Russian voters, after all, may think that democracy is a appealing concept in the abstract or an appropriate way for governing in rich, Western countries, but still inappropriate for contemporary Russia. Russian commentators often refer to democracy as a luxury that Russia cannot afford right now. However, Russian voters, as Table Five indicates, disagree.

TABLE FIVE HERE

Equally striking, Russian voters also seem to understand that no political system is perfect. In response to the Churchill question about democracy, a plurality of Russian voters agree that democracy is the best form of government when compared to the alternatives.

TABLE SIX HERE

When asked about government accountability, we reported above that most Russian voters do not think that their government is responsive to their needs. In the abstract, however, these same people believe that democracies in general give citizens more control over their leaders than dictatorships. The set of answers to this question is especially interesting since most of these voters have direct experience with dictatorship.

TABLE SEVEN HERE

It is tempting to argue that this strong support for the general idea of democracy is simply a proxy for strong support for ideas associated with the West. Russians support the idea of democracy because they associate the concept with the rich West. Our data does not allow us a way to disentangle if support for democracy might be a proxy for some deeper

set of associations. However, envy of the West is not the force it once was in Russia a decade earlier, while democracy is not an idea that seems totally understood as a monopoly of the "West." We asked Russian voters, 'Should Russia utilize the experience of the West or should it seek out its own path of development?' Admittedly, this question does not distinguish between political and economic development. Nonetheless, the results are interesting, showing a real even divide between those who look to the West as a model and source of ideas and those seek to find Russian own, unique path.

TABLE EIGHT HERE

In comparing these figures with percentages on support for democracy above, it is clear that some portion of the population both embraces the idea of democracy and yet does not look to the West for idea about development. Democracy as a concept or idea may have achieved some independence from the West, a finding that undermines the arguments of those who try to juxtapose democratic ideas against non-Western cultures. As the experience of German, Japanese, or Botswana democracy demonstrates, countries can build democratic institutions without becoming facsimiles of the United States. Our data hints that a similar process of Russifying the idea of democracy may be taking place.

III. Popular Attitudes about the *Components* of Democracy

The word, democracy, is an obtuse, abstract reference to system of governance that can mean many things to different people.¹⁸ This word has been used to describe everything from the Greek city-states to the German Democratic Republic. Soviet ideology was never anti-democratic, just anti-capitalist. Likewise, Boris Yeltsin's appropriation of the term to describe his reforms and his allies -- the "democrats" versus the "communists" -- also served to distort if not discredit the term. To understand people's attitudes about democracy, therefore, requires questions pertaining to specific institutions and practices of democracy.

When disaggregated into specific components, support for democratic institutions and practices among Russian voters are even higher than the already surprisingly high support for democracy as a general concept. Regarding the most basic component of a minimalist democracy, elections, Russian voters overwhelmingly believe in them. A robust 85.7 percent of respondents to our surveys answered that it was important to elect the country's leaders, while only 10.4 percent responded that it was not important. When

¹⁸ This is a problem that both citizens and scholars analyzing citizens face. Throughout the 1990s, there has been real debate about whether Russia was a democracy or not. And if not a liberal democracy, was/is it an electoral democracy, a semi-democracy, a democratic monarchy, or just your generic autocracy? For varying opinions, see, McFaul, *Russia's Unfinished Revolution*; Peter Reddaway and Dmitri Glinski, *Market Bolshevism: The Tragedy of Russia's Reforms*, (Washington: U.S. Institute of Peace, 2000); and Lilia Shevtsova, *Yeltsin's Russia: Myths and Realities* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999); and Stephen Cohen, "Russian Studies without Russia," *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (1999) pp. 37-55. On the debates about the concept and attempts to measure the practice, see Philippe Schmitter and Terry Karl, "What Democracy Is ... and Is Not," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 2 No. 3 (Summer 1991) pp. 75-88; David Collier and Steve Levitsky, "Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research," *World Politics*, Vol. 49, No. 3 (April 1997), pp. 430-451. Research projects have attempted to quantify the degree of democracy. See, for instance, the rating system in Adrian Karatnycky, Alexander Motyl, and Charles Graybow, eds., *Nations in Transit: Civil Society, Democracy and Markets in East Central Europe and the Newly Independent States* (New York, 1999).

asked about citizen responsibilities, 86.1 percent fully agreed or agreed that it is the duty of each citizen to vote in elections, while only 5.8 percent disagreed or completely disagreed. Perhaps these figures explain why voter turnout in Russian national elections has hovered around two-thirds, except for the dip in voter participation in the December 1993 parliamentary elections and referendum.¹⁹

Elections, of course, are only one component of a consolidated democracy, and supporting them as a practice could theoretically be a legacy of the Soviet era since leaders back then were "elected" as well.²⁰ Russian voters, however, support many other components of the democratic polity that did not exist in Soviet times. In response to the question, 'how important is freedom of the press, radio, and television,' 79.4 percent answered important while only 15.3 percent answered not important. And unlike some of the other responses to abstract questions about democracy in general, those that answered hard to say to this question about the free press was very low, .9 percent. In response to the question, 'how important is freedom to follow any religion,' 69.4 percent answered important while 26.4 percent answered not important. To the more general, 'how important is freedom of expression,' an amazing 85.1 percent answered important compared to only 11.2 percent who answered unimportant.

¹⁹ In retrospect, this dip in 1993 should not have been surprising given the bad behavior of elected officials only a few months earlier. At the time, many predicted that the fall in turnout reflected a more general trend in voter apathy. Subsequently, the two national electoral cycles in 1995-1996 and 1999-2000 demonstrated that December 1993 was the aberration, not the beginning of a new trend.

²⁰ See chapter one of Stephen White, Richard Rose, and Ian McAllister, *How Russia Votes* (Chatham House Publishers: Chatham, New Jersey 1997).

Regarding more complex democratic ideas -- or perhaps more precisely, liberal ideas -- support among Russians does not reach near unanimity, but the level of support is still striking. As Table Nine illustrates, more Russians are willing to let some criminals go in the name of preserving the right of individuals than those that are not willing to support such a principle.

TABLE NINE HERE

Support for this idea requires a rather sophisticated understanding of the rule of law that we would expect would not be present in Russia where the rule of law is weak at best, non-existent at worst.²¹ We should expect that the poor performance of legal system would undermine support for the idea of the rule of law. And, without question, the high number of people that disagreed with the statement in Table Nine is disturbing. Yet, this split result does not support the hypothesis that Russians yearn for law and order not matter what the cost, a topic discussed in detail below.

Regarding checks and balances and the separation of powers between different political institutions, again rather complex democratic ideas, a majority of Russians favors liberal and federal practices. Cultural theorists and Kremlin propagandists often assert that the Russian people want a strong president as the head of the government, unconstrained by other political actors or agents. In fact, however, Russians seem more comfortable with a division of power between the president and other political actors. In

²¹ See the reports of dissatisfaction with courts system as tallied in Ronald Pope, "The rule of Law and Russian Culture -- Are They Compatible?" *Demokratizatsiya*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Spring 1999) pp. 204-213.

response to the question, should the president or parliament be stronger, the largest number of respondents moved to the middle to advocate that these two branches of government should have equal power.

TABLE TEN HERE

This result is especially striking given the low level of respect the parliament in Russia enjoys. In our questions about trust in institutions, the parliament ranked near the bottom, well below the most trusted army and Russian Orthodox Church. Again, in ranking the actual parliament so low, but still embracing the norm of separation of powers, Russian citizens demonstrate a rather sophisticated understanding of the democracy.

Nor do Russians appear to want to give the center more power over regional governments. Again, when asked if the center of regions should have more power, the majority of respondents gravitated to the neutral answer of some power to the center, some power to the regions.

TABLE 11 HERE

On the related question of Chechnya, our results were most surprising. Using a five-point scale, we asked Russians about their attitudes regarding the ‘Chechnya problem.’ On our

scale, 1 denotes that Russian should keep at all costs and 5 denotes that it is necessary to let Chechnya cede from the Russian Federation. As Table Twelve illustrates, the largest number of respondents believe that Chechnya should remain a part of Russia no matter the cost, but a near equal number of respondents advocated the Chechnya be allowed to become an independent country.

TABLE 12 HERE

This is a different question than support for the war or not. General support for Putin's handling of the Chechen war has remained nearly sixty percent since the second invasion began in the summer of 1999.²² Support and trust of the military has also remained high.²³ Yet, the same percentage of Russian citizens of voting age does not endorse Putin's final objective in the war, that is keeping Chechnya as a part of Russia no matter what the cost. The more nationalistic, chauvinistic explanations for support of the war also do not appear to be as robust as reported. Though every scholar of Russian society has heard or experienced anecdotal evidence of racist sentiment towards Chechens and other minorities among ethnic Russians, such sentiment, as Table Thirteen indicates, is not a majority view.

²² On the relationship between the popular war and Putin's rise to power, see Peter Rutland, "Putin's Path to Power, *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (October-December 2000) pp. 322-324.

²³ At the same time, 80.3 percent of respondents to our poll either fully agreed or agreed that Russian should have a professional army, consisting of paid volunteers, instead of an army of conscript soldiers. Only 8.2 percent disagreed or completely disagreed with the idea of a volunteer army. Russian apparently do not mind fighting the war in Chechnya just as long as they or their family members do not have to fight it.

TABLE 13 HERE

The distribution of responses along this five-point scale changes only marginally among ethnic Russians only.

Even extremely unpopular actors and organizations are recognized as a necessary for a democratic system. Political parties enjoy the lowest level of trust among all of Russia's institutions and organizations. Yet, when asked how necessary are political parties in making the Russian political system work, many more respondents answered that they were necessary compared with those who asserted that they were unnecessary.

TABLE 14 HERE

Similarly, though by a smaller margin, more people agreed than disagreed with the statement that competition among political parties makes the polity stronger.

TABLE 15 HERE

If Russians are willing to accept political parties – organizations deemed to be inept, marginal, and ineffective in other polls – as a necessary evil of democracy, then the level

of understanding of democratic theory and practice among Russian may be much higher than we usually assume.

IV. Democracy versus Order: A False Dichotomy and Unpopular Tradeoff

When asked the dichotomous question, do you prefer order or democracy, 72 percent of Russian respondents selected order, while only 13 percent chose democracy.²⁴ Many analysts have extrapolated from this data a thirst for dictatorship and a rejection of democracy within Russian society today. Proponents of autocracy, be they businessmen who want more radical economic reform or military officers who desire a stronger more internationally feared state, cite these figures to argue that authoritarian rule is popular. If the majority want order and are willing to sacrifice democracy to achieve this end, then autocratic policies are legitimate.

The logic of such arguments is flawed. Order and democracy are not two extreme points on a continuum. To imply in a question that there must be a tradeoff presents the respondent to a poll with a false dichotomy. In our surveys, Russian respondents seem to understand the trap. When asked to react to the statement 'democracies are not any good at maintaining order,' respondents were divided. As Table 16 shows, slightly more people disagreed or completely disagreed with this statement as those whom fully agreed and agreed.

Table 16 here

²⁴ This was a VTsIOM poll as cited in Rutland, "Putin's Path to Power," p.345.

Russian voters also do not seem to embrace the clichés about the ineptitude of democracies for making decisions or executing economic reform. When asked if 'democracies are indecisive and have too much squabbling' (a question which admittedly makes it easy for the respondent to agree), more disagree with this statement than agree.

Table 17 here

Russians may very well believe that their own government is indecisive and squabbles too much, but they do make this assumption about democracy in the abstract. On the more specific relationship between democracy and the economy, Russians categorically reject the idea that democracies are bad for the economy.

Table 18 here

Again, because we know that Russians are unsatisfied with their economy and their democracy, this poll result suggests a rather sophisticated understanding of how democracy and the economy *should* interact with each other. Knowledge about the successful experience of market democracies in the West probably informs this attitude. In any case, the results expressed in Table 18 suggest that a Pinochet-style dictatorship in the name of market reform would not necessarily be popular.

Our polls suggest that the willingness to forego concrete rights or sacrifice specific democratic institutions for more order is much lower than previous polls have implied. The difference may be that we asked respondents about specific democratic practices and not the more general and abstract notion of democracy. When asked to give up real rights and real practices, the results are more divided. For instance, as Table 19 shows, we asked Russian voters how should order in Russia be achieved, with one representing "at all costs" and 5 representing "only without violating citizen's rights." The results are strikingly skewed in favor of the most cautious answer.

Table 19 here.

People want more order but they are not prepared to give up much to achieve it. When asked the dichotomous question, are you prepared to support censorship of the press and television to achieve greater order, only 35.5 percent answered yes, while 49.8 answered no. Likewise, support for emergency rule in the name of order was low; only 31 percent were prepared to back emergency rule for more order, while 52.4 percent were not prepared. The only component of democratic system that a majority was prepared to sacrifice to achieve more order was the political party system. A solid majority, 67.2 percent were prepared to ban political parties if the act brought about more order, while only 17.8 percent were not prepared to support this anti-democratic act. Obviously, these numbers suggest that democratic values in Russia do not have deep roots yet. Instead, they reflect a rather divided society. At the same time, these numbers also suggest that the thirst for order within Russia no matter what the cost is not as overwhelming as analysts often suggest.

When the question is not an abstract choice between "order" and "democracy", but a concrete choice about a course of action that might produce more order, support falls off dramatically. When asked about trust in institutions, Russians fully trust (11.6 percent) or trust (64.7 percent) the Russian Army more than any other institution or actor in Russia today.²⁵ Yet, when asked is having the army rule an appropriate way of governing Russia, 37.4 percent responded that military rule would be a very bad way and 33.1 percent responded that such a regime change would be a fairly bad to govern Russia. Only 15.1 percent said that army rule would be a very good way or fairly good way to govern Russia. Russians want more order *and* more democracy.

V. CONCLUSION

If Russian culture was anti-liberal, anti-democratic, and anti-individual liberties for centuries, then the 1990s may represent a revolutionary change in culture in only ten short years.²⁶ This rapid change in attitudes is especially striking considering how slow and incomplete has been the parallel change in political institutions. Scholars throughout the 1970s and 1980s portrayed the process of democratization as an elite affair, a bargain between elites, which produced new democratic institutions. These democratic institutions then helped to change society along more democratic and liberal dimensions.

²⁵ Complementing these high levels of support for the current army is also strong support for a new professional army comprised of paid volunteers. An amazing 43.4 percent fully agree and 36.9 percent agree that Russia needs this new kind of army, while only 6.4 percent disagree and 1.8 percent completely disagree.

²⁶ Some have argued that Russia has deep democratic legacies from its past. See Nicolai Petro, *The Rebirth of Russian Democracy: An Interpretation of Political Culture*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995).

The Russian case suggests a different dynamic; the people have embraced democratic values a lot faster than the elites have negotiated democratic institutions.