

Russia

Rice

In 1919, Russia was already a single-party, communist state under the leadership of Vladimir Lenin, who was the leader of the Russian Communist Party of Bolsheviks (RCP). When Lenin died, he was replaced by Josef Stalin, who had consolidated his power enough to be elected as General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (no SOLS change). The RCP changed its name to the All-Union Communist Party of the Bolsheviks in 1925, which is why Stalin's SOLS is listed as AUCP as opposed to the RCP (no SOLS change). Russia remained a single-party state (and was a part of the Soviet Union) until 1991. From 1994 until present, Russia is considered a personalist authoritarian regime by GWF and Cheibub et al. (2010). However, based on our coding rules it is a mixed democracy between 2000 and 2006 (Gueorguieva & Simon 2008; Willerton 2013).

In 1953, Stalin died in office. Stalin died without a successor, so there was some confusion concerning who would run the country after his demise. For a few days, his top aid, Georgy Malenkov, served as General Secretary until the Presidium and Central Committee could agree on who would run the party and country. Eventually, they chose Nikita Khrushchev as the leader. Malenkov continued to serve as Prime Minister until his rivalry with Khrushchev facilitated his resignation in 1955. At any rate, neither of these changes represented a significant SOLS change because the same party was still in power. It should be mentioned that in 1952 the party had changed its name from the AUCP to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU).

In 1964, the Central Committee of the CPSU ousted Khrushchev from leadership, citing his failing domestic policies. This move saw Leonid Brezhnev come to power in the party, and he occupied the leadership until his death in 1982. The terms of the next two general secretaries were short on account of poor health; Yuri Andropov served from 1982 to his death in 1984, and Konstantin Chernenko lasted from just 1984 to 1985. Finally, in 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev became the last Secretary General of the CPSU. As previously stated, none of the leadership transitions discussed thus far constitute SOLS changes.

Reforms brought about by Gorbachev ultimately caused the unraveling of the USSR. Calls for radical change soon dictated the country's course, and Boris Yeltsin was elected to the presidency as an independent. This signified a major SOLS change as the CPSU was no longer in control of the government and the party's Secretary General was no longer head of state. A failed coup attempt in 1993 underscored the ability of Yeltsin and the reformers to continue shaping the government, and a new parliament was elected shortly thereafter that was much more conducive to further change. Starting in 1993, GWF code Yeltsin's regime as personalist. In 1991 and 1992, we code it as a non-specific autocratic system.

In 1999, Yeltsin resigned and Vladimir Putin became the acting president only to be elected officially in 2000. This does not indicate a SOLS change since Putin was effectively a pre-designated successor. While GWF continue to code a personalist system, since POLITY codes Russia as democratic from 2000-2007, we code that period according to our rules for democracies. In 2007, the regime transitions back to non-democracy and is coded as personalist. Putin briefly had his own political party in 2008 called the United Russian Party, but it had no real impact. In 2008, Putin's term expired, and his hand-picked successor Dmitri Medvedev

became President, while Putin assumed the role of PM. Because power continued to lie in the hands of Putin we continue coding Putin through 2008.

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