

Russia

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Russia is considered authoritarian from 1919 to 1945. Geddes codes the USSR as a single-party regime starting in 1917. From 1917 until 1923 Vladimir Ilich Lenin of the Russian Communist Party of Bolsheviks (RCP) ruled as Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars. (Note that there is indication that the regime had personalist features as well. "Although a collective of prominent communists nominally guided the party and the Soviet Union, Lenin commanded such prestige and authority that even such brilliant theoreticians as Trotsky and Nikolay Bukharin generally yielded to his will. But when Lenin became temporarily incapacitated after a stroke in May 1922, the unity of the Politburo fractured... Lenin recovered late in 1922 and found fault with the troika, and particularly with Stalin." [US Library of Congress].)

In 1923 Lenin died and "the Central Committee elected Josef Stalin [...] to the new post of General Secretary" (Worldstatesmen.org). This is not a SOLS change because he also belonged to the RCP. In 1925 the RCP's name changed to the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks (AUCP) (Worldstatesmen.org) and Stalin's affiliation changed accordingly. This is not a SOLS change. Stalin ruled through 1945.

Russia (from 1945 until 1991 known as the Soviet Union) is coded as a single-party authoritarian regime from 1945 until 1991 under the rule of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). The CPSU was formally known as the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks (AUCP). The name change occurred in 1952. None of the leadership changes during this period are SOLS changes—from Stalin to Malenkov or from Malenkov to Khrushchev in 1953; from Khrushchev to Brezhnev in 1964; from Brezhnev to Andropov in 1982; from Andropov to Chernenko in 1984; or from Chernenko to Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985. Between 1989 and 1991 the Soviet Union was in a state of collapse. Lithuania declared unilateral independence from the Soviet Union in March 1990. As the Soviet Union's power waned, Boris Yeltsin began to challenge Gorbachev's power. The Library of Congress explains: "The major challenge to Gorbachev, however, came not from the non-Russian constituent republics but from Russia itself... in the late 1980s average Russians increasingly saw the CPSU's efforts to co-opt and coerce the other nationalities as debasing the Russian language and culture and depleting Russian natural and financial resources. Gorbachev viewed this growing body of opinion with fear, but Yeltsin, who had been learning from the Baltic republics' struggle, saw it as providing an opportunity. Yeltsin took up the cause of Russia's rights within the union, making alliances with both Russian nationalists and Russian liberals."

On June 11, 1990 Russia became an independent state. The next day, Yeltsin was elected president of Russia and took the oath of office to become president on July 10th. This is a SOLS change because the dominance of the single-party regime was ended and Yeltsin presided over a new state with a different constituency. We code a non-specific autocratic regime from 1991-92 and from 1994 until present, Russia is considered a personalist authoritarian regime by GWF and Cheibub et al. (2010). However, based on our coding rules (POLITY codes Russia as democratic) it is a mixed democracy between 2000 and 2006 (Gueorguieva & Simon 2008; Willerton 2013). Gorbachev resigned as leader of the Soviet Union on December 25, 1991 and eleven days later, it was formally dissolved. In August 1999 Yeltsin named Vladimir Putin to the post of prime minister. "Putin, Yeltsin told Russians in a television broadcast, would be 'able to consolidate society' and to 'ensure the continuation of reform'" (White 2000, 304). Yeltsin

resigned on December 31, 1999 and Putin became “Acting President” (U.S. Department of State). This is not a SOLS change since Putin was Yeltsin’s predesignated successor. In March 2000 Putin won national elections to become president. In 2008, Putin “made clear that he would relinquish the presidency and take the position of prime minister after his protégé, First Deputy Prime Minister Dmitri Medvedev, was elected president” (Goldman 2008). Medvedev was elected in March 2008 and inaugurated as president in May. Because power continued to lie in the hands of Putin we continue coding Putin through 2008.

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Pre-1945 reviewed by Michaela Mattes 02/10/2012

Pre-1945 reviewed by Eelco van der Maat for reconciliation 09/15/2012 (no revisions required)

Post-1945 checked by Michaela Mattes (Vanderbilt) on 11/01/2010

Post-1945 updated by Mariana Rodriguez (Vanderbilt) on 9/14/2011

Post-1945 updated by Naoko Matsumura (Rice) on 06/13/2012

Combined by Matt DiLorenzo (Vanderbilt) on 06/13/2013

Edited by Andrew Wood (Rice) on 5/24/2014

Edited by Ashley Leeds on 09/22/14

Revised by Michaela Mattes on 8/4/2015