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Perceived Political Freedom
in the Soviet Union

James L. Gibson
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The question of how political freedom gets allocated in societies is one of utmost importance for political science. Different polities allocate freedom differently. At the macro-level, some progress has been made in measuring levels of political freedom and accounting for intersystem variability. At the micro-level, however, very little work has been conducted.

This paper is an analysis of micro-level political freedom in the Soviet Union. Relying on a survey of public opinion conducted in the USSR in May 1990, the analysis focuses on how individual Soviet people perceive the availability of political freedom. Perceived freedom is conceptualized as involving both perceptions of cultural and governmental constraints on political expression.

Beyond the important task of measuring and describing freedom, I also consider how perceived freedom affects political activity. Different sorts of political activity are investigated, ranging from conventional and unconventional political activism to discussions about politics among family and friends. While perceptions of government political repression seem not to affect levels of activism, perceptions of cultural intolerance serve to constrain political behavior.

I also investigate the etiology of freedom perceptions, testing several hypotheses about the connections between political deviance, minority status, politicization, personality attributes and perceptions of repression and intolerance. The most unfree Soviet citizens are those with less sense of personal political competence, with marginal political interest, and who perceive a repressive government.

Throughout this analysis, I make comparisons to a similar survey of opinion conducted in the United States (in 1987). Though my ability to conduct a comparative analysis based on only two systems is of course limited, my inquiry does take advantage of both data sets in an effort to understand how freedom gets allocated in both a relatively capitalist country and a relatively socialist country. In general, the Soviet people seem to be remarkably free, a surprising finding in light of the history of totalitarianism in that country.

One of the most interesting and important ways in which political systems differ is in how they allocate individual political freedom. Indeed, perhaps one of the basal defining attributes of "democracy" concerns the distribution of freedom. Peoples of different polities throughout the world experience quite different levels

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of political freedom. As a consequence of its importance, there has been a panoply of efforts to explain cross-national differences in the allocation of freedom (e.g., Bilson 1982; Gastil 1987). Most of this research focuses on macro-level indicators of political freedom and uses system attributes as the major predictors. Aggregate studies such as these have contributed significantly to our understanding of how freedom is allocated within different types of polities.

Efforts to analyze micro-level political freedom are less common, mainly due to conceptual and operational difficulties. While most would agree that the levels of freedom experienced differ across individuals, just as aggregate levels of freedom differ across countries, there have been few attempts at analyzing individual variation in personal political freedom. Surely it is true that the citizens of a polity do not enjoy freedom equally, and it is an important task to determine why some enjoy more freedom than others.

The purpose of this article is to investigate micro-level political freedom, focusing on recent survey data from the European portion of the Soviet Union. The first task is to describe how ordinary Soviet people perceive freedom. As possible constraints on freedom, both repression from the government and sanctions from friends, family, and coworkers are considered. In addition, however, I will investigate the consequences of perceived freedom for political action at the individual level. Finally, tests of several hypotheses about the etiology of these perceptions of freedom are investigated. Since comparable survey data exist from the United States, cross-national comparisons are presented at several points in this analysis. Because change in the Soviet Union since the ascendancy of Gorbachev has been enormous, I must begin this analysis with a brief overview of the political context within which this research is embedded.

**Political Freedom in the USSR**

The historical view of political freedom in the USSR is that liberty has been a quite scarce commodity. Indeed, from the western point of view, one of the most defining characteristics of the old Soviet Union is the freedoms that have

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and *The Los Angeles Times Poll*. I assume complete responsibility for all interpretations and conclusions in this article; none of these agencies necessarily endorses my findings. Without my collaboration with Gennady Denisovsky, Polina Kozyreva, and Mikhail Matskovsky of the Institute of Sociology, USSR Academy of Sciences, this research would not have been possible. Raymond M. Duch, University of Houston, has been my invaluable collaborator throughout this project. Donna Bahry has provided most helpful comments on an earlier version of the paper.

1Change is occurring so rapidly in the USSR that events since the original data collection (May 1990) have altered virtually every aspect of the Soviet state, including its name. In order to simplify matters, and because that was the name of the country when the data were collected, I will refer to the country as the USSR. In the conclusions to this article, the issue of how freedom may have change between 1990 and the present is addressed.
apparently been denied its citizens. The Soviet Union is in some respects the archetypical totalitarian regime. The “Evil Empire” is evil in part due to widespread political repression.\(^2\)

But much has changed in the Soviet Union since Mikhail Gorbachev gained power in 1985.\(^3\) The period between 1985 and 1990 was one of liberalization in nearly every sphere of political and social life. During this period the Communist party lost its monopoly on political power; political struggles often took place in the streets, in the context of massive demonstrations; the press was unmuzzled; and \textit{glasnost} became the official state ideology. It is easy to overstate both the speed and breadth of the opening of Soviet society during this period, but it is beyond debate that the objective conditions of political freedom vastly expanded during this period.

Beyond the dramatic political events of the late 1980s, a host of secular changes has been taking place in the USSR, changes that weaken the state’s ability to control its citizens even while they strengthen the resolve of ordinary people to gain control over their own destinies. One such change is the revolution in information technology—from personal computers to satellite television—which has had a major impact on Soviet society (see for example Mickiewicz 1988, 1989; and Rose-nau 1988), making information in the modern state virtually uncontrollable. There are today few corners of the Soviet Union that are not penetrated by some sort of foreign radio. Moreover, the Soviet people themselves have dramatically modernized over the course of the postwar period. Increasing urbanization, widespread education, the burgeoning of information, and even the growth of a significant middle class have created Soviet citizens who are much less likely to accept a subject role in their relationships with the state. As Lapidus put it: “By the 1980s . . . it was among young people and the better educated that new attitudes and values were taking root, and these included a more critical view of state control over economic life, greater openness to private economic activity, and \textit{greater commitment to personal freedom and individual rights}” (1989, 128, emphasis added).\(^4\) Even the sustained, if unspectacular, economic growth of the postwar period has contributed to the satisfaction of basic economic needs, leading to a heightened

\(^2\) As Bahry and Silver (1987, 1063) note: “The feature of the Soviet political system that is most often said to distinguish it from industrial democracies is the use of state terror—physical coercion or the threat of it—to assure compliance with the regime and to remake the nature of man.”

\(^3\) I cannot address the degree to which personal political freedom has been constrained in the USSR over the last 70 years, although I have little doubt that many dissidents have suffered greatly and that the Soviet population has been formally denied many freedoms. Yet, I think it is not completely obvious that the modern (post–World War II) USSR has operated as a totalitarian state, denying to its citizens opportunities for political expression. There are the noticeable examples of dissent from a lonely few in the USSR, but there is also reason to suspect that ordinary Soviet people have enjoyed more freedom than portrayed in some western scholarly writing and nearly all western propaganda.

\(^4\) On economic and social changes in the USSR see also Starr 1988; Zaslavskaya 1990; Ruble 1987; and Ludlam 1991, 289–94. For an analysis of the momentous social changes during the Brezhnev era see Ruble 1991.
emphasis on values such as political self-expression, individual autonomy, etc. (cf. Inglehart 1990; Gibson and Duch, forthcoming). And as Bahry and Silver have argued (1990), political participation in the Soviet Union has been far from undifferentiated, disengaged, and ritualistic (see also Duch and Gibson 1991). Thus, there are many good reasons to expect that Soviet people today enjoy some nontrivial level of political freedom, whatever may have been true in the past.\textsuperscript{5}

Moreover, in what is perhaps the most important systematic inquiry into political repression in the old Soviet Union, Bahry and Silver (1987) discovered that relatively few Soviet citizens were direct victims of the KGB, and that those who were victims did not cease their political activity. While they reported that interpersonal distrust (an element of social atomization) did seem to dissuade unconventional political activity, their basic conclusion is prophetic:

But with the succession of generations, the social atomization bred by the Great Terror may be withering away, along with its inhibiting effect on unconventional behavior. Generational replacement and increasing education attainments also appear to be weakening support for the old orthodoxies. Therefore, a regime bent on suppressing dissent and open opposition must rely on other means to achieve the same degree of control. (Bahry and Silver 1987, 1091)

On the other hand, there are those who argue that cultural attributes do not change quite so rapidly, even when objective institutional conditions do change. This is an especially popular argument in the case of the Soviet Union. In general, scholars have long been concerned about resistance to change—to democratic reform—from the traditional culture of Russia and the Soviet Union. For instance, few observers of the USSR have been sanguine about the development of a democratic political culture in the country.\textsuperscript{6} Most argue that traditional Russian culture harbors deep strains of authoritarianism, and that seven decades of Communist rule have strongly reinforced those tendencies. For example, Brown contends that “the relative absence of pluralist and democratic political structures during a historically long period should make it less than surprising that attachment to individual political liberties, and support for their institutionalization, remains weak” (1989, p. 18).\textsuperscript{7} Perhaps the key cultural enemy of democracy in the Soviet Union

\textsuperscript{5}For an analysis of how these various forces have affected the development of a democratic political culture in the USSR, see Gibson and Duch 1992b.


\textsuperscript{7}Similarly, Zaslavskaya argues:

It is unfortunate that neither Russian pre-revolutionary nor Soviet politics developed strong traditions of genuinely democratic relations. People have paid the price for centuries of servitude and autocratic tyranny and decades of lawlessness under Stalin and Brezhnev. They either did not have the chance to acquire or have lost the culture of political and national tolerance, social dialogues conducted with mutual respect, collective attempts to find a compromise, and sensible agreements reached by striking a balance between conflicting interests. The low level of political culture has led to measures to extend democracy being perceived by certain groups as the right to fight for their interests by any methods including undemocratic ones.” (Zaslavskaya 1990, 198)
is the desire for order. Since liberty inevitably poses a potential for disorder, opposition to democratization is thought to be concentrated among order-loving Soviet people. If these depictions of Soviet culture are correct, and if culture is (almost inherently) resistant to short-term change, then it may well be that the increased political freedom available in the USSR has not been seized upon by ordinary people and that the legacy of totalitarianism prevails.

Thus, it is not unreasonable to inquire into the state of Soviet freedom. Many of the objective conditions for the materialization of demands for political self-expression exist, and there has been accumulating evidence of the relaxation of political repression in the USSR for the past five years. Moreover, rigorous survey evidence on perceptions of freedom in the USSR has never before been collected, so whatever the results, it is important to have a systematic look at perceived freedom in the Soviet Union.

CONCEPTUALIZING PERSONAL POLITICAL FREEDOM

A common understanding of “freedom” within modern Anglo-American liberalism is “the ability of individuals to pursue personal goals without burdensome restraints or coercion” (Preston 1982, 73). For Preston, the essence of the problem of freedom is “that of distinguishing consciously determined, free activity from behavior which is controlled or manipulated by other causes” (Preston 1982, 82). Thus, “conscious deliberation” is an important distinguishing characteristic of free choice. But since it is so difficult to observe the interior workings of the deliberative mechanism—the human brain—Preston takes one step back. He argues that “freedom can only be examined by determining whether individuals possess, when they act, the essential capacities and conditions for deliberative choice” (Preston 1982, 74, emphasis added). By capacities he means “skills, abilities, or understanding essential for deliberate choice with respect to a given problem” (Preston 1982, 84). Conditions “refer to the presence of genuine opportunities in a

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Mr. Gorbachev has been especially careful not to equate democracy with disorder:

Democracy is not opposed to order. On the contrary, it is order of a higher level, being based not on unquestioning obedience, the mindless execution of instructions, but on the active participation of members of society in all affairs. Democracy is not the opposite of discipline. On the contrary, it is conscious discipline and organization of people’s work, the foundation of which is the sense of being a real master of the country, together with collectivism and the solidarity of the interests of efforts of all citizens. Democracy is not the opposite of responsibility, not the absence of control or the permitting of everything. On the contrary, it is self-control on the part of society, based on faith in the civic maturity and understanding of social duty of Soviet people; it is the unity of rights and duties. (Pravda, February 26, 1987, 1–2, quoted in Brown 1989, 24)

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Similarly, Perry (1944, 521) has defined liberty (the same thing as freedom) as “the absence of external obstacles which prevent, and the presence of resources and capacities which promote, the power of any individual to realize his desires or execute his will.” For Pennock (1979, 28) liberty is “the opportunity for spontaneous and deliberate self-direction in the formation and the accomplishment of one's purposes.”
given decision-making environment which either (1) support the development of needed capacities or (2) permit action in pursuit of freely selected goals” (Preston 1982, 84). Threats and physical coercion are of course incompatible with these conditions. Thus, Preston melds various views of freedom by proposing external but to some degree subjective standards for judging the capacities and conditions for freedom.10

This view of freedom is useful because it implies that a key element of the capacities and conditions for deliberative choice is the perception of the ability to make such choices freely. People cannot be free unless they perceive opportunities for self-expression.11 To the extent that some perceive constraints on their freedom, liberty is diminished.

This conceptualization of freedom is also salutary because it renders the concept susceptible to empirical investigation. Though Preston is correct that we cannot get easy access to the interior workings of the brain, we can certainly assess the perceptions of people of the conditions for deliberative choice. Most basically, do people perceive such conditions as available to them? Certainly those who perceive the likelihood of sanctions for political activity have neither the capacity nor the conditions for free action. Though freedom is more than merely perceptual, the beliefs of individuals are important for understanding their own levels of freedom.

**Democratic Freedom**

Just what sort of activities are of concern when we speak of “freedom to act?” Though there are many domains of activity that may be of interest, my interest in this article is limited to political freedom, and mainly within the context of liberal democratic theory. Consequently, it is useful to provide a brief outline of the meaning of freedom within this body of theory.

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10I recognize that a distinction is typically made between “negative” and “positive” conceptions of freedom (see Berlin 1958). The negative view of freedom argues that to free people is to remove restraints on their actions. Rights perform this function by guaranteeing broad areas of autonomous activity within which the individual can make free choices. The positive view of freedom emphasizes rational self-determination. Freedom is thus assessed not in terms of whether conditions for free choice prevail, but rather by the objective rationality of the choice. Decisions that are irrational, but seemingly unrestrained, are not free choices.

The distinction between negative and positive freedom has been subjected to a variety of attacks and has been much debated (e.g., MacCallum 1967). For my purposes, it is more important to distinguish between subjective (perceived) and objective freedom than positive and negative freedom. Preston’s conceptualization allows me to do just that.

11There is a certain asymmetry to my argument. Perceived restraints on choices—perceptions that certain political activities will generate adverse repercussions—certainly are evidence of the lack of freedom, even if I am on less certain ground when I claim that the absence of perceived restraints is equivalent to freedom. Nonetheless, if the absence of perceived constraints is grounded in reality, then this is an important component of positive freedom. Clearly, those who expect to be penalized for their political activity are not free. In this sense, my conceptualization of freedom is closer to the negative view than to the positive view.
The most useful conceptualizations of freedom are embedded in larger theories of politics. The theory employed is most generally liberal-democratic, with specific reference to Dahl's (1971, 1989) theory of polyarchy. This perspective emphasizes obstacles that individual citizens might perceive to frank political expression. This is not freedom of unconstrained licentiousness; instead it is freedom to engage in political activity that is essential to the effective functioning of polyarchies. It is quite possible for others to conceive of freedom differently, emphasizing, for instance, the potential of individuals—whether perceived or not—to develop nascent capacities for expression. Nonetheless, relying on Dahl's theory of polyarchy, it is reasonable to postulate that in a democracy, citizens must have the opportunity to communicate with their fellows and to join together in political parties and pressure groups to press their political demands. Within this framework, a liberal democracy is a political system that requires unimpaired opportunities for all full citizens.

1. To formulate their preferences
2. To signify their preferences to their fellow citizens and the government by individual and collective action
3. To have their preferences weighed equally in the conduct of the government, that is, weighted with no discrimination because of the content or source of the preference (Dahl 1971, 2).

Liberal democracies need not allow all political interests equal influence over public policies, but they must allow all political interests equal opportunity to compete for the control of public policies.

If polities circumscribe this right then political freedom is limited. As McClosky and Brill put it:

. . . freedom of expression is obviously essential for registering popular consent and holding rulers accountable. To be genuine, consent must be freely given; and to be freely given, it must be the product of unhindered communication. At a minimum, all citizens must have the opportunity to obtain the information they need to evaluate their rulers fairly. They must be free to exchange opinions, to persuade others by facts and argument, and to be persuaded in turn. Effective consent and accountability presuppose the unhampered opportunity for citizens to test the truth or falsity of government claims; to evaluate the government, its policies, and its officeholders; and to participate (via speech, press, assembly, and association) in efforts to achieve peaceful and orderly change. (1983, 39)

Such an approach to the definition of democracy places great emphasis on political competition. Because democracy is a style of government that must maximize the opportunities and avenues of the entire citizenry to compete for control of political power and/or influence over public policy, the ability to compete, to dissent, to challenge the actions of government is crucial. Thus, from the perspective of democratic political systems, political freedom includes institutional guarantees of the right to engage in oppositionist political activity: to speak, to assemble, to
organize, to proselytize, to compete for political power. From the perspective of the freedom of individual citizens, my concern is whether individuals perceive the opportunity to express themselves about political matters.

Caveats

This view of personal political freedom is unabashedly focused on the individual citizen—it looks directly toward the attributes and beliefs of individuals, as well as their interactions with their immediate environments, to try to understand freedom. In adopting this approach, I do not deny or discount the utility of alternatives—for instance, studies that focus on the attributes of cultures or polities. But my basic premises are that what people believe about their own freedom is important; that what they perceive about the opportunities for political expression and the costs associated with such expression has much to do with their exercise of freedom; and that it is useful to think about the degree of freedom available and the patterns of allocation of freedom within a polity as ultimately reducible to a study of the beliefs of individual citizens. I do not gainsay the utility of thinking about other sorts of freedom, and at a later point in this analysis, some linkages between the individuals and the larger social and political environment within which they function are identified. But the strategy here must be recognized from the beginning as a particular, and not necessarily inclusive approach to the problem of perceived personal political freedom.

It is necessary as well to acknowledge the distinction between objective and subjective freedom. Mine is a study of subjective freedom—the freedom that is perceived by individuals. A different sort of freedom—for instance, the degree of freedom acknowledged by law—might be measured more objectively (and as an attribute of polities, not of individuals). Within my conceptualization of the problem, there is no necessary relationship between objective and subjective freedom. People may perceive themselves as free even in the most repressive conditions (and that sort of “false consciousness” is not addressed in this research). Alternatively, people may not perceive the freedom that is truly available to them. When I refer to freedom it is to the freedom that exists in the minds and hearts of citizens; not to the freedom that exists in the law books, in institutions, or even in the broader political culture.

This research focuses on the perceptions of freedom within the Soviet Union.

There are of course alternative conceptualizations of democracy and of democratic freedom, and I certainly do not claim this as the only legitimate approach. The emphasis I place on democracy as procedure, without much regard for substantive public policy, must be borne in mind throughout the analysis that follows.

Bay (1970) also recognizes this distinction and provides a quite useful review of the views of several political philosophers on this issue (see especially chap. 2). He refers to those who look inside individuals to understand freedom as “idealists,” as distinguished from “empiricists” who focus on freedom in terms of relationships between people. My own approach is a blend of these two ideal types.
The mass demonstrations in Moscow and Leningrad vividly attest to the fact that at least some in Russia are exercising political freedom. But how widespread are perceptions of freedom? While people may readily participate in demonstrations in Moscow, do they also feel free to express their views in the countryside in Georgia? What is the legacy of totalitarianism in the Soviet Union—is perceived freedom limited only to the new, younger generations, or have perceptions of freedom permeated the entire culture? There are a host of empirical questions that can be asked about the distribution of political freedom in the contemporary USSR.

RESEARCH DESIGN: SURVEYS OF SOVIET PUBLIC OPINION

The analysis reported here relies on a survey of 1,561 residents of the European portion of the USSR. Face-to-face interviews were conducted in May 1990. The survey was conducted in conjunction with the Institute of Sociology, USSR Academy of Sciences. The sample is not representative of the individual republics. Since surveys of this type are a relatively new phenomenon in the USSR, the technical details on the sample are provided in Appendix A.

The European USSR sample interviewed is 54% female, with an average age of 42 years old. Nearly 16% of the sample claimed to be a member of the Communist party. Most of the respondents reside in Russia (63%), with 4% residing in the Baltics, and the remaining 33% living in other areas in the European portion of the USSR. The respondents are largely Russian in ethnicity (61%), although the sample includes 23% Ukrainians, and a reasonable number of Belorussians, Armenians, Moldavians, and others.

For a study interested in the question of political freedom, it is perhaps appropriate to ask whether Soviet people respond candidly to interviewers posing difficult and sometimes sensitive questions. It is of course impossible to address this question definitively. There is, however, some circumstantial evidence that suggests that the answers of the respondents were relatively truthful.

We can assess the candor of the respondent using a question that asks about feelings toward a fictitious group. The respondents were asked whether they felt positively or negatively toward "Kalakshists"—a group that does not exist. In the introduction to the question (which asked about 11 groups), the respondents were told to indicate if they have no opinion toward the group. The 1987 U.S. survey used a similar technique, asking the respondents about "The Society for a New America." In the U.S. survey, 30% of the respondents expressed a view toward

14The fieldwork for both samples was conducted under the direction of Polina Kozyreva and Gennady Denisovsky.
15Scientific polling has been conducted in the USSR for nearly three decades now. For a review of earlier research on public opinion in the USSR see Mickiewicz 1972–1973 and 1983 (especially footnote 6, 103); Connor 1977; Welsh 1981; and Slider 1985, 1990.
16"Kalakshists" is actually a fictitious word that was derived from one of Gennady Denisovsky's metro stops in Moscow. Unfortunately, however, we later discovered that the word sounds something
the fictitious group, with the rest offering no opinion. In the Soviet survey, fully 83% claimed no opinion toward Kalakhists, while another 8% expressed "neutrality" toward the group. Thus, less than 11% expressed a view toward the fictitious group. Again, these data are not definitive but they certainly suggest a level of truthfulness—perhaps due to a keen sense of citizen duty (see Shlapentokh 1989)—among the Soviet respondents that is reasonably high.

We find little evidence in the survey that people were expressing views they thought the government or anyone else would like to hear. On many issues the respondents were willing to give strongly antiregime responses. Thus, while we are mindful that polling results must always be treated cautiously, there are many reasons to believe that perceptions of freedom can be studied successfully in the Soviet Union using standard survey research methods.

At several points in this analysis, comparisons are made between the Soviet data and the results from a survey I conducted in the United States in 1987. Details of the national survey have been reported at several points (e.g., Gibson 1989b, 1992, 1993), although there is one special attribute of the U.S. sample that should be mentioned here. In addition to a typical national sample of white Americans, a special "over-sample" of African-Americans was selected. Thus, the survey allows an unusual opportunity to explore racial differences in perceptions of freedom and liberty—and in fact racial differences in perceptions of freedom in the United States are substantial. Consequently, the U.S. results will be reported separately by racial grouping.

**OPERATIONALIZING PERSONAL POLITICAL FREEDOM**

Within this conceptualization of perceived freedom, two primary sources of constraints on liberty should be recognized: the larger political system, and the immediate interpersonal context. Citizens may perceive that public expressions of their political views are circumscribed by the laws and actions of the state. This external censorship is the most consonant with traditional notions of political repression. In addition, however, both public and private expressions may be constrained by interpersonal norms, by pressures toward conformity, and sanctions for deviance. Local networks of friends, family, and associates may impose like "Salashists," the name of a group of World War II Hungarian fascists. This is also the name the Soviet media applied more generally to the reformers in the 1956 Hungarian uprising. To the extent that these respondents remember anything about the Hungarian group (and we doubt that many do), they are cueing on a very explicitly political group. This, by the way, may be why those who actually responded toward the group, responded overwhelmingly negatively.

We cannot claim that Kalakhists are strictly comparable to the Society for a New America. No comparison is ever perfect—this is just one bit of evidence that we marshal within a larger argument about the candor of the respondents.

At a second point in the Soviet questionnaire, we asked about their level of confidence in "Kukhterists," another fictitious group. Only 14% of the sample offered a substantive response toward this group.
substantial restrictions on freedom.\textsuperscript{17} To the extent that the political culture to which the individual is exposed does not reinforce political diversity and respect nonconformity, individuals with unpopular views may perceive significant repercussions for expressing their opinions. Thus, in measuring personal political freedom we must be sensitive to constraints emanating from the larger political system, as well as from the personal network of the individual.\textsuperscript{18}

Perhaps the easiest of these dimensions to measure is perceptions of what sort of political behavior the government will permit. Table 1 reports responses to a set of items asking whether the government would allow the respondent to engage in certain types of political activities. The context was set by the following introduction: "Suppose you felt very strongly that something the government was doing was very wrong and you wanted to do something about it." The responses were collected through a four-point response set, though table 1 reports percentages based on collapsing the categories "probably not allow" and "definitely not allow."

At an absolute level, there is more perceived political freedom in the USSR than might be expected in light of decades of substantial political repression.\textsuperscript{19} For instance, only 39\% of the respondents believe they would not be allowed to make a speech critical of the government, and only 45\% think that critical pamphlets would not be allowed. Still, majorities believe that government would forbid public meetings, protest marches, and strikes. The picture painted by table 1 does not seem to be one of totalitarian terror among the Soviet people, even if most Soviet

\textsuperscript{17}In a repressive totalitarian society, local networks may actually serve as an agent of state repression. For instance: "An equally important instrument of collective coercion against the individual according to the totalitarian model is the individual's lack of trust in others, a sense that risks lurk not only in the overt activities of the agencies of coercion but also in one's most ordinary contacts with coworkers, bosses, friends, and even relatives. It is this set of perceptions—of the coercive potential of the political police and of other people—that we call the intimidation factor" (Bahry and Silver 1987, 1066). However, it is not possible for me to distinguish why peers constrain freedom; my only concern is whether they constrain freedom.

\textsuperscript{18}I recognize that irrespective of the freedom allowed by the larger political system or local networks, individuals may be unwilling to express themselves politically for completely psychological reasons. For instance, lack of self-confidence may lead people to be unwilling to risk the opprobrium of others (Bay 1970, terms this "psychological" freedom). Though the effect of psychological attributes might be interactive (in the sense that personality attributes structure perceptions of and reactions to external environmental stimuli), the effect may exist completely apart from the objective attributes of the environment.

This sort of psychological freedom is not addressed in this research. Instead, the psychological attributes of individuals are treated as independent variables, as predictors of social and political freedom. Thus, rather than asserting that psychologically based risk aversion is a sign of unfreedom, I prefer to test the hypothesis that those who perceive less freedom are more risk averse and psychologically insecure.

\textsuperscript{19}These data systematically overestimate levels of freedom to the extent that those who refused to participate in the survey feel less free than those who agreed to be interviewed. It is reasonable to assume that there is less perceived freedom among the refusals, although it should be noted that the response rate is reasonably high for the survey (83\%–84\%) so the amount of bias is probably not too
TABLE 1

VIEWS OF GOVERNMENTAL CONSTRAINTS ON POLITICAL OPPOSITION,
BLACK AND WHITE U.S. MASS PUBLICS, SOVIET MASS PUBLIC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percent Believing that the Government Would Not Allow Them to . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organize a nationwide strike of all workers</td>
<td>85.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organize public meetings</td>
<td>63.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organize protest marches and demonstrations</td>
<td>54.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make a speech criticizing the actions of the government</td>
<td>55.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publish pamphlets</td>
<td>53.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The question stem read: "Suppose you felt very strongly that something the government was doing was very wrong and you wanted to do something about it. Do you think the government would definitely allow, probably allow, probably not allow, or definitely not allow you to . . .?" The weighted number of black respondents is approximately 181; for whites, the number is approximately 962. Roughly 1,560 Soviets responded to the questions.

people believe there are significant constraints on some aspects of their political freedom. Apparently, glasnost has in fact made important inroads within the political culture of the USSR.

Comparison of these data to the 1987 U.S. survey is instructive.\textsuperscript{20} Generally, white Americans perceive more political freedom available than the Soviet people, and some of the differences are quite large. For instance, only 35% of American whites believe that the government would not allow them to organize protest marches and demonstrations; the figure for the Soviet sample is 63%. On the other hand, there is similarity between the views of African-Americans and the Soviet people, as for instance in the responses to whether public meetings would be allowed. On some activities (e.g., making a speech criticizing the actions of the
great. All surveys of public opinion—in the USSR and in all countries—systematically exclude a non-trivial segment of the population.

In addition, surveys in the Soviet Union often encounter large proportions of “don’t know” responses. In a study of political freedom respondents may be unwilling to express their true views to the interviewer and may hide instead behind a “don’t know” response. It is important to consider whether this sort of respondent biases the results reported in this article.

The figures reported in table 1 are the percentages of all respondents—including in the denominator those who responded that they did not know the answer to the question. The percentage of respondents claiming not to know whether the government would allow these activities ranges from 11% to 16%. These respondents might legitimately be also counted as having limited political freedom.

\textsuperscript{20}For more complete analyses of these data see Gibson 1992, 1993.
government), black Americans perceive considerably less political freedom than do the Soviet citizens. Generally, white Americans perceive the least amount of government repression, black Americans the most, with Soviet people in between.

An important exception to the general pattern can be found in responses to the item on strikes. While there is consensus among black and white Americans that the government would not allow a nationwide strike, a considerably smaller proportion of the Soviet sample holds the same view. This may reflect the greater legitimacy of strikes within socialist systems, and suggests that particular types of political behavior might be more acceptable in some regimes than in others.

The items in table 1 all concern perceptions of repression by the government. Those who perceive greater governmental constraints on their political expression are less free. An index of perceived freedom in the Soviet Union was created from these items based on a factor analysis of the responses to the five questions.\(^{21}\)

Perceptions of governmental limitations on political freedom represent an external form of censorship. Internal, or self-censorship, can be measured by asking whether individuals are willing to express themselves politically when their views are unpopular with their peers. Consequently, the survey attempted to measure the beliefs Soviet people hold that might justify self-censorship. The respondents were given the opportunity to accept or reject several statements that might explain reluctance to talk about politics with their families and friends. Each of these statements represents the belief that there are significant personal costs to be paid for expressing one's views. Table 2 reports their responses to these statements.

On not one of the items did a majority of the Soviet respondents agree that political discussions were unwise. Roughly one-third of the Soviet people believe that politics leads to arguments, creates enemies, and causes others to think the respondents' views strange. Generally, a minority (although a nontrivial one) seems to believe that political discussions can be associated with unwelcomed repercussions from their friends and family.

Yet, when compared with the U.S. data the Soviet subjects have responded altogether similarly. Generally, African Americans perceive slightly greater constraints on their freedom than do Soviet people, but the differences are not as great as we observed when considering perceptions of political repression, and white Americans and Soviet people do not differ greatly in their perceptions. For instance, something on the order of one in five respondents assert that they are reluctant to discuss politics because they worry what people might think of them. Levels of perceived interpersonal constraints on freedom are roughly comparable in the United States and the USSR.\(^{22}\)

\(^{21}\) A single significant factor emerged from the Common Factor Analysis, with an eigenvalue of 3.1 and accounting for 61.3% of the original item variance. The index is highly reliable: Cronbach's alpha for the five-item scale is .84.

\(^{22}\) One additional item was asked in this series that called for the respondents to agree or disagree that "I worry that the government might find out about" my political views. This item was omitted from the index because it refers to a governmental, not interpersonal, constraint. Nonetheless, it is
TABLE 2
RELUCTANCE TO TALK ABOUT POLITICS,
BLACK AND WHITE U.S. MASS PUBLICS, SOVIET MASS PUBLIC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent Agreeing</th>
<th>Blacks</th>
<th>Whites</th>
<th>European Soviet Union</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>United States</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t like arguments</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>39.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It creates enemies</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>33.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People would think my political views were strange</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>35.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I worry about what people would think of me</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The stem of each of the items is: “I am sometimes reluctant to talk about politics because . . . .” Responses were recorded as “true” or “false.” The weighted number of black respondents is approximately 183; for whites, it is approximately 974. Roughly 1,560 Soviets answered these questions.

A factor score summarizing the Soviet responses to the items is shown in table 2.\(^{23}\) This index will serve as the measure of perceived interpersonal constraints on political freedom, or self-censorship.

In the Soviet Union self-censorship and perceptions of government repression are not strongly connected; the correlation between the two indices is only .14. Those who perceive greater governmental repression do not necessarily perceive greater interpersonal constraints on their political freedom. There is not a generalized tendency to perceive constraints on freedom from all quarters of society. This implies that the sources of unfreedom in the USSR are distinctive and perhaps unconnected.

Table 3 reports the regional breakdown of these two indices of political freedom. Great care must be taken in examining these means because the sample was specifically not designed to be representative of the individual republics. Consequently, in most republics the number of respondents interviewed is quite small (and is proportional to population size). Just as one can rarely rely on national surveys in the United States to provide state-level estimates of opinion, our sample is of only limited utility. Nonetheless, the overwhelming pattern exhibited by these data is one of regional uniformity. If we use one standard deviation as a yardstick for assessing the magnitude of regional differences, not a single republic mean differs from the overall sample mean. Perhaps there is a slight tendency for residents of

interesting to note that virtually no white Americans endorsed this statement, while 13% of the African Americans and 18% of the Soviet citizens agreed with it. Both the agreement of a relatively low percentage of Soviet people and a relatively high percentage of American blacks are noteworthy.

\(^{23}\)Only a single significant factor emerged from the Common Factor Analysis. Its eigenvalue is 2.2 and it accounts for 54.2% of the original item variance. The four-item scale is highly reliable: Cronbach’s alpha is .72.
the Baltics to perceive less repression than, say, Georgians, but the differences are certainly not great. Nor is size of place of residence even monotonically related to perceived political freedom. There are some intriguing tidbits in these data—for instance, Georgians perceive a slightly greater level of political repression, but seem to self-censor less—but the proper statistical conclusion is that regional differences are slight. The methodological importance of this finding is that regional controls are unnecessary in the analysis that follows. The substantive significance is that perestroika and glasnost seem to have penetrated every nook of European USSR.

Thus, political freedom is not nearly so scarce in the USSR as would be predicted by theories of cultural persistence. Instead, even the relatively brief period of perestroika and glasnost seems to have had a remarkable effect on Soviet mass culture. On some important dimensions of political activity there is more freedom perceived by Soviet citizens than by African Americans. Before assessing the importance of these findings, it is useful to consider how perceived constraints on freedom affect Soviet political behavior.

THE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF PERSONAL POLITICAL FREEDOM

Of what consequence are these beliefs about political freedom? That is, what implications do they have for the sorts of ordinary political participation—both
public and private—in which citizens engage? It is important to try to establish whether perceptions of political freedom have any effect on participatory political behavior.

Three types of political participation are of interest.24

1. *Conventional Public Participation*: This is an index composed of indicators of (1) voting in the elections of 1989; (2) membership in a trade union; (3) participation in electoral campaign activity; (4) contacting authorities on issues; and (5) working with public groups on a community problem. This is an approach to conventional activism that is often used (e.g., Bahry and Silver 1990; see also Duch and Gibson 1991, 1992).

2. *Unconventional Public Participation*: This concept refers to “behavior that does not correspond to the norms of law and custom that regulate political participation under a particular regime” (Marsh and Kaase 1979, 41). The measure is an index composed of self-reported incidence of (1) signing petitions; (2) attending unofficial political meetings; (3) attending unofficial cultural events; (4) joining a boycott; (5) participating in a protest group; (6) joining an unofficial strike; (7) participating in an informal political movement; and (8) occupying a factory. This approach to unconventional activism follows closely the work of Barnes and Kaase (1979) and many others (e.g., Bahry and Silver 1990; see also Duch and Gibson 1991, 1992). Two indices of unconventional activism were created, one indicating how many of the unconventional acts the respondent has actually engaged in, and the other indicating how many the respondent claims he or she might engage in.

3. *Private Political Discussions*: So as not to rely too heavily on public political participation, a variable that is simply the frequency of political discussions among friends and family members was also included. This trichotomy captures participation not dependent on a public display of one’s political positions and thus may be less sensitive to repression from the state, even if it is more sensitive to pressures for private conformity.

My general hypothesis is that those who perceive greater cultural and political constraints on their freedom are less likely to participate. Table 4 reports the simple relationship among these variables.

It is clear from the coefficients in the table that perceived political repression has little impact on any of these forms of political participation. Those who perceive greater governmental repression are slightly less likely to participate, but the effect is small (even if, in two instances, statistically significant). On the other hand, self-censorship does indeed affect political participation. Its greatest effect is on private political discussions—those who perceive more repercussions from political discussions are less likely to talk about politics. The effects on the public forms of

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24This development of the participation measures and analysis relies heavily on Duch and Gibson 1992.
Table 4

The relationships between perceived freedom and political participation, Soviet mass public, 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Participation</th>
<th>Perceived Political Repression</th>
<th>Self-Censorship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conventional Public Participation</td>
<td>-0.07*</td>
<td>-0.10*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unconventional Public Participation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual Behavior</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>-0.15*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothetical Behavior</td>
<td>-0.09*</td>
<td>-0.31*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Political Discussions</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>-0.32*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Entries are Pearson correlation coefficients. \( N \) is approximately 1,530.
*Coefficient is significant at .01 or less (one-tail test).

Political participation are weaker, as expected. Thus, personal self-censorship does seem to influence one’s level of political participation—those who perceive a less tolerant immediate political environment are less likely to express their political views, to contemplate unconventional political activity, and (to a lesser degree) to actually engage in conventional and unconventional political acts.

It is noteworthy that public expressions of political behavior are not particularly well predicted by perceptions of freedom. One possible explanation of this finding is that activism, especially conventional public participation, is mobilized behavior (i.e., mobilized by the state) and that it is consequently disengaged from the personal attributes of the individual citizen. This expectation is grounded in the typical view of totalitarianism (e.g., DiFrancesisco and Gitelman 1984). However, in our earlier analysis of conventional activism we concluded that this behavior is not mobilized and that it closely reflects the attributes of the respondents (Duch and Gibson 1991, 1992). Indeed, were conventional participation mobilized behavior we would expect to see at least some positive relationship between these two variables—participation should rise as the government is perceived as more repressive. Thus, it is more likely that actual political behavior in the USSR reflects a panoply of factors, including some contextual variables not directly under the control of the respondent, thereby reducing the effects of these freedom variables.

It is possible to see more clearly the nature of these relationships by examining the data within a crosstablulation. This requires that the freedom factor scores be transformed into categorical variables. Table 5 reports the relationships between the two measures of freedom and the respondents’ estimates of the frequency of their political conversations.

25 Five categories were created for each index. The categories are defined as .67 standard deviations in width, with the center group encompassing those scoring between -.33 to +.33 standard deviation units.
TABLE 5

THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PERCEIVED POLITICAL FREEDOM
AND FREQUENCY OF POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS, SOVIET MASS PUBLIC, 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Political Repression</th>
<th>Percentage Engaging in Frequent Political Discussions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Least Repression</td>
<td>42.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Least</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Least</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Least</td>
<td>32.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most Repression</td>
<td>33.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self Censorship</th>
<th>Percentage Engaging in Frequent Political Discussions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Least Censorship</td>
<td>51.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Least Censorship</td>
<td>35.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Least Censorship</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Least Censorship</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most Censorship</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: N is approximately 1,530.

Several aspects of these data are worthy of comment. First, the relationship between perceptions of political repression and political discussion is slightly curvilinear. The frequency of discussion is highest among those respondents perceiving the least amount of repression and those perceiving the greatest amount of repression. This relationship is not particularly strong, but it does suggest that the consequences of repression are not uniform for all citizens. For some, repression seems to stimulate discussions, perhaps as a means of resisting the government (cf. Bahry and Silver 1987).

A much stronger, and monotonic, relationship can be seen between self-censorship and the frequency of political discussion. Those who perceive little need to censor themselves discuss politics quite often; those who perceive repercussions are far less likely to engage in political discussions. People who perceive freedom in their immediate environments apparently use it.

It is possible that the relationships we observe here are spurious—that is, that the impact of self-censorship on political discussion is not direct, but is instead a function of common antecedent variables. Before accepting these findings, it is important to test the effect of self-censorship within a more completely specified model.

The frequency of political discussions reflects far more than self-censorship. As table 5 (above) makes plain, at least some Soviet respondents will engage in political discussions even in the face of a hostile personal environment, while many apparently do not engage in political discussions for reasons having little to do with personal freedom. It is important to try to understand some of these additional determinants of political discussion.
The most obvious predictor of political activity is motivation. As a summary measure of motivation the variable "political interest" is useful. The simple hypothesis is that those who are more interested in politics will be more likely to engage in political discussions. This variable is useful because it is a variable through which a host of factors influences political discussions.\textsuperscript{26}

In addition, this simple model of participation uses internal and external political efficacy as control variables.\textsuperscript{27} I hypothesize that those who perceive themselves as more politically competent and who view the government as more responsive are more likely to participate in a variety of ways. Controlling for political interest and these two dimensions of political efficacy should provide a difficult test of the hypothesis that perceived political freedom has an independent impact on political participation. Table 6 reports the results of these multivariate analyses.

It should first be noted that the simple three-variable model is not equally useful across the different measures of political activity. Only 5% of the variance in actual unconventional activity is explained (although this dependent variable suffers a bit from degenerate variance), while 20% of the variance in private political discussions can be explained. Generally (and not surprisingly), as interest in politics increases, so too does political activity. Similarly, those who feel politically competent ("internal political efficacy") are more likely to engage in each of these sorts of activities.

The effect of external political efficacy varies substantially. Perceptions of government responsiveness have little impact on private political discussions, while they have a substantial impact on (hypothetical) unconventional public participation—those who perceive the government as less responsive are more likely to say they would consider engaging in unconventional protest activities. The effect on actual protest behavior is smaller, but in the same direction. For conventional political participation, the relationship is weak, but in the opposite direction: those who view the government as more responsive are more likely to engage in conventional political behavior. Thus, external political efficacy tends to channel political participation into less threatening, more conventional modes of activity. Generally, these findings comport with those from the West and are therefore not too surprising.\textsuperscript{28}

The more interesting question is whether perceptions of political freedom have an independent impact on political participation. For perceptions of governmental repression, the answer is clear: those who perceive greater governmental repression are no more or less likely to engage in political activity than those who perceive less repression. The only possible exception to this conclusion is on (hypothetical) unconventional activity—here there is a slight tendency for those

\textsuperscript{26}For example, media consumption, like many variables, contributes to political discussions mainly through enhancing interest in politics.

\textsuperscript{27}See Appendix B for details on the measures.

\textsuperscript{28}For additional analysis of political participation using this data set see Duch and Gibson 1992.
## Table 6


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Simple Model</th>
<th></th>
<th>Simple Model &amp; Perceived Freedom</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b)</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td>(b)</td>
<td>Beta</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conventional Public Participation</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Interest</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.20*</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.20*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internal Political Efficacy</td>
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<td>.14*</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.13*</td>
</tr>
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<td>External Political Efficacy</td>
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<td>.09*</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.09*</td>
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<td>Self-Censorship</td>
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<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception of Governmental Repression</td>
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<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(R^2)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>.09*</td>
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<td>Unconventional Public Participation (Actual)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Interest</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.12*</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.11*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Political Efficacy</td>
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<td>.17*</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.15*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Political Efficacy</td>
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<td>-.14*</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>-.14*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Censorship</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
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<td>Perception of Governmental Repression</td>
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<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
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<td>(R^2)</td>
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<td>.06*</td>
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<td>Unconventional Public Participation (Hypothetical)</td>
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<td>.05</td>
<td>.12*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internal Political Efficacy</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.28*</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.21*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Political Efficacy</td>
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<td>-.29*</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>-.27*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Censorship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perception of Governmental Repression</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(R^2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.12*</td>
<td></td>
<td>.18*</td>
</tr>
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<td>Private Political Discussions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political Interest</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.39*</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.36*</td>
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<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.03</td>
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<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(R^2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.20*</td>
<td></td>
<td>.24*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Standardized regression coefficient (beta) is significant at .01 or less. \(N\) is approximately 1,560.

perceiving repression to participate less. This effect is too weak to warrant much attention, however.

The effect of self-censorship is highly variable. It has no impact on conventional participation. On the other hand, there is substantial influence on political discussions and on the propensity toward unconventional political participation. Those who engage in more self-censorship are less likely to be inclined toward unconventional activity, and are less likely to engage in political discussions with their friends and family, even, it should be added, holding constant levels of political interest and feelings about one's own political competence. The impact on
actual unconventional participation is significant but reduced (as is the impact of all the other variables in the equation). Generally, these data suggest that the tendency to perceive repercussions from political self-expression—the propensity toward self-censorship—has an important independent effect on levels of political activity.

Thus, levels of political freedom do affect levels of political participation. Perhaps surprisingly, however, perceptions of what the government would allow have little to do with rates of participation. Many Soviet citizens perceive their government as repressive, yet they do not adjust their behavior accordingly. Instead, they are more sensitive to the immediate personal political environments than to the larger political context. These findings are significant for understanding the public and private aspects of freedom in the USSR. Before considering these implications in detail, it is useful, however, to consider the origins of freedom perceptions.

THE ETIOLOGY OF FREEDOM PERCEPTIONS

Perceptions of Government Repression

No general theory of political freedom currently exists (but see MacKuen 1990). Consequently, it is necessary to try to piece some theoretical propositions together in order to examine individual variation in perceptions of political freedom.

My understanding of perceptions of repression is fairly simple: the hypothesis is that those who in any sense deviate from dominant political and social norms are more likely to perceive repression. For instance, those favoring fundamental social change are more likely to perceive political repression than those who support the status quo. Conversely, those who are in the political mainstream, or those who have withdrawn from politics, are more likely to perceive freedom from repression.

This hypothesis raises difficult issues of measuring deviance in the Soviet Union. It is conceptually easy to define deviance as holding political and social views that are shared by a minority of people and which most view as socially undesirable. It is more difficult to discern exactly what was socially desirable in the Soviet Union of 1990, a country in which virtually every conceivable viewpoint was being openly and often vigorously advocated. Consequently, the following hypotheses are offered as quite tentative:

H₁: Those who are religious are more likely to perceive repression than those who are not. This hypothesis, while historically grounded, will perhaps not receive strong support from the 1990 data because religion had become fashionable in the Soviet Union at this time (though perhaps not reflecting deeply felt convictions) and religious freedom was fairly widespread (including American-style evangelical preaching on Radio Moscow). Nonetheless, as a vestige of the past, those with strong and long-held religious convictions may well perceive restricted political freedom.
H₃: Those who more strongly support democratic values and those who favor political and economic reform are more likely to perceive political repression. This too is a hypothesis that might not receive as strong support in 1990 as it might have earlier. Democratic values were not unanimously held in the Soviet Union in 1990 but nor were they particularly socially undesirable. Nonetheless, strong advocates of democracy were strong critics of the political status quo, and therefore often stood in opposition to the regime. Therefore, the hypothesis is worth testing.

H₄: Those who perceive themselves as holding relatively extreme political views will perceive less freedom than centrists. This hypothesis will be tested using ideological self identifications on a continuum ranging from “left” to “right” (while realizing that this continuum is often ambiguous if not perverse in its contemporary usage in the USSR). Nonetheless, my purpose here is to use the measure to indicate political extremism, irrespective of political content, and therefore the measure is probably fairly reliable.

H₅: Those with stronger connections to the West are more likely to perceive repression. This hypothesis is based on two separate lines of reasoning. First, most contacts with the West (e.g., listening to foreign radio) have been illegal until fairly recently in the Soviet Union. Thus, those who sought such contacts did so with the awareness that they were engaged in activity prohibited by the regime. Second, knowledge of Western European politics sensitizes Soviet people to the availability and importance of freedom. Thus, I expect that those with knowledge of Western politics to perceive less freedom in the Soviet Union.

H₆: It is also reasonable to hypothesize that those who value freedom more perceive greater political repression. Relatedly, those with “postmaterial” values are more likely to favor political self-expression and hence to view even minor restrictions on political expression as repressive. Postmaterialists value individual freedom more highly and therefore are more likely to perceive even minor encroachments as repressive.

H₇: Minority status may contribute to perceptions of repression. For instance, those who are of a minority nationality within their republic may perceive less freedom. On the other hand, since Russians are the largest minority nationality in most of the republics of the USSR, this hypothesis may not receive strong support. Minority status may also be indicated by gender and even by (in 1990) membership in the Communist party.

H₈: Perceptions of political repression may also be less substantial when respondents have confidence in their major political institutions. Those who are confident and trustful are less likely to expect repercussions from political activity.

²⁹And indeed nearly 40% of the respondents refused or were unable to locate themselves on the scale.
Similarly, those who perceive their government as more responsive to popular preferences (external political efficacy) are expected to perceive less repression.

\( H_8 \): Those who are uninterested and uninvolved in politics are less likely to perceive political repression (unless it is the repression that caused the lack of interest and involvement).

\( H_9 \): Perceptions of repression are most likely greater in the countryside than in urban areas. Many parts of the rural Soviet Union have not experienced the effects of glasnost the way that urban-dwellers have.

\( H_{10} \): Following Bahry and Silver, younger Soviet people should perceive less political repression. Many of the young have only vague understandings of the Stalinist excesses of a very distant past. For some of the young, a state that seems impotent at solving even mundane economic problems is of little threat politically.

\( H_{11} \): Finally, perceptions of repression may also reflect the psychological make-up of the individual citizen. Those who perceive political repression are perhaps more psychologically vulnerable. That is, they are likely to be less confident, lower in self-esteem, more risk averse, and generally more threatened by the world in which they live, in part due to the tendency to view the world in dichotomous absolutes like "good" and "evil." Consequently, those perceiving greater governmental repression are expected to be more dogmatic, more determined to avoid harm, more dependent upon external rewards, and less attracted to novelty.

The indicators of each of these concepts are reported in appendix B. The data relevant to these hypotheses are shown in table 7.

Generally, there is very little support for the hypothesis that those holding deviant political views perceive less freedom. The data are unequivocal. Though few (5.3%) of the respondents are highly religious, they do not perceive less freedom than their nonbelieving fellow citizens. Supporters and opponents of democratic values, institutions, and processes and political reform differ little in their perceptions of political freedom.\(^{30}\) Moreover, citizens who least share the views of the average Soviet perceive no less freedom than those in the mainstream. The correlations between repression perceptions and opinion deviation are trivial.\(^{31}\) Though those who describe themselves as being on the far left perceive slightly greater political repression, the differences are statistically trivial. Thus, there is no evidence

\(^{30}\)Support for democratic values, institutions, and processes is a complex measure made up of six primary indices (see Gibson and Duch 1993). None of these indices is significantly related to perceptions of repression.

\(^{31}\)Opinion deviation is measured as:

\[ (X_i - \bar{X})^2 \]

where \( X \) is the particular value

This measure indicates the degree to which the respondent is different than the average attitude score, irrespective of the direction of difference.
TABLE 7

CORRELATES OF PERCEPTIONS OF GOVERNMENTAL REPRESSION,
Soviet Mass Public, 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception of Governmental Repression</th>
<th>Ideological Deviance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Religiosity</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support for Democratic Values</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support for Economic and Political Reform</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ideological Self Identification</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ideological Extremism</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge of Western European Politics</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Valuation of Freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Postmaterialism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority Status</td>
<td>Minority Nationality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Membership in the Communist Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Confidence</td>
<td>Confidence in Governmental Institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trust in the National Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trust in People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>External Political Efficacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Interest</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size of Place of Residence</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality Attributes</td>
<td>Closedmindedness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Harm Avoidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reward Dependence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Novelty Seeking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Bivariate correlation coefficient is significant at .01 or less.

whateversoever that those holding unpopular or deviant views perceive themselves as more politically repressed in the Soviet Union of the 1990s. We must look elsewhere for the sources of individual variance in perceptions of political repression.

Indeed, virtually none of these hypotheses is supported by these data. The strongest relationship observed—$r = -.14$—indicates that those who perceive that the government is more responsive to citizen demands are likely to view the government as less repressive. Even this relationship, however, is not particularly noteworthy because nonresponsiveness and repression are conceptually connected.

It is clear that not everyone in the Soviet Union perceives governmental constraints on their political freedom. At the same time, however, perceptions of repression seem to have penetrated virtually all segments of society. That is, the absence of any correlations may indicate that perceptions of repression have evenly diffused throughout society. One need not be especially interested or
knowledgeable about politics, nor particularly vulnerable to repercussions due to one's political beliefs. Instead, information about the repressiveness of the government seems to be available to nearly all segments of society. I will consider the implications of this finding in the discussion below.

**Self-Censorship**

What accounts for the propensity to self-censor one's political discussions? MacKuen (1990) has proposed an interesting theory of the economics of political conversation that has some relevance here. Basically, he proposes that individuals will express themselves politically if the pleasure of political discussion exceeds the displeasure. He argues that the primary displeasure of conversation arises from disagreement and he paints an interesting portrait of the social consequences of individuals maximizing conversational utility.

For my purposes, individuals are expected to engage in less self-censorship when political discussion is itself valuable, and when the costs of conversation are low. Costs are reduced when levels of political information are high and when individuals are not sanctioned for expressing their views. Sanctions can (but do not necessarily) arise when differences of opinion exist, and are likely when members of the discussion group are intolerant. Moreover, since individuals have different thresholds of disapproval, as well as different perceptions of the meaning of squabbles, the psychological costs of disagreements differ across people. Finally, for some, disengagement is itself costly so the nature of the alternatives to political discussion must be taken into consideration. Consequently, I hypothesize that:

- $H_1$: The propensity to engage in self-censorship will be less among those with more interest in politics.
- $H_2$: Self-censorship will be less among those with more information about politics, as well as among those with a stronger sense of political self-competence.
- $H_3$: Self-censorship will be less among those with greater trust in people and in major social and political institutions.
- $H_4$: The key variables of peer group heterogeneity and intolerance are unfortunately not available in this survey (but see Gibson 1992). However, self-censorship will most likely be higher among those who are by nationality a minority in the republic in which they live, and those who live in less urbanized areas of the country. Similarly, women, older people, and those who are members of the Communist party may engage in greater self-censorship.
- $H_5$: Self-censorship will reflect the personality attributes of the respondent. Specifically, those who are less dependent upon others for rewards, who have a tendency to value novelty, who are less averse to harm, and who are less dogmatic will engage in less self-censorship.
In addition, following the analysis of perceptions of political repression, I hypothesize that those who are politically different will engage in more self-censorship. I also expect that perceptions of government repression will have some effect on the propensity for self-censorship. Table 8 reports the data relevant to these hypotheses.

Though many of the hypotheses receive some support at the bivariate level—for instance, those with greater awareness of Western European politics are less likely to engage in self-censorship—only two variables are significantly related to

**Table 8**

**Correlates of Self Censorship, Soviet Mass Public, 1990**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Self Censorship</th>
<th>Beta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political Interest</td>
<td>-.21</td>
<td>-.11*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Political Efficacy</td>
<td>-.27</td>
<td>-.15*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Education</td>
<td>-.26</td>
<td>-.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Consumption</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of Western European Politics</td>
<td>-.28</td>
<td>-.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Confidence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence in Governmental Institutions</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in the National Government</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust in People</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Political Efficacy</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority Nationality</td>
<td>-.00</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership in the Communist Party</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size of Place of Residence</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality Attributes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closedmindedness</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harm Avoidance</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reward Dependence</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novelty Seeking</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological Deviance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religiosity</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for Democratic Values</td>
<td>-.29</td>
<td>-.05</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support for Economic and Political Reform</td>
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<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological Self Identification</td>
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<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological Extremism</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valuation of Freedom</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postmaterialism</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>-.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception of Governmental Repression</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( R^2 )</td>
<td></td>
<td>.23*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Standardized regression coefficient (beta) is significant at .01 or less.
levels of self-censorship in the multivariate equation: internal political efficacy and interest in politics. In addition, however, two other variables are very nearly statistically significant: those who perceive greater governmental repression and older people are more likely to engage in self-censorship ($p = .016$ and .017, respectively). In a large multivariate equation such as this, it is not surprising that the direct, independent effects of many variables are relatively small. Nonetheless, those who feel reticent to express themselves are those who lack confidence in their own political efficacy, who have little interest in politics, who perceive the government as repressive, and who are older.

It is clear that one’s political views are unrelated to the propensity to self-censorship, as are most personality characteristics. Those who have some sort of minority status are no more likely to engage in self-censorship than those in the majority. Nor do political confidence or personality attributes have an impact on self-censorship.

One understanding of these findings on self-censorship stresses the inadequacy of the individual—those who engage in self-censorship are those least likely to view themselves as politically competent or to have much of an interest in politics. Indeed, one might wonder whether those who seem to censor their views actually have any views to censor. Of course, in the absence of data pertaining to the environment of the respondent, it would be difficult for a different picture to emerge. In a similar but more complete analysis of data from the United States, for instance, self-censorship was discovered to be in part a function of the level of political intolerance in one’s immediate micro-environment (Gibson 1992). Since comparable data are not available for the Soviet case, inevitably the attributes of the individual must be the best predictors of levels of self-censorship.

On the other hand, the effect of perceptions of freedom on self-censorship, while weak, is statistically significant. Moreover, there is some effect of perceptions of repression on internal political efficacy ($r = -.17$), although not on political interest ($r = -.03$). This suggests that while perceptions of a repressive government may not directly dampen political activity, repression may affect citizens’ perceptions of their ability to act in a politically efficacious fashion, which results in more self-censorship, thereby indirectly depressing levels of political activism. The effects here are certainly not strong, but the data hint at some important direct and indirect effects of repression on self-censorship and ultimately on political activity.

**Discussion**

Perhaps the most remarkable finding of this research is that in the USSR of 1990 subjective perceptions of freedom seem to correspond with the expansion of objective levels of freedom in the country. These findings are entirely consonant with the thesis that fundamental change has taken place within the political
culture of the Soviet Union. At the time of the survey, perestroika and glasnost had long been implemented, even if they were widely seen as having failed. But this was also the period before the dramatic decline of the economic and political fortunes of the Union in 1991, including the failed August Putsch. The USSR in 1990 may not have been exactly the equivalent of a “Prague Spring,” but certainly it was a time of political exuberance, broad political participation, and rapid, mostly democratic, political change. Consequently, it is perhaps not surprising that this research has discovered so much political freedom within the USSR.

It is also noteworthy that perceptions of political repression in the USSR are of such small direct consequence. Not only does repression fail to impede political behavior, but perceptions of repression are not rooted in the ideology or values of individual Soviet citizens. That is, those who perceive repression are not a distinct social, political, or ideological group. These are not research findings anticipated by the imagery of less than a decade ago of the “Evil Empire.”

The period of this survey was also a time when ordinary Soviet people were learning about the expanded limits of their political freedom. Would there be repression for holding or trading foreign currency; for entering a beriozka; for attending a political rally? These were activities that the Soviet people increasingly were coming to realize were possible. It is possible, then, that this survey captured an apogee of political freedom. The increase in objective political freedom within the country seems to have penetrated the political culture.

Indeed, the reaction to the August 1991 Putsch may well be an example of the depth of commitment to political freedom that had been established by the time of our survey. Before the coup, many predicted that the Soviet people would welcome the reimposition of political order, even if by an “iron hand.” While it is not clear just how broad active opposition to the coup was, clearly ordinary Soviet citizens did not mobilize in support of the Putsch and considerable numbers of people (even if only a tiny proportion) took to the streets of at least Moscow and Leningrad to defend their political freedom. It is impossible to know precisely just how the recent political events in the Soviet Union affected the responses to the questions about political freedom. But these data give sustenance to those who perceive the development of nascent pluralism within the political culture of the Soviet Union.

Though my measures are perhaps too weak to justify the conclusion entirely, this analysis provides some support for the thesis that cultural intolerance constrains freedom more than formal governmental repression. Certainly this seems to be the case in the United States (Gibson 1992). In the Soviet Union, citizens are constrained not by fear of the state but by fear of repercussions from their friends, family, and colleagues. This is especially significant in the USSR because political intolerance is so widespread within the mass public (Gibson and Duch n.d.) and because political differences have not yet been fully legitimized within
the political culture. Self-censorship may well reflect the more general intolerance of the political culture.

Self-censorship and perceptions of repression are not closely related. This suggests that they are distinct phenomena, no doubt with different origins and different consequences. Those who perceive a repressive state do not necessarily perceive a repressive culture, although there is some tendency for self-censorship to be higher among those perceiving greater repression.

These findings do not fit well with those observers who believe that contemporary Soviet culture is but a mere extrapolation of centuries of authoritarian and repressive political beliefs and values. Traditionally, totalitarianism has been perceived as using terror and social atomization to cow the populace into submission (cf. Moore 1954). If there were any legacy of this repression in the Soviet Union of 1990, then we would expect to see stronger correlations between perceived constraints on freedom across different domains. Political atomization does not seem to characterize contemporary Soviet people, even if it might have in the past.

Finally, it does not appear that lack of political freedom stands as an important impediment to the further democratization of the country. At the absolute level, perceived freedom is comparable to the United States, at least when compared to white Americans. Perceptions of a repressive state do not paralyze political behavior, and those with democratic ideologies are not more likely to perceive repression than supporters of the status quo ante. Even the connection between perceptions of cultural constraints and political behavior does not strongly translate into impediments to political activity. Generally, the amount of the freedom available in the USSR is sufficient to sustain citizen political activism and the emerging democratic politics.

What of the future of Russia and the other successor states? Much has changed since our survey, including the demise of the USSR itself. Will democratization proceed; will freedom prevail? Certainly, there are reasons to doubt the success of the political transformation. Political tolerance seems to be in short supply, elite consensus on the value of democratization weakens nearly daily, and few of the successor states have dealt democratically with national minorities. Communists have recently been freely elected to govern Lithuania, and, of course, Communists were never dislodged in many of the republics of the former Soviet Union. Furthermore, it would be fatuous to predict the consummation of democratization in the former USSR solely on the basis of survey data such as these.

Nonetheless, this analysis has demonstrated that democratization permeated the mass political culture of the former Soviet Union, and that this democratization generated tangible benefits in terms of perceived political freedom. That the Soviet people have actually enjoyed political freedom may well mean they are more reluctant to surrender it to the enemies of democracy.
APPENDIX A: THE EUROPEAN USSR SAMPLE

This analysis is based on a sample of residents of that portion of the USSR that is in Europe. The details of the sample are:

(1) The Universe: Our original goal was to include residents from all territory within the European USSR. Except for two areas, the goal was achieved. In the original sample, 54 respondents were targeted from Azerbaijan. Due to political unrest in the republic (Spring, 1990), including the situation with the Soviet military, we deemed it difficult and perhaps dangerous for interviewers to attempt any interviews. Consequently, we cannot generalize our findings to include Azerbaijan.

In addition, there were approximately five subjects targeted from the European portion of Kazakastan. Due to the expense of interviewing these subjects, and because Kazakastan is only partially and nominally in Europe, these interviews were not attempted.

Thus, the specific geographical universe from which the sample was drawn includes residents of the Republics of: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belorussia, Ukraine, Moldavia, Georgia, Armenia, and the portion of Russia west of the Ural Mountains.

(2) The Sample: A primary sample of 1,590 respondents was selected. In anticipation of the nonresponse rate, a supplementary sample of 410 respondents was also drawn. Respondents from each of the republics identified above were included in the sample.

This sample is a four-stage stratified sample. At the initial stage of the sampling geographical units were classified according to four statistical indices: (1) the level of industrial development (e.g., the number of plants and factories); (2) the level of well-being of the population (e.g., income per family); (3) ethnocultural peculiarities (e.g., the degree of homogeneity of the distribution of nationalities); and (4) accessibility of cultural amenities (e.g., the numbers of libraries, cinemas, theaters, etc.). These criteria were selected due to their assumed importance in structuring the beliefs of ordinary respondents. The geographical units classified were the oblasts in Russia and the Ukraine, and the republics elsewhere. A total of 85 units was classified within these 18 homogeneous strata.

At the second stage of the sampling, eight substrata were identified, including: (1) capitals of the union republics with a population more than one million; (2) capitals of the union republics with a population less than one million; (3) regional centers with a population more than one million; (4) regional centers with a population less than one million; (5) centers of the autonomous republics, regions, districts; (6) peripheral towns of the autonomous republics, regions, districts; (7) Moscow and Leningrad; and (8) villages.

At the third stage of the sampling, each geographical unit fitting within the 18 * 8 matrix was enumerated, and units were sampled. Sampling points were drawn from each cell in the matrix. Where there was discretion on which of several units to select, experts on the area were consulted in an effort to select the most representative unit. The strategy resulted in 62 sampling points.
(3) **Respondent Selection:** Within each of these sampling points, respondents were selected through random procedures. Using the records of the address bureaus and farm records, specific named respondents were identified. Thus, unlike many western samples, there was no need to select individual respondents within households using household enumeration methods.

It is important to consider whether the records of the address and farm bureaus constitute a useful sampling frame. Certainly these records are superior to using voting lists, which are derived mainly from the address and farm records themselves. But using these records clearly has some disadvantages, in addition to their many important advantages.

The first question is whether these records fairly completely enumerate the population. We believe they probably do. There is a strong incentive for all Soviet people to register with the bureaus. It is the records from these bureaus that are used to issue the internal passports. Not only is it a criminal offense not to register, but this is also the required point of registration for military service. These records have also become quite important recently for purposes of rationing. They also have the advantage of being updated continuously.

At the same time, however, it is clear that some Soviet residents do not live where they are thought to live according to the official records. The proportion of people in this category is impossible to judge with any precision, but is probably on the order of 10% to 15% in large cities, much less in small cities, and practically nil in villages and rural areas. Thus, it was impossible to locate some of the respondents selected to be interviewed because they did not live where we expected them to live.

(4) **The Questionnaire:** The survey instrument was constructed primarily in the United States, but was pre-tested in Moscow, and was significantly revised by both the American and Soviet research teams working closely together. The survey asked a broad array of questions on many topics. The survey instrument was back-translated twice and every effort was made to insure that the questions, though mainly Western in origin, were tailored to the Soviet cultural context. Special attention was given to training the interviewers in techniques more common in Western survey research. Of course, the respondents had no idea that the survey was in any way connected with an American research project.

(5) **Response Rate:** Of the 1,590 respondents originally selected in the sample, 268 could not be interviewed. As in American studies, the overwhelming explanation of not completing an interview with a respondent was not the subject's lack of cooperation, but the inability to locate the specific subject. In one sense, then, the response rate is 83%: 1,322 completed interviews/1,590 selected respondents.

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32 The European USSR questionnaire represented the joint efforts of the American and Soviet research teams, and the *Los Angeles Times*, which paid for a portion of the research. The late I. A. ("Bud") Lewis, director of *The Los Angeles Times Poll*, contributed substantially to the design and execution of the survey.
Anticipating that some proportion of the respondents could not be interviewed, a supplementary sample of respondents was randomly selected using precisely the same methods as used for the primary sample. Since the gender, age, and sampling point were known from the address bureau records, those who could not be interviewed were replaced by subjects in this randomly selected supplementary sample who matched the (non)respondent on these three criteria. The objective of this strategy was to generate a specific number of completed interviews. Interviews were completed with 239 supplementary respondents.

Thus, the most reasonable way to calculate the response rate is to divide the 1,561 completed interviews by 1,858 (1,590 respondents from the primary sample and 268 from the supplementary sample). This results in a response rate of 84%.

(6) The Interviewers: Interviewers were recruited and trained by staff from the Institute of Sociology (USSR Academy of Sciences). The interviewers were instructed in standard interview techniques. Of the 266 interviewers used in the project, 236 completed the questionnaire and returned it to Moscow. Like interviewers in the West, these interviewers were overwhelmingly female (71%). The average age was 35 years old. Reflecting their associations with various institutes, the interviewers are quite well educated, even though two-thirds report an average monthly income of less than 150 rubles per family member. One-fourth of the interviewers are members of the Communist party, while two-thirds are members of a trade union. Thus, the Soviet interviewers are better educated than western interviewers, but in most other respects are similar to their western colleagues.

Several steps were taken to discourage cheating on the interviews. First, a fairly elaborate system of supervision was put in place. Second, each questionnaire was carefully checked by a supervisor. Third, with just a few exceptions, interviewers were not allowed to conduct a great number of interviews. The average number of interviews conducted per interviewer is 5.9 (minimum = 1 interview, 3 interviewers; maximum = 22 interviews, 1 interviewer). Finally, a small percentage of cases was selected for verification. No instances of falsification were discovered.

(7) Data Reliability: As with all surveys, there can be no absolute guarantee of the reliability of all the data collected. All that we can guarantee is that every reasonable step to insure the quality of the data was in fact taken.

APPENDIX B: MEASUREMENT

Support for Democratic Processes and Institutions

Some scholars have conceptualized support for the norms of democracy as an abstract concomitant to democratic values (e.g., Sullivan, Piersen, and Marcus 1982). We have taken a somewhat different and broader tack, using a more variegated set of political values. The subdimensions of democratic values include: (1) valuation of liberty; (2) rights consciousness; (3) support for dissent and opposition; (4) support for an independent media; (5) support for the institution of competitive elections; and (6) political tolerance. Each of these concepts is
measured through an index based on multiple items. The theoretical, conceptual, and operational details of these variables have been the objects of earlier papers (e.g., Gibson and Duch 1993, and Gibson, Duch, and Tedin 1992).

Support for Political and Economic Reform

This attitude was measured using four items focusing on reform. The items are:

39. Political reform in this country is moving too rapidly. (Agree strongly—Disagree strongly).

113. Let’s talk about the possibility and necessity of radical economic reform in the Soviet Union which may lead to a free market economy. Some people say that such reform may at first lead to unemployment and inflation of prices after which may come plentiful consumer goods of high quality and economic prosperity. Do you think it is necessary to introduce such economic reform in the Soviet Union or not?

114. 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?

115. Are you in favor of an economy in which prices are set by supply and demand and people get jobs when they are qualified for them, or are you in favor of an economy in which prices are set by the government and people are given a job even though it may not be the one they prefer?

These items were reduced to a single index using factor analysis. The eigenvalue of the first factor extracted is 1.80, while for the second factor it is .87. The first factor accounts for 45% of the original variance.

Knowledge of Western European Politics

This is a variable that indicates whether the respondent has heard about “The Common European House,” the “Pan-European Confederation,” and “The European Community.” Forty percent of the respondents had heard of none of these institutions.

Postmaterialism

We have measured postmaterialism through the standard set of two questions that were developed by Inglehart. These items ask the respondents to indicate which two of the following goals are more important: (1) maintaining order in the nation; (2) giving the people more say in important state decisions; (3) fighting rising prices; and (4) protecting freedom of speech. Postmaterialists are those who claim (2) and (4) as the most important goals.33

33For a more complete consideration of the importance of postmaterialism within Soviet political culture see Gibson and Duch, forthcoming.
Not surprisingly, there is not a large number of postmaterialists in the contemporary USSR. Only 11% of the respondents are pure postmaterialists. On the other hand, 53% of the respondents named one material and one postmaterial goal, which in the context of widespread concern about social and economic disorder is noteworthy. When compared with Polish data from a survey in 1989 these figures are quite similar.34

Minority Status

We have designated individuals as members of a minority nationality based on a comparison of their own nationality with the majority nationality of the republic in which they live.

Confidence in Governmental Institutions

The respondents were asked to indicate how much confidence they have in “the government,” the Supreme Soviet, and the Communist party. Responses were recorded on a four-point scale ranging from a great deal of confidence to no confidence at all. The index is the mean of the responses to the three variables.

Political Interest

The respondents were asked to indicate how interested they are in politics. A total of 19% claimed to be very interested; only 5% said they were not at all interested.

Media Consumption

We have measured the frequency of media consumption with an index based on the frequency of listening to news broadcasts on television and radio, and the frequency of newspaper readership. Roughly 58% of the respondents watch news on television everyday, 47% listen to news on radio everyday, and 60% read the newspaper daily.

Political Efficacy

The external efficacy questions are: “If you had some complaint about a local government activity and took that complaint to the local apparatus, how would you be treated: pay a lot of attention to what you say, some attention, or none at all?”; “Suppose there were some question that you had to take to a government official—for example, a housing problem [militia—a traffic violation]. “If you explained your point of view to the officials, what effect do you think it would have?”; “If you explained your point of view to a militia worker, how do you think he would react?” The response set for the last two questions was: serious

34From our calculations from table 4 of Inglehart and Siemienbska (1990), 31% of the Poles are materialists, 10% are postmaterialists, and 60% have mixed values.
consideration, pay some attention, ignore what you say. The fourth external item was the following agree-disagree question: "People who run the country are not really concerned with what happens to people like me." The internal efficacy questions are: "How much influence do you think that people like you can have over local government—a lot, a little or none at all?"; "People like me don’t have any say over what the authorities do."; "Sometimes political and state affairs seem so complicated to me that a person like me can’t really understand what’s going on." The response set for the last two questions is: agree strongly, agree, uncertain, disagree, disagree strongly. The summary measures are based on the factor scores for each respondent that results from a factor analysis of all seven questions. Two significant factors emerge from a common factor analysis of the seven items using principal axis factor extraction (oblimin rotation). The first factor, external efficacy, has an eigenvalue of 2.2 and explains 32% of the total variance of the items. The second factor, internal efficacy, has an eigenvalue of 1.3 and explains 19% of the total variance of the items. The correlation between the factor scores is .58.

Closedmindedness

Dogmatism, or "closemindedness," was first proposed by Rokeach (1960) as an important personality attribute. Perhaps the most relevant attribute of dogmatism is the tendency to dichotomize beliefs into strict categories of acceptance and rejection. More dogmatic people are quite hostile to beliefs that differ from their own, in part because these beliefs are seen as threatening. Dogmatism was measured in this research through four items. One significant factor emerged from the factor analysis of these items. It had an eigenvalue of 1.62 (explaining 40.5% of the variance). The reliability of the scale is .51 (Cronbach’s alpha).

Reward Dependence

Reward dependence is a tendency to maintain behavior associated with reward and nonpunishment. Individuals who are reward independent are practical, tough-minded, analytical, shrewd, and realistic. In contrast, those who are reward dependent are "outer directed," "ambitious, wishful thinkers, sentimental and impractical, intuitive dreamers who may be idealistic, ingratiating, manipulative or sympathetic depending on influence of other personality dimensions and what will satisfy their appetite for reward" (Cloninger 1986, 180).

"Reward dependence" is very closely related to social learning. Cloninger (1988) argues that reward dependence contributes to social involvement: those high in reward dependence are said to be sensitive to social cues and personal succorance, and eager to help and please others, while those low in reward dependence are emotionally independent and socially detached. Those who are reward dependent are more likely to excel in social learning and thus to acquire the norms that dominate the polity. Because they are ingratiating and anxious to
please, those high in reward dependence are especially likely to know what is expected of them.

**Novelty Seeking**

“Novelty-seeking is hypothesized to involve variation in behavioral activation, including individual differences in exhilaration or excitement by novel stimuli and potential rewards or relief from punishment, as well as cognitive differences in allocation of attention to detail” (Cloninger N.d., 6). The novelty-seeking dimension is bounded by “pain-prone impulsivity” and “stoical reflection.” Those high on this dimension tend to be impulsive, exploratory, vacillating, pain-prone, quick-tempered, and extravagant.

**Harm Avoidance**

Cloninger (N.d.) posits that “harm avoidance is a heritable tendency to respond intensely to aversive stimuli and their conditioned signals, thereby facilitating learning to inhibit behavior in order to avoid punishment, novelty, and frustrating non-reward” (6). The dimension varies from the extremes of “inhibited apprehension” to “carefree sociability.” Those who are high on harm avoidance are likely to be cautious, apprehensive, fatiguable, and inhibited, while those low on harm avoidance tend to be fearless, carefree, sociable, and energetic.

**Political Participation**

We include in this analysis measures of both conventional and unconventional participation. Conventional participation is an index based on voting, participation in campaigns, membership in organizations, and communal activities (e.g., Verba, Nie, and Kim 1978). Our indicator of unconventional participation closely replicates the questions employed in the 1990 World Values Surveys and are similar to the earlier unconventional participation questions implemented in the Political Action surveys (Barnes et al. 1979). The respondents were asked to indicate whether they had actually undertaken each of the unconventional activities, whether they could do them, or whether they would never do them. (For additional details see Duch and Gibson 1991.)

**REFERENCES**


Perceived Political Freedom in the Soviet Union


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