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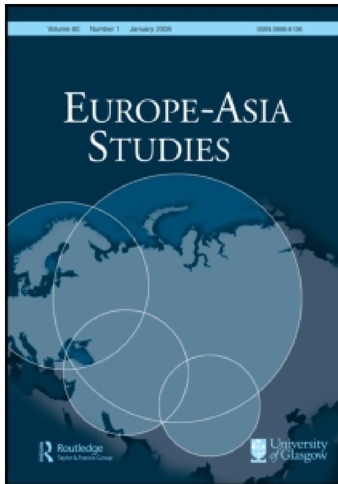

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Generational Differences in Russian Attitudes towards Democracy and the Economy

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Generational Differences in Russian Attitudes towards Democracy and the Economy

JEFFREY W. HAHN & IGOR LOGVINENKO

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to explore whether there is evidence of generational differences in Russian attitudes towards democracy. Are the attitudes, values and beliefs of those who came of age politically after the fall of the Soviet Union significantly different from those who did so in the Soviet period? The main finding is that the post-Soviet generation of Russians is generally more supportive of democratic values and institutions and a free market economy than the generations which came of age politically during the Soviet years. Such a result is not surprising. However, while support was found to be the case generally, the differences appear much more strongly for economic reforms than for political ones. In trying to explain why this should be, the authors argue that instrumentalist rather than culturalist considerations are paramount. Put another way, the current generation appears to be less interested in politics than in getting ahead in the world. If these differences are generational and not simply a function of aging, in the future this generation may be less interested in the public good than in their own.

THE DEMISE OF THE SOVIET COMMUNIST SYSTEM AND the collapse of the Soviet Union by the end of 1991 marked a radical change of direction for those living in Soviet Russia. Virtually overnight, not only were they citizens of a new country, but of one whose leaders were committed to the rapid creation of a democratic political system in place of the socialism they had known all their lives. However, in the years since 1991, the outcome of this experiment in building democracy has remained uncertain. What is certain is that, demographically speaking, the outcome will

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inevitably be determined by those who have come of age politically since those events took place. What are the political views of the post-Soviet generation? Do they differ significantly from those of their parents and grandparents brought up in the Soviet period? If they do differ, how are we to explain the differences? Are there differences not only between generations, but within generations? Are the attitudes of the post-Soviet generation likely to impede or facilitate change in a democratic direction? The purpose of this article is to address these questions using survey data replicated in Yaroslavl', Russia in three waves since 1993, the latest in 2004.

Literature review

Because it has only been a relatively short time since the collapse of Soviet communism, scholarly research on the attitudes of the post-Soviet generation is only now beginning to materialise. However, the argument that generational differences have been important to understanding change in Russia is not new. In 1979, Jerry Hough published an article entitled 'The Generation Gap and the Brezhnev Succession' in which he looked at how administrative elites had changed over time reflecting the different generations in which they had come to hold their positions (Hough 1979). He elaborated further on this theme in 1980 suggesting that there were four distinct generations in Soviet political history and that the transfer of administrative authority from one to another could help us understand change in the Soviet Union (Hough 1980).

The importance of generational change in the Soviet period was also found using data gathered by the Soviet Interview Project (SIP) which interviewed Soviet émigrés, mostly Jewish, who left the USSR in the 1970s and 1980s. In particular, Donna Bahry identified five generations and found that 'the turbulence of Soviet history has created divergent political values, levels of activism, and evaluations of the regime among successive generations' (Bahry 1987, p. 94). The 'Stalin generation' was the most supportive of the Soviet system, but the preceding and succeeding generations were much more critical. Using the same data, Brian Silver concluded that the younger (post-Stalin) generations exhibited significantly more support for individual rights than previous generations. Generational differences, even when controlling for education, explained the most variance for this value (Silver 1987).

After 1989, systematic survey research on the political views of Russians by Western social scientists became possible. Some of this research offered further confirmation of the importance of generational differences in political attitudes. Hahn's work published in 1991 suggested that age and education are reinforcing influences. The better educated tended to be more supportive of democratic norms, but higher education was closely related to age (Hahn 1991, p. 419). These findings, which identified a younger generation that was distinctively more pro-reform and better educated than its predecessors, would appear to be consistent with Bahry's findings noted above. Indeed, Bahry's review of survey data gathered both before and after 1990 leads her to conclude that generational change may be 'the most compelling explanation' for the social roots of *perestroika* (Bahry 1993, p. 550).

Still other survey research conducted in the 1990s found not only an unexpectedly high degree of support for democratic norms, but that the demographic variable most

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clearly associated with it was age (Gibson *et al.* 1992; Gibson 1996a; Reisinger *et al.* 1994; Hahn 1991). In particular, Reisinger *et al.* found that when it came to a preference for a strong leader and to favourable assessments of Stalin, the younger generation was distinguished by their rejection of both. 'No other factor has a noteworthy effect' they concluded (Reisinger *et al.* 1994, p. 203). Using panel survey data from national election studies in 1995 and 1996, Timothy Colton also noted the importance of age in electoral choice. He found support for the hypothesis that 'the young should be attracted to reformist candidates and the old and set in their ways to anti-reform candidates' (Colton 2000, p. 77).

The most ambitious effort to employ generational analysis to the study of post-communist attitudes in the 1990s was undertaken by Richard Rose and Ellen Carnaghan. In 1993 and 1994, they surveyed attitudes on political and economic reforms for 13,614 respondents in 11 formerly communist countries. They found significant differences between the five generations they identified, most especially for what they called the '*glasnost*'' generation, those born 1967 and after. On the question about whether respondents approved of the former communist regime, the authors found a steady and monotonic decline in support, most pronounced among younger Russians (Rose & Carnaghan 1995, p. 40). Asked whether they preferred a socialist economic system, a similar pattern emerged (Rose & Carnghan 1995, p. 44). Aware that such differences might be explained by other factors, such as maturation or socio-economic change over time, the authors controlled for education and for life cycle effects, neither of which caused the generational effect to disappear. Although the findings suggest that the post-Soviet generation does not appear disposed to return to the old order, the authors caution against making a 'deterministic forecast' on the basis of generational analysis.

Not all the research on the impact of generational change on Russia's future is encouraging. A far more pessimistic assessment of the post-Soviet generation's attitudes towards democracy was offered recently by Sarah Mendelson and Theodore Gerber. On the basis of a survey of 2,000 Russians aged 16–29 conducted in June 2005 about a variety of issues related to democracy, the authors conclude that 'generally, the data show that opinion about whether democracy is always desirable remains sharply divided among Russian youth. If anything, support for authoritarianism may be growing' (Mendelson & Gerber 2005/06, p. 88). The authors were particularly alarmed at what they refer to as the 'tremendous ambivalence and widespread misperception' they found in the young peoples' views of Stalin (Mendelson & Gerber 2005/06, p. 86). In another article, they argue that 'willful blindness [about Stalin] is dangerous' because such attitudes constitute a major impediment to the further democratisation in Russia (Mendelson & Gerber 2006, p. 2). Stephen White also found that many Russians regard Soviet rule as more 'legitimate' than the post-communist Russian regime (White 2002, p. 38). Although not specifically about the younger generation, such a finding, he concludes, does not auger well for the eventual emergence of liberal democracy in Russia (p. 49).

Still other recent research suggests that the post-Soviet generation does not identify with the old order, either politically or economically. Assessing what they call the 'emerging master narrative' that Russians are undemocratic, Timothy Colton and Michael McFaul find important demographic correlates of support for democracy

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among Russians. Of these, the strongest is age and associated generational experience (Colton & McFaul 2002, p. 112). Support for Soviet rule was found to be much weaker among those who were 18–29 years old in 1999 than for those aged 40 and older. Significant generational differences were also found regarding individual liberties.

Survey research conducted by Stephen Whitefield and his colleagues from 1995 to 2003 revealed that on the question of state identity, 'the strongest factor by far, ... is found in the effects of age, with the young being far more likely than older people to identify with Russia' (Whitefield 2005b, pp. 137–38). He goes on to explain this on the grounds that 'younger people are at a greater and increasingly growing distance from Soviet socialisation and the fundamental foci of loyalty and identification associated with it'. Whitefield does caution, however, that this does not necessarily mean the younger generation is politically more democratic, but rather that they are more 'pro-market, pro-private ownership and more anti-welfare' (Whitefield 2005b, p. 139).

What this literature review makes clear is that generational differences in Russian attitudes about politics matter, if only because the turbulence of Russian political history in the twentieth century created so many distinct breaking points. The most recent of these breaking points, arguably, is the demise of the Soviet Union and the collapse of the communist regime that governed it at the end of 1991. Certainly, the political environment since 1991 has been radically different than the one that preceded it. It is hard to imagine that the political experiences, and the political socialisation, of those who came of age politically in these years, would not also be affected. Research to date regarding the post-Soviet generation of Russians is only beginning to emerge, but there can be little doubt about the relevance of the answer for Russia's political future. What follows is a preliminary effort to offer an answer.

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Methodology

Database

Tentative answers are offered to the foregoing questions based on replicate survey research carried out in Yaroslavl', Russia in 1993 ($n = 1{,}019$), 1996 ($n = 962$) and 2004 ($n = 1{,}132$).[1] A detailed discussion regarding sampling, questionnaire design and data processing has been published elsewhere (Hahn 2005, pp. 156 ff.) and need not be repeated here. Suffice it to say that all procedures employed were undertaken to ensure that the results would be fully representative of the population for which they were intended, namely those over the age of 17 living in Yaroslavl'. It may fairly be asked whether conclusions drawn from this pool of respondents can be generalised for Russians elsewhere. Previous publications using these data have been careful not to claim that they can be with any statistical certainty. However, it is also fair to point out that the demographic profile of those living in Yaroslavl' is not so different than other provinces (*oblasti*) of central Russia. Indeed, by measures such as ethnicity (97% Russian), age distribution, education, occupation and income, they more closely

[1]The initial survey using the data presented here was conducted in 1990. However, results from that survey are not included here, largely because the Soviet Union did not disintegrate until the end of 1991 and the focus of this article is on the post-Soviet generation.

resemble the other populations in these regions than the more heterogeneous cities of Moscow and St Petersburg. In any case, the goal of the present work is not to offer universally valid generalisations about generational change in political attitudes among Russians, but to offer testable hypotheses which can be a point of departure for other scholars interested in this question.

Analysing Russian generations

The principle independent variable in this analysis is generation, defined by 'chronological' age at the time of the survey (see Table 1).[2] The 'younger' cohort is reserved for those less than 35 years of age and the 'older' for those over 55. Using

TABLE 1
GENERATIONS

Year of survey	*Older*	*Middle (†)*	*Younger*	*Total*
1993				
N	287	432	297	1,019
%	28.2	42.5	29.2	100.0
1996				
N	289	398	275	962
%	30.0	41.4	28.6	100.0
2004				
N	316	389	427	1,132
%	27.9	34.4	37.7	100.0

†Differences for this generation are significant between 1993 and 1996.

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[2]It is possible to compare our approach with that of the leading Russian sociologist studying generations, Yury Levada. Levada (2005, pp. 41–44) divides the twentieth century Russians into six generations in accordance with six historic epochs. The first three—those living through the 'revolutionary breach between 1905 and 1930 who were born in the 1890s'; those living during 'Stalin's mobilisation 1930–1941 who were born in the 1910s'; and those experiencing the 'war and immediate post-war period between 1941 and 1953 who were born in the 1920s'—only constitute 11% of Russia's current adult population. The fourth political epoch, the generation of 'the thaw' (*ottepel'*) who were born in the 1930–1943 period, make up about 21% of Russia's current adult population.

In our groupings, the third cohort is combined with the fourth, thus we only 'leave out' 4% of Russia's adult population, according to Levada's calculations. What we refer to as the 'older generation' consistently makes up about 28–30% of the Yaroslavl' sample from 1993 to 2004. It is hard to imagine that there would be a great heterogeneity of political views among those who were socialised from 1930 to 1955, especially in a provincial town like Yaroslavl'. This period was marked by the horrific economic hardship of the 1930s, even more horrific war and a period of mass reconstruction. It is a well-known fact that peasants did not receive passports, and were not allowed to leave collective farms and migrate to the city until after Stalin's death. While the 20th CPSU Congress started the period of the 'thaw', one would be hard-pressed to find instances of trickling down of political liberalisation in its immediate aftermath.

The '*zastoi*' period (1964–1985) comprised those born in the period 1944–1968. The *zastoi* generation constitutes the biggest portion of Russia's current population: 39% of the adult population. In the Yaroslavl' sample they make up 42% (1993), 41% (1996) and 34% (2004). Finally, the '*perestroika* and reform' generations were born after 1969 and socialised during the 1985–1999 period. They make up 28% of Russia's current population. In the Yaroslavl' sample the '*perestroika* and reform' generation make up 29% (1993), 28% (1996) and 37% (2004).

these parameters, the younger cohort in 1993 was born between 1958 and 1975; in 1996, between 1961 and 1978; for 2004, between 1969 and 1986. If, following Rose and Carnaghan (1995, p. 34), we use 15 years of age to mark the time when people 'come of age politically', then for those surveyed in 1993, the 'younger' generation would have come of age politically between 1973 and 1990, while in 1996 it would have taken place between 1976 and 1993. In both these cases, a substantial number of our respondents would have been socialised in the late Soviet period or during the period of Gorbachev's reforms. Only those interviewed in 2004, who came of age politically after 1985, can arguably be considered part of the post-Soviet generation assuming one allows that democratic reform was well underway during *perestroika*.

The problems with generational analysis have been addressed by social scientists at length (Mannheim 1952; Converse 1976; Inglehart 1990; Putnam 1995). Traditionally, two types of generational effects are identified: generational[3] and life-cycle. In analysing the data, the former is coded by the subjects' date of birth, while the latter assigns age at each specific survey date. Hence, in any given year generational and life-cycle effects are identical, but with the longer time of study, the difference between the two widens. Putnam (1995) describes the life-cycle effects as having a zero-sum quality. In his words, 'Everyone's eyesight worsens with age, but the aggregate demand for glasses remains the same' (p. 674). Generational effects, on the other hand, can be seen as historic 'imprints' that are left on a particular group of people who went through a process of political socialisation during the time in which the imprints were made (Converse 1976). For example, if a group of people born between 1950 and 1960 had an experience which damaged their eyesight around 1975, we should expect them to have poor eyesight throughout their life, making it a particular characteristic of that generation. Thus, poor eyesight was an 'imprint' on the whole generation. However, these two effects tend to amalgamate, making age cohort analysis an ambiguous enterprise that 'inevitably involves more unknowns than equations' (Putnam 1995, p. 674). In other words, our generation with poor vision is going to experience even greater problems with eyesight as they age, because of natural life-cycle effects. Additionally, generational analysis of political culture, which according to Diamond (1993, p. 412), could be viewed as 'geological structure with sedimentary deposits from many historical ages and events', tends to complicate matters even further.

Russia, with its troubled history is an especially difficult case. Drastic societal transformations, economic and political crises, can immeasurably increase the difficulty of studying inter-cohort dynamics (Belyaeva 2004, p. 32). According to Levada (2005, p. 57), no time period during twentieth century Russian history witnessed a functioning life-cycle mechanism of generational change. Moreover, data presented in this study are limited to three surveys spanning only 11 years, of which only two (1996 and 2004) have the full array of economic variables. Even others who have studied more politically stable polities (Inglehart 1990; Converse 1976) have struggled to identify the life-cycle effects even with broader longitudinal parameters. This means that, in our case, following one particular generation as it ages, testing the 'life-cycle' hypothesis is not possible. Hence, approaching survey research in a generational context in the Russian case is unlikely to tell us much about generations

[3]Converse (1976, p. 19) separates this effect into classic generational ('imprint') and period effects.

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as such. However, such an approach can be helpful in determining the extent to which different age groups differ in their values and attitudes and whether those differences have endured or evolved over the last decade.

Having identified the shortcomings, it is important to note that we are not limited to just one survey in time. Not only can we compare different cohorts in the same time period, but we can compare the same cohorts during different time periods as well (what this article refers to as change within generations). This allows us to test the hypothesis that older groups, socialised under a centralised, redistributive system would be more prone to support a centralised state with redistributive economic policies. Similarly we will be able to see whether the younger group that came of age during the very last decade of Soviet rule and the first decade of the post-Soviet regime is more supportive of open, participatory, democratic values and an economic system based on merit and self-reliance. Arguably, young people get the most out of an open political system which gives them rights, and also more out of the economic system which gives them opportunities to succeed. Previous studies found that lack of political trust and over-reliance on the government is common among all age groups in all post-communist countries (Sadowski 1993). While this might be true for the totality of post-communist populations, inter-generational differences, if they exist, could be illuminating. Why should there be such differences?

Instrumental explanations would argue that older people were the most adversely affected group during the transition. Although older Russians may be advantaged by the fact that they own apartments, they are also mostly retired and therefore especially dependent on the state. Belyaeva (2004, pp. 33–34), points out that during the Soviet regime the older generation, endowed with personal connections, experience and status often materially supported the younger group. This pattern changed dramatically after the break-up of Soviet rule when the needs of an emerging market economy were much better met by the younger people who were more willing to alter their educational or career paths, or seek new employment. For example, today only a quarter of those aged 40 and over know how to use a computer (Belyaeva 2004, p. 39). A culturalist explanation would posit that Russians, used to the state ordering their lives, withdrew once the state ceased to interfere (Alexander 2000, p. 232). It is also plausible that a variation of efficacy and political trust among age cohorts could be due to some combination of these factors.

To test the two competing views, we look for changes within the generations from year to year which are not unidirectional. In other words, we are especially interested in results that yield an increase (or decrease) for one group from survey to survey, but a decrease (or increase) for others. We refer to these as 'multi-directional' changes in responses. The presence of such a dynamic is intriguing to observe in an ethnically homogenous single city in Russia. All generations experienced the same exogenous political and economic adversity. That is, all people lived through the economic failures of the early 1990s and all would be expected to become disenchanted with the political system to some extent. But, if we clearly see that in some instances the young generation's support for an open political system 'survives' the harsh societal realities of the 1990s, while other generations do not, then we can support the contention that real generational differences exist. Furthermore, if such substantial inter-generational changes can be observed, then in accordance with Eckstein's 'congruence' thesis (1988),

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we could anticipate a future 'balancing' between a clearly authoritatively inclined state and, what appears to be, an increasingly 'liberal' public. That is, of course, only possible if the liberal tendencies of the younger generation 'stick' (or make an 'imprint').

Dependent variables

In this research, we examine whether there are generational differences in diffuse support (Easton 1965, p. 273) for democracy.[4] Data are also reported regarding how different generations view their leaders and how they feel about economic and political reforms currently underway. The first dependent variables chosen for analysis are those commonly associated with diffuse support: national and local feelings of political efficacy, national and local levels of political trust, and support for elections. The questions used to measure these variables come from studies of American voting behaviour which have been conducted since the early 1950s and which were thought to measure diffuse support for the American political system over time (Miller & Traugott 1989, Chapter 4).[5] Originally, these variables were intended to measure enduring political values associated with living in a democratic society. However, previous analysis of these data (Hahn 2005) concluded that one of them, political trust, is better regarded as an attitude subject to short term situational change rather than a value. That is, levels of political trust were dependent on governmental performance, and therefore should be regarded as instrumental rather than cultural (p. 175). For each variable with multiple measures, additive scales were created to form single dependent variables.[6] In addition to measures of support, there are a

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[4]The distinction between specific and diffuse sources of political support was first made by David Easton. Specific support is more closely tied to political outputs and regime performance while diffuse supports are based on longer term sources of loyalty and a willingness to accept the regime as legitimate.

[5]In part, the use of these variables is dictated by their appearance in the original survey conducted in 1990 which were replicated in subsequent surveys. The purpose of the original survey was to discover how similar or different Russian attitudes on these measures of support for democracy would be from those found in the United States.

[6]The absolute values reported in the additive tables for a single point in time for a specific cohort should be considered with caution. For example, we present an aggregate table for local political efficacy which combines two questions: 'people like me don't have much to say about what local government does' and 'sometimes local government seems so complicated that people like me can't really understand what is going on'. Respondents were offered options 'yes' and 'no' for these two questions. The aggregate table is dichotomised and only reports two categories: 'low efficacy' and 'high efficacy'. The number in the 'high efficacy' category for the younger cohort for 2004 is reported to be 52%. These 52% include both those who responded 'no' to both questions and those who said 'no' to only one of the questions. The 'low efficacy' number for the same group and year of survey is 48% and it includes only those who said 'yes' to both questions. Hence, this table cannot be interpreted to mean that 'in 2004, 52% of those under the age of 35 expressed feelings of "high efficacy" in Yaroslavl". These are essentially dichotomised percentage averages of several singular questions which are grouped into the same category. Specific questions should be perused in order to make a statement of that sort. We should note, however, that while the additive or 'aggregate' scales are used for presentation in the article, the difference of means tests reported were performed on the un-dichotomised averages, which accounted for the subtitles that were lost in the attempt to present a more lucid picture in the summary tables. Incidentally, absolute numbers in the summary tables are for the most part in line with each specific question that makes up the aggregate, even after they are dichotomised. However, we are most concerned with the differences between generations and between years of surveys. These should be

number of variables reported here aimed at measuring orientations more specifically related to political and economic reforms. Some of these were also combined into additive scales. Other dependent variables used in this analysis include measures of how generations may differ in their evaluations of the government's economic performance, both socio-tropically and egocentrically, and prospectively and retrospectively.

The findings that follow present a comparison of means between generations for the same questions at three points in time (1993, 1996 and 2004) for each of our dependent variables. Each comparison of means was tested for statistical significance using the ANOVA procedure available in SPSS. Specifically, we want to know if there are significant differences on all the dependent variables between the three generations identified earlier. In addition, we compare the mean responses within each generation over time to see whether the different generations respond to the same period effects in the same way (uni-directionally) or differently ('multi-directionally').

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Hypotheses

First, following from the preceding review of the literature, we expect to find that the younger generation will be more supportive of the political and economic reforms undertaken in post-Soviet Russia than older generations. Specifically, we expect that they will exhibit higher levels of political efficacy, political trust and support for elections. They will be more supportive of political participation, and less so of authoritarian governance. Finally, they will be more hopeful about their future prospects in post-Soviet Russia.

Second, following Whitefield's conclusion (2005b) that the identification of the younger generation of Russians with the post-Soviet Russian state is driven more by attitudes favourable to market economic reform than to democratic political reform, we would expect to find generational differences along similar lines. That is, differences among generations in attitudes involving economic reform will be more pronounced than for political reform.

Third, if post-Soviet generational differences attributable to period effects exist, we would expect them to be visible within generations. That is, if there is attitudinal change in different directions ('multi-directional'), despite the fact that their post-Soviet experiences of each generation have been identical, then we can conclude that not only are our generations different in their attitudes towards reform, but that these differences are best explained by instrumental or performance considerations.

Findings

The presentation of the findings is as follows. For each variable, there is a table setting out the responses in percentages by year of survey (1993, 1996, 2004) and by

accepted as being of quite robust statistical variety, because the same method of combining summary tables and their dichotomisation was used for all years and for all generations. Hence, while it might be questionable what the fact that the 48% of young people were measured to have 'low efficacy' tells us in isolation, it is quite clear that contrasting it with a 75% 'low efficacy' measure for the older generation should lead us to believe that the older generation has significantly lower levels of efficacy in that year, and it is confirmed in the difference of means tests.

generation (older, middle, younger) as defined earlier in Table 1 of this article. In each case, except for six tables at the end measuring subjective assessments of the government's economic performance, the tables are based on an additive scale using multiple questions. The questions used in these aggregate tables are found below each table. In some cases, individual questions proved insightful and, where appropriate, the data are described in the narrative section which accompanies each table.

The appropriate measure of statistical significance for these data is a comparison of means test. Differences which are significant between generations are indicated by numbers in parentheses vertically under 'year of survey' and within generations are indicated by letters in parentheses next to 'generations' horizontally. All reported levels of significance are 0.05 or below. In four instances differences of means significant for $0.05 < p < 0.1$ are denoted by a * symbol.[7]

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National political efficacy (Table 2)

Political efficacy refers to an individual's subjective feeling that he or she can exert some influence over the governmental decisions that affect them. Consistent with Stephen White's findings (2002), our data indicate that overall levels of national political efficacy in Russia are extremely low. All groups experienced a drop from 1993 to 1996 but this is statistically significant only for questions (b) and (d). However, the

TABLE 2
NATIONAL POLITICAL EFFICACY

Year of survey	*Older %*	*Middle (a) %*	*Younger %*	*Total %*
1993				
Low efficacy	89.7	86.0	86.8	87.2
High efficacy	10.3	14.0	13.2	12.8
1996 (1.2)				
Low efficacy	93.9	94.0	87.3	92.1
High efficacy	6.1	6.0	12.7	7.9
2004 (0.1)				
Low efficacy	92.9	89.6	89.1	90.4
High efficacy	7.1	10.4	10.9	9.6

Notes: National political efficacy questions:
(a) People like me don't have much to say in what the government does.
(b) I don't think public officials care much about what people like me think.
(c) Generally speaking, those we elect lose touch with the people quickly.
(d) Sometimes government seems so complicated that people like me can't understand what is going on.

[7]The numbers (in parentheses next to the year of survey) indicating statistical significance in each table have the following meanings: 0 = differences are significant between older and middle cohorts; 1 = differences are significant between older and younger cohorts; 2 = differences are significant between middle and younger cohorts; 3 = differences are significant between older, middle and younger cohorts. The letters (in parentheses next to the generation) indicating statistical significance in each table have the following meanings: a = differences are significant between 1993 and 1996; b = differences are significant between 1996 and 2004; c = differences are significant between 1993 and 2004; d = differences are significant between 1993, 1996 and 2004.

drop for the younger cohort was noticeably less pronounced. Nevertheless, the low efficacy figures are high and change little over time. As the summary table shows, only 9.6% of those surveyed in 2004 expressed a high level of efficacy, although this number is significantly lower for the older cohort.

While all age groups showed low levels of efficacy, an overarching pattern can be observed in the higher levels of efficacy reported by the younger cohort in 2004 in relation to other groups. Overall, they are statistically more efficacious than the older group in 1996 and 2004. In 2004 this is especially notable on questions of both external ('I don't think public officials care much what people like me think') and internal ('Sometimes the government seems so complicated that people like me can't really understand what is going on') efficacy.

Local political efficacy (Table 3)

Levels of local efficacy overall were much higher than their national counterpart. Over a third of people (from 33% to 40%) surveyed in each year felt like the local government was at least somewhat responsive to their needs. Taken as a whole, these responses did not change much over time. However, there are considerable differences across generations and from survey to survey. First, the majority of responses within the younger cohort expressed relatively higher levels of efficacy in each year, significantly higher than the older generation in 1993 and higher than both older and middle cohorts in 1996 and 2004. The middle generation is also significantly higher than the older one in each year. The young cohort gained significantly from 1993 to 1996, while the two older groups remained at their previous levels of efficacy.

A clear positive relationship between age and levels of local efficacy can be observed for this group of questions. This relationship was especially noticeable for question (b) which measures internal efficacy.[8] Here, the percentage of the older generation

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TABLE 3
LOCAL POLITICAL EFFICACY

Year of survey	*Older %*	*Middle %*	*Younger (a) %*	*Total %*
1993 (0.1)				
Low efficacy	74.7	63.1	62.5	66.4
High efficacy	25.3	36.9	37.5	33.6
1996 (3)				
Low efficacy	77.0	60.2	49.8	62.4
High efficacy	23.0	39.8	50.2	37.6
2004 (3)				
Low efficacy	75.6	59.0	48.0	59.4
High efficacy	24.4	41.0	52.0	40.6

Notes: Local political efficacy questions:
(a) People like me don't have any say about what the local government does.
(b) Sometimes local government seems so complicated that people like me can't understand what is going on.

[8]Although the data tables for individual questions are not presented here for reasons of space, they are available from the authors to those interested.

responding with lower levels of efficacy is about 65% for all three years, while for the middle cohort it is about 52%. The younger cohort, however, moves monotonically—and significantly—from 63% in 1993 to 52% in 2004. A similar pattern is visible for question (a) which measures external efficacy.

Political trust nationally (Table 4)

Political trust is a variable that reflects how people feel about whether their government is doing a good job or not. It is the converse of political cynicism. As such, it was originally thought to be an important source of diffuse support for the political system. However, more recent research, including some using the current database (Hahn 2005), suggests that it really reflects an assessment of governmental performance.[9] As such, it should properly be regarded as an attitude subject to short term change based on an instrumental calculation of interests, and not an enduring value, reflecting cultural norms (Brown 2003). The findings presented here provide further evidence of this.

For the population as a whole, we can observe a decline of 15% in political trust from 1993 to 1996 but a return to even higher levels (plus 17%) by 2004. The difference between 1996 and 2004 is statistically significant; and on question (a), a robust 59% of the population felt that the government was making the right decisions all or most of the time in 2004. This may be viewed as a favourable evaluation of Putin's government's performance, something we can also observe in Putin's own popularity ratings which, for our sample in 2004, was around 74%, a figure similar to his ratings nationally. It is noteworthy that, on the whole, levels of political trust in 2004 and 1993

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TABLE 4
NATIONAL POLITICAL TRUST

Year of survey	*Older (a) %*	*Middle (a.b) %*	*Younger (b) %*	*Total %*
1993 (1)				
High trust	58.3	51.7	47.7	52.4
Low trust	41.7	48.3	52.3	47.6
1996				
High trust	39.2	32.8	41.9	37.4
Low trust	60.8	67.2	58.1	62.6
2004 (1.2)				
High trust	49.0	48.2	62.2	53.9
Low trust	51.0	51.8	37.8	46.1

Notes: Political trust—national government:
(a) How much of the time do you think the government makes the right decisions?
(b) Would you say that government, when it makes decisions, takes care of the well-being of all the people of only a few?
(c) Do you feel that a majority of those running the government are capable or do you think only a few are?

[9]For a review of this discussion, see Hahn (2005, p. 163). For the finding that political trust should be regarded as an attitude, not a value, see Hahn (2005, p. 175).

were similar (52% and 54%). That is, Putin's government was receiving a level of support in 2004 similar to Boris Yel'tsin's in 1993.

Culturalist arguments which support the idea that political socialisation is paramount in explaining political attitudes would arguably expect that, in 1993, the younger age cohort would have the highest levels of trust toward the nascent post-communist government as compared to the older cohorts. Since the members of the younger cohort were socialised during the last and the most politically liberalised era of Soviet rule, they could be expected to be the stronger supporters of the newly emergent democratic government. Conversely, both older cohorts, especially the oldest group, could be expected to be the least trustful of the new regime, because their political socialisation had occurred during the more repressive periods of the communist reign.

Similarly, the same logic, applied to the increasingly authoritarian state emerging under Putin, suggests that the older cohorts would probably be the most supportive of state centralisation, democratic retrogression and the accentuation of order over liberty. Citizens belonging to the younger age group, socialised almost entirely during the first post-communist decade, would be expected to be the least supportive of Putin's authoritarian tendencies.

However, our data suggest little support for these hypotheses. In fact, our findings offer a picture that is just the opposite. In 1993, the youngest generation reported the lowest levels of trust in the national government, while the oldest group was the most trustful of the new government. By 1996, both older cohorts' levels of trust underwent a statistically significant drop, while the younger cohort's level of political trust decreased only slightly and insignificantly. By 2004, the youngest group had by far the highest trust measure, 62%, as opposed to around 49% for the older two cohorts.

However, if we isolate just one question ('How much of the time do you think the government makes the right decisions?') two-thirds of all younger respondents answered 'all or most of the time'. What is striking is that, for political trust at both the local and national level, the within-generation change for this question is moving in the opposite direction for the older and younger generations. Over time the older generation becomes less trustful and the younger generation more so. This is the case despite the fact that both generations experienced the same political events that took place during these tumultuous years. While it is possible to argue on the basis of this finding that the younger generation is more authoritarian (for example, it likes Putin), by our other measures of political attitudes, including efficacy, the data do not support this conclusion. A more compelling interpretation is that the younger generation is better off materially under Putin.

Political trust locally (Table 5)

Unlike efficacy, aggregate levels of local trust are similar to those for national trust. With that said however, the generational patterns are similar. In 1993, cross-sectional levels of local trust were almost identical between all cohorts (about 54%); the older generation's trust levels were five points higher although this was not a significant difference. But, by 1996 the two older cohorts' levels of local trust experienced a statistically significant drop, while the younger cohort's levels of local trust actually

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TABLE 5
LOCAL POLITICAL TRUST

Year of survey	*Older (a) %*	*Middle (a) %*	*Younger (c*) %*	*Total %*
1993				
High trust	59.8	53.0	50.0	54.0
Low trust	40.2	47.0	50.0	46.0
1996				
High trust	43.1	44.7	52.0	46.4
Low trust	56.9	55.3	48.0	53.6
2004 (1.2)				
High trust	41.3	46.1	56.1	48.6
Low trust	58.7	53.9	43.9	51.4

Notes: Political trust—local government:
(a) How much of the time do you think the local government makes the right decisions?
(b) Would you say that local government, when it makes decisions, takes care of the well-being of all the people or only a few?

went up. By 2004 the young people were the most optimistic about the ability of the local government to perform. The younger cohort's responses were statistically higher than the older and middle groups in 2004.

Again, just for question (a) ('How much of the time do you think the local government makes the right decisions?'), we observed a significant reversal in direction in responses within generations with the older and younger generations over time. By 2004, the younger generation was significantly more trusting, with slightly more than 75% saying they thought local government made the right decisions most or all of the time. Despite experiencing the same political events from 1993 to 2004, the older generation became less trusting and the younger generation more so. If the instrumental explanation offered in our analysis of levels of trust at the national level is valid, we would expect to see generational differences in assessments of economic performance, something we will examine later in this article.

Support for elections (Table 6)

Public commitment to the importance of electoral participation has long been regarded as essential to democracy. Early studies of American voting behaviour found such a commitment to be highly correlated to voter turnout and also that it was the product of socialisation during childhood (Campbell 1979, p. 239). Like others (White 2002; Colton & McFaul 2002; Gibson 1996b), we found normative support for elections to be strong among Russians. Among our population, aggregate support for electoral participation is comparatively high for all three generations and over time. In fact, all generations became significantly more supportive of elections with time. Within generations, the change from 1993 to 1996 was significant for the younger and older groups, while the middle group experienced a positive change from 1993 to 2004.

Differences between generations are significant in the earlier years with the younger generation being less enthusiastic about elections than the older ones. For 1993 and 1996, for example, the differences between the older and younger generations are

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TABLE 6
SUPPORT FOR NATIONAL ELECTIONS

Year of survey	*Older (a) %*	*Middle (c) %*	*Younger(a) %*	*Total (a.c) %*
1993 (1)				
Low support	37.4	42.9	48.7	43.1
High support	62.6	57.1	51.3	56.9
1996 (1.2*)				
Low support	26.4	36.5	31.4	32.3
High support	73.6	63.5	68.6	67.7
2004				
Low support	27.3	30.9	28.9	29.1
High support	72.7	69.1	71.1	70.9

Notes: Political support for democratic elections:
(a) If a person doesn't care how an election comes out, then that person shouldn't vote.
(b) So many other people vote in national elections that it doesn't matter whether I vote or not.
(c) It is not so important to vote when you know your party or your candidate have no chance of winning.

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significant. Although the data are not shown here, responses for question (c) ('It is not so important to vote when you know your party or your candidate have no chance of winning') are particularly interesting. The younger generation became significantly more supportive of elections in each of the three years reaching 65% in 2004, while the two older generations' response started out higher (60–65%) and remained about the same. By 2004, there was no statistically significant difference between the age groups. One can speculate that older generations had been accustomed to vote regularly through socialisation in the Soviet period and that initially the younger generation was more sceptical of the value of such a vote. By now, however, this scepticism appears to have disappeared.

Attitudes toward political and economic reform. In addition to the preceding variables intended to measure diffuse support for the political system, we asked our respondents questions designed to reveal their attitudes towards more specific political and economic reforms that have been underway since 1993 to see if these revealed any generational differences. With respect to political reforms we asked questions to determine their feelings about popular participation and if they preferred a 'strong leader'. With respect to attitudes towards economic reforms, we asked questions intended to elicit their views on social equality and on capitalism.

Political attitudes: popular participation (Table 7)

Levels of support for popular participation seem to have experienced generational dynamics similar to those found for the trust variable. The older group had the second-highest (albeit statistically insignificant) measures of support for popular participation in 1993, but ended up with the lowest levels of support for popular participation by 2004 (almost 20% lower than the younger group). The younger generation's level of support went up from 1993 to 1996, and in 2004 the younger

group had a statistically higher measure of support for political participation than either of the two older cohorts. This finding coincides with the growing support found among the younger generation for electoral participation. It would seem to contradict the view that the younger generation has become less democratic (or more authoritarian) over time.

Political attitudes: strong leader (Table 8)

Survey research conducted since 1990, including the present study, has shown a rather high level of support among Russians for a 'strong leader', especially for question (a) ('A few strong leaders could do more for their country than all laws and discussion'). This has been interpreted by some as evidence of a lingering, and perhaps culturally determined, preference for authoritarian rule. Others have suggested that this would

TABLE 7
SUPPORT FOR POPULAR PARTICIPATION

Year of survey	*Older %*	*Middle %*	*Younger (a.c*) %*	*Total (a.c) %*
1993				
Low support	58.3	56.5	59.3	57.8
High support	41.7	43.5	40.7	42.2
1996				
Low support	52.3	53.4	50.2	52.2
High support	47.7	46.6	49.8	47.8
2004 (1.2)				
Low support	60.8	52.1	43.8	51.3
High support	39.2	47.9	56.2	48.7

Notes: Political attitudes: popular participation:
(a) The complexity of today's problems allows only the simplest questions to be exposed to public scrutiny?
(b) A high level of public participation in making decisions often leads to unwanted conflicts?

TABLE 8
SUPPORT FOR A STRONG LEADER

Year of survey	*Older %*	*Middle %*	*Younger (c) %*	*Total %*
1993				
High support for a strong leader	78.5	78.0	76.6	77.7
Low support for a strong leader	21.5	22.0	23.4	22.3
1996				
High support for a strong leader	73.7	75.8	73.0	74.4
Low support for a strong leader	26.3	24.2	27.0	25.6
2004				
High support for a strong leader	72.1	73.7	68.0	71.1
Low support for a strong leader	27.9	26.3	32.0	28.9

Notes: Political attitudes: strong leader:
(a) A few strong leaders could do more for their country than all laws and discussion.
(b) There are situations when a leader should not divulge certain facts.

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be a misinterpretation. As Archie Brown writes, 'the oft-repeated assertion that Russians have a predilection for a "strong leader" is the kind of generalisation that should not be accepted uncritically' (2005, p. 192). Support for a strong leader is, arguably, not inconsistent with democracy; on the contrary, it may be that a strong leader who makes things work well deserves public trust. As Reisinger *et al.* (1994) caution, a response from Russians indicating support for a strong leader does not necessarily mean they want an authoritarian regime. His interpretation is that 'those desiring strong leadership were not expressing a wish for arbitrary or harmful leadership. Rather they were expressing a desire for "good government" by means of finding the proper leaders and letting them govern' (p. 215).

As the data in Table 8 indicate, overall levels of support for a 'strong leader' are fairly high for our population, ranging around the 70% mark. Moreover, there are no significant differences between generations on this issue. However, there was a significant drop in support between 1993 and 2004 for the younger generation and support among the older generations waned, albeit insignificantly. Although the data are not shown here, a similar pattern is visible for question (a). Over time, although still high at 70%, fewer of the younger generation agreed with the statement that 'A few strong leaders could do more for their country than all laws and discussion', while agreement among the older generation actually grew. Thus, although the generational differences are not significant on this question, the younger generation becomes less supportive of a strong leader over time.

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Economic attitudes: social equality (Table 9)

Economic attitudes in general seem to provide the clearest watershed between generations in Russia. The differences between all three cohorts on the aggregate scale measuring attitudes toward social equality were significant, with the younger generation being the least likely to value state intervention to maintain social equality. Furthermore, the younger cohort exhibited a significant increase in the

TABLE 9
EGALITARIANISM AND WEALTH DISTRIBUTION

Year of survey	*Older %*	*Middle %*	*Younger (b) %*	*Total (b.c) %*
1993 (3)				
Reliance on state	86.9	72.0	53.5	70.6
Reliance on self	13.1	28.0	46.5	29.4
1996 (3)				
Reliance on state	90.1	75.5	57.1	74.3
Reliance on self	9.9	24.5	42.9	25.7
2004 (3)				
Reliance on state	80.6	73.1	53.6	67.9
Reliance on self	19.4	26.9	46.4	32.1

Notes: Economic attitudes: social equality:
(a) An upper limit should exist on earnings so that no one accumulates more than anyone else.
(b) If others live in poverty, the government should react so that no one can become wealthy.
(c) Wealthy people should pay more than the poor.

'self-reliance' measure from 1996 to 2004. Except for this increase, there is little evidence of change over time within generations. On item (c) used in this aggregate scale, about a quarter of the younger generation believed that the wealthy should not pay more in taxes than the poor (significantly more than either older or younger groups). About two thirds of them in 2004 opposed an upper limit of earnings [item (a)], just the reverse of what the older generation thinks. In fact, 2004 is the first year in which a majority did not favour an upper limit on earnings in the whole sample.

Economic attitudes: support for the private sector (Table 10)

This group of questions also indicates important cut-off points between generations. The younger generation is significantly more supportive of private enterprise than the middle and older groups in 1993 and significantly more supportive than the older group in 1996 and 2004. While differences between generations are significant, in general there is little change within the cohorts over time except that the older group experienced a drop in support for the private sector from 1993 to 1996.

Although the aggregate measure does not show a difference of means between 1996 and 2004, fewer members of the older and middle cohorts opposed state intervention in the economy [item (b)] in 2004 than in 1993 (this is statistically significant). In one anomalous finding, support for increasing the share of the private sector in industry in business actually drops for all three cohorts over time, although once again the differences between the younger and older cohort were significant with the younger generation clearly more in favour of the private sector.

Economic attitudes: views on wealth and profit (Table 11)

Consistent with the finding on economic attitudes presented in Tables 9 and 10, our population demonstrates clear generational differences on questions designed to probe their views on capitalism, wealth distribution and profit. Again the younger generation

TABLE 10
SUPPORT FOR PRIVATE SECTOR

Year of survey	*Older (a) %*	*Middle %*	*Younger %*	*Total %*
1993 (1.2)				
High support	68.2	69.0	76.2	71.0
Low support	31.8	31.0	23.8	29.0
1996 (0.1)				
High support	56.6	67.7	74.3	67.1
Low support	43.4	32.3	25.7	32.9
2004 (0.1)				
High support	57.3	68.7	73.2	67.5
Low support	42.7	31.3	26.8	32.5

Notes: Economic attitudes: support for private sector:

(a) A system of private enterprise is effective.

(b) State regulations of business usually brings more harm than good.

(c) The share of the private sector in business and industry today should be increased.

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TABLE 11
VIEWS ON WEALTH AND PROFITS

Year of survey	*Older %*	*Middle %*	*Younger %*	*Total (c) %*
1993 (3)				
Negative	45.3	36.6	28.6	36.7
Positive	54.7	63.4	71.4	63.3
1996 (0.1)				
Negative	51.9	41.7	34.2	42.6
Positive	48.1	58.3	65.8	57.4
2004 (3)				
Negative	58.9	46.8	35.1	45.8
Positive	41.1	53.2	64.9	54.2

Notes: Views on capitalism, wealth and profits:
(a) A system based on profit brings out the worst in human nature.
(b) People accumulate wealth only at the expense of others.

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is significantly more 'pro-capitalist' than the older generations. Interestingly, however, as was the case for support for the private sector (Table 10), support for capitalist attitudes actually declines over time for all three cohorts, although not significantly. This is especially so for the older and middle cohorts, and much less so for the younger cohort. Why this is the case is not immediately clear.

Explaining the findings

The findings presented in Tables 2–11 provide evidence for generational differences in varying degrees for all our dependent political and economic variables. In general, the differences suggest a younger generation more supportive of norms related to democratic values and more open to free market reforms than the older generations who came of age politically in the Soviet era. These generational differences are far more pronounced for attitudes towards economic reform than for the political variables. Why should this be so? Instrumental explanations for these differences would predict that self interest is at work and that evaluations of government performance would also differ greatly, with the younger generation's assessments being more favourable. Put another way, the younger generation should be more supportive of the system as it has evolved since 1993 because they have benefited from it more than the older generations. Do they feel this way?

Questions introduced in the survey carried out in 1996 were designed to measure the respondents' subjective judgments of governmental economic performance. These questions measured evaluations of economic performance retrospectively, prospectively, socio-tropically and personally. Do people feel they are better off in 2004 after four years under Putin's administration than they did in 1996 during that of Boris Yel'tsin? Are there generational differences in this assessment? The data presented in Tables 12–17 suggest that for the most part, the answer to both questions is in the affirmative. In every case, the younger generation is significantly more positive in its assessment of the economy and of the government's performance with respect to it

TABLE 12
HOW DID THE ECONOMIC SITUATION CHANGE OVER THE LAST 12 MONTHS?

Year of survey	*Older (b) %*	*Middle (b) %*	*Younger (b) %*	*Total (b) %*
1996 (1.2)				
Improved	29.6	27.3	45.6	33.1
Worsened	70.4	72.7	54.4	66.9
2004 (1.2)				
Improved	67.7	70.7	82.1	74.1
Worsened	32.3	29.3	17.9	25.9

TABLE 13
HOW DO YOU THINK THE ECONOMIC SITUATION WILL CHANGE OVER THE NEXT 12 MONTHS?

Year of survey	*Older %*	*Middle (b) %*	*Younger (b) %*	*Total (b) %*
1996 (2)				
Improve	66.1	58.8	75.1	65.6
Worsen	33.9	41.2	24.9	34.4
2004 (1.2)				
Improve	67.1	71.1	86.5	76.1
Worsen	32.9	28.9	13.5	23.9

TABLE 14
HOW DO YOU ASSESS THE INFLUENCE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ON ECONOMY IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS?

Year of survey	*Older (b) %*	*Middle (b) %*	*Younger (b) %*	*Total (b) %*
1996 (1.2)				
Positive	68.1	63.7	72.3	67.4
Negative	31.9	36.3	27.7	32.6
2004 (1.2)				
Positive	78.1	78.8	88.0	82.1
Negative	21.9	21.2	12.0	17.9

TABLE 15
HAD THE CPSU BEEN IN POWER, WOULD THE COUNTRY BE BETTER OFF?

Year of survey	*Older %*	*Middle %*	*Younger (b) %*	*Total (b) %*
1996 (1.2)				
Better	70.2	62.9	52.2	62.0
Worse	29.8	37.1	47.8	38.0
2004 (1.2)				
Better	69.2	63.3	38.7	56.7
Worse	30.8	36.7	61.3	43.3

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TABLE 16
HOW DID YOUR MATERIAL STATUS CHANGE IN THE LAST THREE YEARS?

Year of survey	*Older (b.c) %*	*Middle (b.c) %*	*Younger (b.c) %*	*Total (b.c) %*
1993 (0.1)				
Improved or same	21.3	38.9	39.1	34.0
Worsened	78.7	61.1	60.9	66.0
1996 (3)				
Improved or same	28.4	39.9	50.5	39.5
Worsened	71.6	60.1	49.5	60.5
2004 (1.2)				
Improved or same	75.9	70.7	84.8	77.5
Worsened	24.1	29.3	15.2	22.5

TABLE 17
HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR INCOME?

Year of survey	*Older %*	*Middle (a.b) %*	*Younger (b.c) %*	*Total (d) %*
1993 (0.1.2*)				
High or middle	36.9	50.2	42.4	44.2
Low	63.1	49.8	57.6	55.8
1996 (1.2)				
High or middle	29.4	37.4	46.5	37.6
Low	70.6	62.6	53.5	62.4
2004 (3)				
High or middle	34.2	49.9	71.0	53.4
Low	65.8	50.1	29.0	46.6

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than the older generations. They are more than twice as likely (71% compared with 34%) to report high and middle incomes (Table 17). At the same time, it is also clear that each cohort feels better about the economy and about governmental performance in 2004 than in 1996. The only exception to these generalisations is found in Table 15 which asks whether the respondent would have been better off under communist rule. Here the older and middle generations clearly feel they would have been better off while the younger generation does not.

Given the large amount of data presented to this point it may be useful to try to tie together some of the larger themes that seem to be emerging. Perhaps the most important of these is that the post-Soviet generation's assessment of changes since the fall of communism in Russia is more positive than that of the generations who came of age politically before that watershed. This is not surprising given the findings of some of the literature presented earlier. However, what is noteworthy is that while this was modestly the case for political change, it is much more dramatically so for economic changes. This is seen most clearly in Tables 9–11. These show that the post-Soviet generation is significantly more likely to reject state intervention in the economy in favour of self reliance (Table 9); it is significantly more supportive of expanding the

private sector (Table 10); and significantly more 'pro-capitalist' than the older generations (Table 11).

The data presented in Tables 12–17 offer a possible explanation for this finding. The answer to why they are so significantly more supportive of these changes is that in their perception, the changes have been effective. Data presented in Tables 12, 13 and 14 provide measures of socio-tropic evaluations of economic performance. Predictably, all generations feel things have improved, although the post-Soviet generation feels more strongly that this is the case. Tables 16 and 17 more closely measure ego-centric evaluations and in both cases it seems clear that they feel much better off than the older generations; they are more than twice as likely to see themselves as earning a high or middle income.

With respect to political attitudes, this conclusion is strongly supported by the findings regarding political trust presented earlier. As we have discussed at some length in this article and elsewhere (Hahn 2005, p. 175), political trust should be regarded as an attitude rather than a value because it appears to reflect our respondents' assessment of governmental performance rather than their acculturation. The findings presented on levels of national political trust (Table 4) and local political trust (Table 5) demonstrate that between 1996 and 2004 levels of trust among the youngest generation rose significantly more than those of older generations. For the single question 'How much of the time do you think government makes the right decisions?' responses moved in opposite directions despite the fact that all our respondents were experiencing the same exogenous political and economic effects. By 2004, two-thirds of the younger generation had higher levels of trust in the national government and about 75% in local government while for the older generations percentages actually dropped. Similar within-generational differences are observable in Table 15. Here, while the younger generation is clear by a two to one margin that the country would have been worse off if the CPSU had been in power, that ratio is reversed for the older and middle generations. In sum, arguably, the post-Soviet generation is more supportive of the changes since communism because they have benefited more from them.

Conclusions

The purpose of this article was to explore whether there was evidence of generational differences in Russian attitudes towards democracy. More specifically, it is intended as an inquiry into whether the attitudes, values and beliefs of those who came of age politically after the fall of the Soviet Union are significantly different from those who did so in the Soviet period. And if they are, are they likely to impede or facilitate Russia's movement in a more democratic direction? Tentative answers to these questions are offered on the basis of survey research conducted for a representative sample of people over the age of 17 living in Yaroslavl', Russia since 1993. While the conclusions that follow can only be drawn for the population surveyed, it is hoped that they may be suggestive of hypotheses for future research on generational change in Russian attitudes.

Following our review of the relevant literature, it was hypothesised that the younger generation would be significantly more supportive of the political and economic

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reforms undertaken in post-Soviet Russia than the generation which came of age politically during the Soviet years. In general, this was found to be the case, though it appears to be much more so for economic attitudes than for political ones. Nevertheless, there is little support in the data presented here for the view expressed by Mendelson and Gerber (2006) and, to a lesser extent, by White (2002), that the attitudes of this generation are inconsistent with the eventual emergence of liberal democracy in Russia. In this sense, at least, this study provides some grounds for optimism about the long term prospects for the development of democratic institutions and practices in Russia.

Thus, with respect to political variables, while all generations exhibit low levels of political efficacy, the younger generation appears to be somewhat more politically efficacious, and then, more so at the local level than nationally. Their levels of political trust are higher as well. Levels of political trust, in some cases at least, increase for the younger generation while declining for the older one. The evidence, however, would seem to suggest that levels of trust are related to instrumental rather than cultural considerations. Support for electoral participation increased over time for the younger generation, but by 2004, there were no generational differences; all exhibited high levels of support. In general, the young were more favourable towards popular participation in decision making. While the younger generation shared the older generations' admiration for a 'strong leader', this declined somewhat over time.

The real evidence for generational differences was found in attitudes towards economic reform. Here, the younger generation was consistently, and significantly, more supportive of market economic reforms than the older generations. We find ourselves in agreement with Stephen Whitefield's conclusion that the younger generation may or may not be more democratic, but that they are more 'pro-market, pro-private ownership and more anti-welfare' (Whitefield 2005b, p. 139). Further evidence for such an interpretation is found when generations are compared by their assessments of economic well-being. The younger generation clearly feels things have improved in the post-Soviet period more than the older generations do. The attitude that they have benefited by the post-Soviet change more than the older generation is particularly evident in their growing conviction that the country is better off in the post-communist period; the view of the older generation is exactly opposite and moves in just the opposite direction (as shown especially in Table 15). In short, the weight of the evidence would seem to be consistent with an instrumentalist rather than a culturalist interpretation of attitudinal differences between generations. Put another way, such findings would seem to support a conclusion that the generation that came of age after the fall of communism is indeed different and that it enjoys 'living in a material world'.

What are we to make of these findings? And what implications might they hold for Russia's future? Caution should be the watchword in offering answers to these questions. First of all, of necessity, this article represents an early effort to assess the attitudes, values and beliefs of Russians who have come of age politically since the fall of communism. After all, it is only about 15 years since that event. It will be impossible to truly judge if these differences will continue until this generation ages. It is possible that the generational differences will diminish. Whether the evidence reflects life cycle changes or is generational remains unclear. Nevertheless, one tentative finding that

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may hold significance for Russia's future is that studies conducted in the 1990s showing that socio-tropic assessments of economic performance may be more important than ego-centric ones (Colton 2000, p. 97) may not apply to the post-Soviet generation. 'Pocketbook issues' may be more salient to them than to members of earlier generations. If these differences are generational and not simply a function of aging, in the future this generation may be less interested in the public good than in their own.

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